

A Time-Honored Warning Against Present Dangers to the Church from Pharisaism

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It was a wise king who once sighed, "There is nothing new under the sun." Solomon was weary of life and meant that life is an endless, monotonous round of labor and disappointments and vanity, as unchanging as the rising and setting of the sun. But I am sure that he would not have objected to having his words applied to the evils that constantly harass and afflict the Church, for they too have ever occasioned the Church an endless, monotonous round of labor and struggle and grief. We may speak of modern dangers threatening the Church as if it were the first time they had ever arisen to vex it. But there is nothing new under the sun as far as such present-day dangers are concerned. From its infancy the Christian Church has had to defend itself against the spirit of worldliness, the false doctrine of salvation by good works, unbelief, popery, communistic ideas of the supreme state, the scientific approach to the Bible, skepticism, liberalism, misinterpretation of the relation between Church and State, and the like.

These dangers may have a new look today, like the modern fashions for women, but they are actually only ancient heresies and centuries-old problems in modern dress. We may give them new names or describe them with new terms. We may pity ourselves because we imagine that nothing like them has plagued the Church before, but we may be sure that they are actually nothing new under the sun. The essayist at the Nebraska District Convention, for example, has acknowledged the truth of Solomon's observation in the wording of his topic, "Some Ancient Heresies in Modern Garb." So has the essayist at the Northern Wisconsin District Convention of the Missouri Synod in his paper on "Jeremiah for Our Times—Ageless Lessons from an Age-old Book." In our study of ancient Pharisaism we also discover that behind modern dress lurk many ancient heresies and that there are ageless lessons to be learned from age-old dangers to the Church that, the better we become acquainted with the doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees of old, the more clearly we shall see that all the errors and corruptions that have afflicted the Church these past 1900 odd years were contained in essence in what the Pharisees and Sadducees taught and stood for. Since the Pharisees and Sadducees there has really not been anything new under the sun. They were the original heretics. All the rest have taken leaves out of their books. And when Jesus warned, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees," he was already naming and denouncing all the dangers He foresaw would threaten His Church after He left this world.

The Church of Jesus Christ today is harassed by many formidable dangers that threaten to prevail against it. As we love that Church of which we are members by faith in our Lord and Savior, we must be on our guard against them. That means more than to cope with blatant, public foes of the Church like the pope and the Communists. It also means searching out, recognizing, and identifying subtle, insidious, hard-to-spot errors and falsehoods and to beware of them also lest they corrupt, poison, and destroy the faith by which we live in Christ. In defending the faith delivered unto us, we can do no better than to heed the words of warning our Lord once spoke to His disciples when He put them on guard against the dangers to their faith in their day, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."

Since there will not be sufficient time to review the errors of both Pharisaism and Sadducaism in this essay, we shall confine our remarks to the "Leaven of the Pharisees" under the general direction of the theme and its subdivisions.

A Time-Honored Warning Against Present Dangers to the Church From Pharisaism

I. What is Pharisaism?

- II. Where is it found?
- III. Why beware of it?
- IV. How contend with it?

I. What is Pharisaism

The strongest and severest words our Lord ever spoke against any class of people were directed against the Pharisees. Not even the women of the street, racketeering politicians, and notorious sinners were the target of such scathing denunciations as he aimed at these highly respectable people. It was not in His public preaching that He condemned the Pharisees as hypocrites, blind guides, fools, serpents, and generation of vipers, but it was even as a dinner guest in the home of a Pharisee that Jesus once upbraided his host and all those of his stripe. When you and I are invited to a dinner, we hardly dare to criticize our hosts, even when we violently disagree with them; but the Pharisees and all they stood for were so absolutely contrary to the way of life Christ taught that He could not even permit His place as a guest to deter Him from doing His utmost to convince these self-righteous people of the error of their way and to win them for His Gospel.

Who were these people whom our Savior opposed so determinedly? What made them Pharisees? How did they develop the traits we usually associate with this religious sect of Jesus' day? Before we can determine the scope of Christ's warning, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees," and apply it, we shall have to know more about them. Our first and most reliable source is the Bible, of course. Whatever else we read about them must square with the lines with which Scripture characterizes them and pictures them to us. However, since it is not the object of the sacred writers to give detailed information about this sect or to supply their historical background, we shall have to draw on other sources for a more complete picture.

"The starting point in any history of Pharisaism must of necessity be the work of Ezra," declares R. Travers Herford in his book, "The Pharisees." The life work of Ezra, one of the Old Testament sacred writers, falls into the period after the return of the Jews to Jerusalem from their seventy-year captivity in Babylon. When Ezra arrived at Jerusalem at the head of a group of exiles returning to their homeland from Babylon about the year 450 B.C., he found conditions discouraging, the people already there weak in faith and indifferent to the Law. Many were in danger of quitting the faith of their fathers entirely. Ezra then became the energetic leader of a reform movement and spiritual revival. As a scribe he also faithfully instructed his people in the Law or teaching of Moses. The renewed interest in the Law that Ezra aroused was sustained through the efforts of other scribes or teachers of the Law, whose work was all the more necessary because the people no longer spoke the Hebrew in which the Law had been written. The Law or teaching of Moses became the central rallying principle of Jewish religious life. In that Law the people rediscovered what they must live by and live for if they wished to be and remain Jews and a nation that could be the bearer of the promise of a Savior until at long last He came to His waiting people.

After the death of Ezra, scribes continued to study that Law and to teach the people. The study of the Law of Moses, one of their great links with the glorious past, became a religious passion. But in their renewed zeal they overstressed the Law. Not that they delved too deeply into its wonders or became too much absorbed in contemplating its glorious truths. That could not be wrong when the writer of Psalm 119 exulted, "O how I love Thy Law! It is my meditation all the days." But as the scribes studied it zealously and minutely, they laid undue stress on the external form of the Law, even counting the letters in it. The words themselves came to mean more than their living content. More importance was attached to the letter of the Law than to its spirit, more significance to its form than to its essence. They were like botanists who gather the beautiful flowers from the woodland and meadow, press them, mount the dry, faded specimens on sheets of paper, and then examine them under a microscope to note the details of their structure. They may learn all about their form, but they do not yet know the flower as a child may know it in its glorious beauty, caressed by the warm sun and nodded by the gentle breezes, a living, growing plant that tells of its Creator's love and wisdom and power.

Because they saw only words in the Law and not the spirit behind it and in it, they began to feel that the Law was inadequate to reveal all of God's will to the people. There seemed to be so many problems of life and

conduct which the Law of Moses did not solve. So many questions concerning the details of daily living appeared to be unanswered in the sacred writings. For example, the New Testament really enjoins only one duty upon Christians in their relations to their fellow-Christians, and that is that they love one another. Now, where the spirit of Christian love has entered their hearts, constrained by the love of Christ, their love will know how to act toward another Christian without a thousand rules of conduct to cover the many possible difficulties that may arise between Christians. There need not be a special regulation to determine what course you will follow when your neighbor takes a short cut across your lawn, or doesn't shovel the snow from his sidewalk, or parks his car too near your driveway. The law of Christian love can take care of such details without special rules of conduct, just as a mother's love for her child can be depended upon to solve the problems connected with bringing up a child without constantly referring to a rule-book. But because the quibbling scribes did not understand the spirit of the Law and were blind to its inner principles of faith and love, they could only make more rules where the exact words of the Law of Moses did not seem to cover the situation. If the literal words of the Fourth Commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother," did not expressly mention a stepfather or foster-father, they were the type of people who could be depended upon to make special laws for stepfathers and foster-fathers. When the Fifth Commandment decreed, "Thou shalt not kill," they felt that special commandments were needed to cover intent to kill, assault with a deadly weapon, angry words, hatred, revenge, and all the other related sins that Luther, who understood the spirit of the Fifth Commandment, simply included in the words, "Thou shalt not kill."

By what authority did the scribes make new precepts? They felt that the words of Deut. 17, 9–11, authorized them to add new precepts and ordinances to the Law without claiming that they were part of the Law or equal to it. Deut. 17, 9–11 reads: "And thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and enquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment. And thou shalt do according to the sentence, which they of that place which the Lord shall choose shall shew thee: and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee. According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand, nor to the left."

Unfortunately, the scribes seem to have interpreted these words as granting them the license to make their own new laws instead of teaching and explaining the spirit of the Law of Moses to the people. Accordingly, the teachers of the Law took the liberty to add more and more ordinances and precepts to the Law until there was a definite danger that the Law of Moses itself would be considered outmoded or only a relic from the past, with little practical reference to the life and thought of a later age. The ancient words of the Law were used less and less as the number of new precepts and ordinances became greater and greater. And so, in order to preserve the authority of the Law of Moses and to give authority to the new ordinances, the two were combined. The new ordinances were declared to be unwritten law, which was in harmony with and sanctioned by the ancient Law. The defenders of the new ordinances said that there had been unwritten precepts all along, that it had been traditional to interpret the Law in the past. Thus it came about that written and unwritten Law was accepted as authoritative. Tradition was put on the same plane with the written text. Tradition was elevated to a place of authority where it was binding on the people just as the Law of Moses itself was. Tradition was honored with the name of fresh inspiration from God. God was supposed to be revealing His will to His people continually according to their growing moral and spiritual understanding. Tradition thus became an accepted and a vital part of religious teaching, equal in authority to the written Law of Moses itself. Another body of man-made laws had been set up alongside the Law once given to Moses by God, so that rabbis could say that "God studies the Torah (Law of Moses) by day and the Mishnah (tradition) by night." And that was Pharisaism in its basic principle of tradition equal to Scripture. By the year 150 B.C. the Pharisaic view of tradition was firmly established and caused a split in the ranks of the religious teachers, dividing them into two opposing parties, the Pharisees defending Torah plus tradition and the Sadducees insisting on the written text alone with no additions or interpretations.

There were also other factors to account for the rise of the Pharisees, such as nationalism, which was a strong national feeling among the Jews, an intense patriotism and devotion to everything truly Jewish and a

determined opposition to everything Gentile or foreign. The Pharisees were as fiercely Jewish as Haganah or Irgun are in Palestine today. Then there was the understandable desire to preserve the priestly system. People in positions of power and influence never want to give up their privileges; just as little as the Democrats look forward to going out of office next November. And so we find the Pharisees concentrating their efforts on preserving the power and privileges of their priestly position from which they could dominate the people. It will suffice for our purposes merely to mention these factors contributing to the rise and establishment of Pharisaism among the Jews.

Now how did these Pharisees, who upheld the principle of tradition plus Scripture, get to be the kind of people whom Jesus denounced as hypocrites, vipers, blind guides, fools, etc.? They were concerned with knowing the will of God more perfectly. And each precept and each ordinance they added to their traditions gave them another opportunity to serve their God in an ever-increasing number of ways. But because they understood less and less of the spirit of the Law and got farther and farther away from the source of all true religion and worship—the revealed Word of God, they became more and more concerned with its outward form and their tradition. Their precepts stressed external things, little things, outward details more than the real essence of the Law, namely, righteous judgment, mercy, faithfulness. Once they had more or less discarded God’s Law as inadequate for their religious life, they were without that by which men alone can live before God, the Word of which Jesus said, “Man lives by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Instead, they endeavored to serve God by multiplying ceremonies and regulations, especially concerning fasting, prayer, washings, tithing, alms, and the Sabbath. Their own tradition came to mean more than the inspired Word of God. For example, “to fail to pay the full tenth of tiny garden herbs—a mortal crime! To disregard the heavenly virtues themselves—not a qualm, not a thought!” Lenski, Matt. 23. When he was asked which precept his father had honored most in his life, the son replied, “The law of the *zizith* (the Pharisaic regulation concerning tassels on garments).” Man-made regulations crowded out divine Law and were exalted above it. To this state of affairs Jesus referred when He said, “Ye have made the Law of God of none effect by your traditions.” Matt. 15, 6

The Pharisaic teaching about phylacteries shows what a wide gulf existed between the spirit of Moses and their superficially literal tradition, and what pettiness of spirit these men evidenced in their worship. No wonder they neglected God’s Law in favor of their tradition. In the Book of Exodus we read, “And it (the Law) shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes.” Any confirmand can understand this exhortation. It simply meant that the Children of Israel were to remember the Law God had given them to do it with their hands, and to study it and meditate upon it; then it would be a sign upon their hands and a memorial between their eyes. How did the Pharisees interpret these words? They copied the word of Exodus 13, 3–16; Deut. 6, 5–9; and Deut. 11, 13–21 on little strips of parchment, inserted it into little capsules, passed bands through these capsules, and then tied them on their left wrists and their foreheads. Thus the Pharisees made the Law “a sign upon their hands and a memorial between their eyes.” In addition to prescribing the construction of these phylacteries, as they were called, they had various regulations concerning the types of bows and knots with which these phylacteries were to be bound to their wrists and foreheads, whether to wear them at night or not, how broad they were to be, etc. We wonder why they didn’t complete their interpretation of Ex. 13, 9 by carrying a capsule or phylactery in their mouths too, because this verse also commanded, “that the Lord’s law may be in thy mouth.” Here we have a good example of the way the Pharisees went about interpreting the Law of Moses. The regulations concerning the phylacteries were in true Pharisaic tradition.

The more regulations and precepts they set up, the more works their worship demanded and the more they drifted into work righteousness. Their religion became an endless round of work to be done, mostly little things and comparatively easy services and obligations. The more works they performed, the more they believed they were pleasing to the Lord and the greater their reward would be. The Pharisees worked for credits and honors in divine service as students work for credits and honors in their studies. The more extra credits they could get by keeping their regulations, the higher the rating they expected God to give them.

Of course, both God and men could also see all the works they were doing; and they sought the admiration of men just as they strove to earn God's approval. "All their works they do to be seen of men." (Mt. 23, 5) They wanted to appear pious and holy before their fellow men and to impress them with their saintliness and godliness. That was the purpose of making long prayers on street corners, of enlarging their phylacteries, of making a great to-do about their alms, of wearing long tassels on their garments. Not only did they hope that men would admire and respect them for their great righteousness; they demanded special honors from them, such as the foremost places at feasts.

That this craving for recognition and praise from men could tend to hypocrisy and deceit is evident. After all, men could not look into their hearts; they could only judge their actions. What was in their hearts, what they were inwardly, was masked by what they appeared to be outwardly. An external religion of work-righteousness, such as the Pharisees practiced, deludes its followers into believing that what they are in their hearts doesn't matter so much, as long as their works pass inspection. Scrupulous and painful was their concern for external piety, while their hearts were filled with violence and wickedness. That accounts for the fact that these Pharisees could cover up a hardened heart under the cloak of charity (*e.g.*, they consecrated gifts to the temple but refused to provide for their needy parents); they could mask a cold and dead heart with devout prayers (*e.g.*, they devoured widows' houses and for a pretence made long prayers); they could hide a lustful, worldly heart and its works of darkness under the guise of self-denial and fasting and in so doing they well deserved Jesus' stinging rebuke that they were white-washed sepulchers "which indeed appear beautiful outward, but within are full of dead men's bones and of all unrighteousness." (Matt. 23, 27) But the Pharisees were blind to the utter, damnable inconsistency of straining themselves to appear righteous outwardly and being unconcerned about inner moral filth and corruption, of washing the outside of the cup and not cleansing the pollution on the inside. One wonders whether they were even aware of what a terrible indictment it was that Christ leveled at them, "Ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." (Matt. 23, 28) Certainly they could not comprehend the hopeless condemnation of such hypocrites as they were.

But the Pharisees could sink still deeper into the morass of hypocrisy. Not only did they practice conscienceless deceit on others; they even deceived themselves. The most shameless form of hypocrisy is that which carries its self-deception to the point where it believes it really is what actually it only pretends. They were like an actor taking the part of Abraham Lincoln on the stage, who actually believes that he is another Abraham Lincoln. Impossible? Man can practice no greater and more tragic deceit than that with which he deceives himself. These Pharisees really believed that they were as righteous, pious, god-fearing, devout, and consecrated as they pretended to be. The characterization of the Pharisee in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican is not overdrawn. Pharisees could be and were like that. If they were accused of avarice, fraud, treachery, cruelty, neglect of parents, even of murder and other flagrant sins, they habitually justified themselves. None could accuse them of wrong, no matter how patent and heinous—they permitted none to pass judgment on them. They declared themselves just and innocent, and—can conscience become so dull and hardened? They believed they really were blameless. Their self-justification, this whitewashing of themselves, was one of their outstanding characteristics and their fundamental sin. They judged themselves to be whole and not in need of a physician. They alone, in their estimation, were God's peculiar people. Others they considered as nothing. Toward the common people they were haughty and proud, looking upon them as accursed and unclean—"Am-haaretz," "scum of the earth," they called them. Hypocrisy never came into fuller flower than in these self-deluding, self-justifying Pharisees. "Scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites!"—again and again Jesus challenged them to deny, disprove, or repent of their hypocrisy,

Men like that must either have been affronted by John the Baptist's stern demand, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of God is at hand," or they must have stared at him with a look of blank astonishment. If someone should call you a Communist, you would look at him with the same uncomprehending eyes. What could such self-righteous hypocrites know of repentance when they honestly believed that they had no sins of which to repent? The Pharisee was simply unable to comprehend the problem of the flesh and never reckoned with original sin and the natural depravity of the human heart. The Pharisee who boasted, "God, I thank Thee that I

am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess,” would not smite upon his breast and say, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” Let the publicans and harlots repent; they needed it. What could these impenitent Pharisees know of faith in Jesus Christ as a Savior from sin and damnation when they no more believed that they needed a Savior from sin than you believe that you need treatment for leprosy? They could never understand that they needed a Savior from the sins of their proud and corrupt hearts more than the publicans and sinners did.

What could these shallow, legalistic Pharisees know of the true nature of Christ’s kingdom, of which Jesus said that “the kingdom of God cometh not with observation?” A spiritual kingdom in men’s hearts was beyond their comprehension, because they made purely outward things of spiritual matters. The only kind of kingdom of the promised Messiah they could visualize was an earthly kingdom, the kingdom of David restored, with the Messiah, the Son of David, sitting on an earthly throne and ruling His people in regal power and splendor. And because Jesus did not promise to be such an earthly Messiah, they repudiated Him, disdain His claims to be the real Messiah. In the blindness of their carnally minded, earth-bound hearts they could not see the spiritual fulfillment of the ancient prophecies in Him and damned Him for daring to claim that they were fulfilled in Him. The Pharisee could never understand Christ, the Savior from sin, the ruler of men’s hearts.

Such then were the Pharisees of Jesus’ day with whom He clashed repeatedly, and whose doctrines were so absolutely inimical to the way of repentance and faith. Laying the utmost stress on the strictest outward observance of the Law, including the traditions and regulations of the scribes and rabbis which they elevated above the spiritual Law, they were utterly self-righteous and cultivated an empty formalism of outward religious acts that was both sham and pretence and a peacock display to impress men, especially in observing ceremonies, fastings, the Sabbath, alms-givings, long prayers, tithes, etc. Arrant hypocrites they were, covering up the unrighteousness and wickedness of their hearts and lives with an outward show of false and sanctimonious piety never failing to justify themselves, and in their self-righteous pride and conceit deeming themselves even better than God required them to be. Hypocrites they were, in doctrine and life, always trying to “appear before men as they ought to be before God, yet were not.” Cremer Wörterbuch.

II.

That this Pharisaism is found in every human heart goes without saying. That it lurks in the heart of a Christian does not require any lengthier proof than to call attention to it. We are saved by grace and humbly thank God for it, but we must constantly strive against the Pharisee in us. It is the work-righteous Pharisee in us that lays great store by works and ceremonies. He is content to conform outwardly to the requirements of church membership, attending church services more or less regularly, having his children baptized and confirmed, bringing them to Sunday school or sending them to the parochial school, serving on committees, paying his dues, going to Lord’s Supper three times a year, and so forth. The Pharisee is always there to justify us, present us in a favorable light, to put the best construction on our words and actions. And he is always ready to cover up an evil, vengeful, lustful, covetous heart and a sinful life with a pious front before the world. As Cain needed the Lord’s warning against the sin that lay at the door when ill will toward his brother Abel filled his heart, so the natural Pharisaism in our hearts must be watched and suppressed constantly.

But, in particular, Jesus’ concern in bidding His disciples beware of the leaven of the Pharisees was with their doctrine. He was warning them against the teachings of the Pharisees, and most appropriately, because a Pharisaic life is the necessary fruit of Pharisaic teaching. If the disciples were influenced by the doctrine of the Pharisees, there would be no question but that they would also practice Pharisaism in their religious life. It was the false religious teachings of the Pharisees that led them into a life that was contrary to God’s commandments, without regard for His moral Law and for human rights. Doctrine, teaching, creeds, confessions have an intimate and direct connection with life and conduct. As a man believes, so he will live. Doctrine is to life what soil is to a plant.

When Jesus warned His disciples against the doctrine of the Pharisees, He had in mind anyone or any church, society, or organization that teaches what the Pharisees taught—work-righteousness, strict outward

observance of laws, superior morality, hypocrisy, emphasis on ceremonies, etc., whether in whole or in part. Anyone who makes propaganda for Pharisaic doctrine, who officially preaches it, teaches it, publishes it or any part of it, who seeks to convert others to a Pharisaic way of thinking and living is condemned by Christ in His sweeping injunction. “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.” It is bad enough to contend with the natural Pharisaism in men’s hearts, without strengthening and confirming it in them by putting the stamp of truth upon it. It is bad enough, for instance, to contend with the natural sexual lust in the human heart without justifying it and inciting it by vile and immoral novels, lust-breeding motion pictures, sexy newsstand magazines, or the like. It is hard enough to curb natural dishonesty without having to deter men who have been taught to be dishonest. We cannot wonder that Christ inveighs so strongly against those who make propaganda for Pharisaism when such propaganda makes the hearer a twofold child of hell. He who teaches Pharisaic doctrines and salvation by way of Pharisaism is taking a blind man and blindfolding him. He will never see the light of divine truth after his darkened understanding of the things of the Spirit of God has been made still darker by being taught the false doctrine of Pharisaism.

But the warning of Christ against the false doctrine of the Pharisees will be without meaning unless we now answer the question, “By whom is this Pharisaism taught?” It shall be our purpose, first of all, to discover and identify Pharisaism in church bodies. It will be natural to turn our first attention to the largest and most prominent denomination among the so-called Christian churches, namely, the Roman Catholic Church.

There are dozens of evidences that Roman Catholicism has disregarded the warning of Christ and has clasped Pharisaism to its bosom. The similarity between the Pharisees of Christ’s day and Roman Catholicism today is striking. The Pharisees held that the Old Testament Scriptures were inadequate to reveal all of God’s will to the people, and so they added to the Law of Moses and interpreted it with new rules and regulations called tradition, which God was purported to have inspired and revealed to His people. Roman Catholic teaching holds that the Church can exist without the Bible and that the Bible does not contain all of Christ’s teachings. He gave private teachings, oral teachings, to His apostles in the form of oral instructions, which they were to keep for themselves and reveal only to their successors in office (the popes). Such teachings (fasting, celibacy, Immaculate Conception of Mary, infallibility of the pope, etc.) are called traditions, which Jesus Christ supposedly gave. Such tradition is put on the same plane with the revealed Word of God and must be accepted as though it were God’s Word.

The Pharisees taught a system of work-righteousness. They sought to please God and earn His reward by diligent observance of countless details contained in their precepts and ordinances. They attained righteousness before God via the merit system. It is the teaching of the Roman Church that “Man, separated from God and deprived of original righteousness, can again become just and attain union with God by keeping the commandments which God imposes upon the faithful through the Church.” (F. E. Mayer, *American Churches—Beliefs and Practices*). Man must earn salvation by keeping the various commandments of the Church. When he receives the special grace from God which is infused or poured into him, a God-given ability to be obedient to the Church, to pray, to fast, and to perform all the commandments which the Church imposes upon man to make himself just, he is able to perform those works which merit heaven for him. And so the good Roman Catholic diligently goes to mass, suffers his penances, makes his pilgrimages, recites his acts of contrition and faith, makes the stations of the cross, repeats the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory for the intention of the Holy Father, etc., on a commercial basis—so much per hour and time and a half for overtime. It would seem that the good Roman Catholic needs to be a secretary and should have a daybook to keep his merit system records accurate and to determine his standing with God and his priest. The Roman Catholic practices his religion on a barter basis—so much service rendered for so much credit in heaven. His entire worship is influenced by Catholicism’s one central thought—salvation by good works.

The Pharisee wore his phylacteries on the forehead and left wrist, not only as a superficial reminder and fulfillment of the Law, but also as a charm against evil spirits, accidents, etc. The Roman Catholic wears his scapulars and his rosary, burns his candles, hangs a picture of the sacred heart of Jesus on the wall, adores his relics, crosses himself with holy water, carries his palm branches, and believes that these sacramentals, blessed

by the priest, are effective against dangers of crop failures, accidents, fires, sickness, evil spirits, headaches, indigestion, asthma, throat trouble, miscarriage, and the like.

The Pharisee boasted about his superior piety and holiness. The Roman Catholic monks and nuns, who are members of Rome's holy orders, pride themselves on their super-piety when they take vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty. These works are held to be so much more meritorious than those done by the ordinary run of Christians that the well-known Roman Catholic apologist, Cardinal Bellarmine, said of these holy works that they are "more difficult, better, and more perfect, and receiving a higher reward than the works commanded by Christ." Catholic saints can do so many good works that they do not require them all for their own salvation. The surplus is for sale to their brethren who are short on sanctification.

The Pharisees loved ceremonies. Their worship was afflicted with what we could call ceremonitis. Their daily lives were regulated by ceremonies—ceremonies of washing their hands whenever they might have touched a Gentile or anything belonging to him, ceremonies of cleansing dishes and utensils, prayer ceremonies, fasting ceremonies, ceremonies when they tithed, Sabbath ceremonies, ceremonies connected with their apparel, climaxed by ceremonies in their public worship that had degenerated to a mass of ritual and liturgy, every word and action of which was regulated by law.

Catholicism is likewise ceremony-ridden. The Roman Catholic does no more than take part in a ceremony when he attends church on a Sunday morning if his mere presence at Mass is a good work in which he fulfills his various obligations to God and which brings him many rewards. His sacramentals are used with little ceremonies—rosaries, scapulars, holy water, candles, palm branches, Agnus Dei, pictures and wax figures of the saints, relics, the sacred heart of Jesus. He has special ceremonies for many days of the year as any Catholic calendar plainly illustrates. Ceremony attends the blessing of the consecrated candles, the palm branches on Palm Sunday and their ashes on Ash Wednesday. There are four kinds of holy water, each blessed in a different manner. The Roman Catholic is being led to believe that performance of ceremonies will discharge all obligations of his worship and devotion. How can he help it when so many religious duties are made ceremonies?

Jesus accused the Pharisees of an ostentatious worship. They loved to make a display of their devotion, as, for example, praying on street corners, advertising their almsgiving, enlarging their phylacteries, making broad the fringes of their garments and all the other things they did to be "seen of men." What shall we say of the pomp and vain show evident in public parades like Corpus Christi (forbidden in many countries), public ado and fanfare like the Eucharistic congresses held at Mundelein, Illinois, and St. Paul, Minnesota, not too long ago, publicity for Roman Catholic charity (even if community subscriptions must build their hospitals for them), soliciting the attendance of city officials and congratulations from public dignitaries when they dedicate their churches and schools, the conspicuous attire of priests and monks and nuns which remind the world of their saintliness, public praying of the rosary, the eye-catching, gorgeous robes and vestments adorning the persons of the priests, bishops, and cardinals. If we recall the appointment of a number of cardinals by the pope two years ago (1946) and all the rotogravure publicity connected with it, we have seen a typical example of a Roman ecclesiastical show.

Pharisaism was a legalistic religion, a tangled maze of laws, commandments, ordinances, precepts, and regulations that no strict Pharisee could follow without an indexed handbook in his pocket. There were hundreds upon hundreds of details to be observed in the Sabbath rest law alone. Once the Roman Church had established the right to prescribe commandments that the faithful must observe to make themselves just, it too became burdened with laws, regulations, commandments, and precepts. Without a calendar or a handbook the devout Roman Catholic will not know how or when to fast, for example. He will need to consult his rule book to know that broth made of meat is on the forbidden list on a day of abstinence, but beef gravy may be eaten, or that extract of beef may not be eaten, while gelatin may. He will have to read his handbook to know whether the special dispensations excusing workingmen from many of the laws of fasting and abstinence apply to him or not. There he will read that a teacher, a doctor, a dentist, a businessman, for example, is not considered a workingman. Without entering into the details of other worship requirements, we need only make mention of the Roman Catholic penances after confession, the various prayers, the Mass, the home devotions, the use of

holy water, the preparation of the sick room for extreme unction, the burning of candles, and the like, to indicate how the Roman Catholic, like the Pharisee, is burdened with a multitudinous variety of laws.

By elevating tradition to the level of Scriptures and even above it, by introducing ceremony after ceremony, by devising scores of new laws, and then by teaching a righteousness of the Pharisees produced a religion that was wholly external. It was formalism which demanded strict observance of external ceremonies and regulations but did not make worship a matter of the heart, thus coming under the condemnation of Christ, "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth and honoreth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me" (Matth. 15). Who will deny that Catholicism, which also exalts tradition alongside Scripture, stresses ceremony, multiplies the laws of the Church, and teaches that man is justified by keeping the commandments which God imposes on the faithful through the Church, in other words teaches salvation by works, is not making religion an external thing, an empty form, as the Pharisees did? That many of its followers practice it as if only the external, formal requirements matter is well known. More than once my car has had to thread its way slowly through the lines of cars parked at a country tavern after Mass on a Sunday morning. These good Roman Catholics went to Mass, discharged their obligations, performed their good work and then gave the impression that what they did the rest of the day or during the week had no more connection with Sunday worship than answering the telephone has with sweeping the floor, except that a housewife does both. Despite Catholic claims to a higher morality, the delinquency problems and the number of penitentiary cases among its members prove that a Roman Catholic profession is all-too-often an external thing. And if its members take advantage of its externalism, the Roman Catholic Church has only itself to blame because it fosters Pharisaic principles and doctrines.

We sum up our paralleling of Pharisaism and Catholicism by declaring them blood relatives. Were the Pharisees living today and were they inclined to renounce Judaism and to join a so-called Christian Church, they would feel drawn to the Roman Catholic Church. They would feel most at home in it.

We do not say that Protestant bodies (we are not considering Lutherans now) are free from all Pharisaism. They do not exhibit it to the degree the Roman Catholic Church does, but it is still there. Protestantism has its legalistic side too. Some of you have read the book *Papa Was a Preacher*. You may recall seeing on the rear of the book's jacket a sketch of a long-legged, severe-miened Methodist preacher, engaged in his Saturday night chores of polishing nearly a dozen pairs of shoes for his generously sized family. The reading matter under the sketch quotes his daughter as saying that her father was careful to complete all such tasks by the stroke of midnight on Saturday night. There is the incidental remark about a Baylor University professor, a fanatical worshipper of the English poet, Robert Browning, who often stayed at his books until 3 a. m. to learn all about Browning but knocked off at midnight Saturday. "His Congregationalist mother taught him that Sunday was a day of rest. When the clock struck midnight again on Sunday, he often went back to his books," (*Time*, May 17, 1948, p. 44.)

Protestant churches have long sought to enforce Sunday as a day of rest by enacting laws forbidding work on that day, as if Sunday were kept holy chiefly by not working, while God makes the hearing and learning of His Word the all-important thing on a Sunday or any day of worship which the Church may establish. Not too many years ago a Scotch sea captain, a member of the Presbyterian Church, was severely reprimanded and fined for arranging to leave port with his ship on a Sunday. Members of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland offended good taste if they read a newspaper or a novel on a Sunday. Family outings were frowned upon. In our country we heard of Sunday Blue Laws which prohibit baseball games and movies on a Sunday. This making Sunday a day of rest by laws reminds one of the Pharisees, whose Sabbath laws even forbade carrying such burdens as two horsehairs, or enough ink to write two letters of the alphabet, wearing a gold plug in a tooth, restrained women from using a looking glass on the Sabbath because they might discover a white hair and attempt to pull it out (which would be a piece of work), and so on.

These Sabbath regulations are of a kind with the legalistic spirit of Reformed denominations that are evident in their efforts in behalf of prohibition, the anti-saloon league, the WCTU, believing that by laws they can reform the drinking habits of a tavernizing American people.

Their legalistic principles are also observed in their attitude toward church contributions, which they often regulate as much by the ten per cent rule as by love and gratitude. Recently the Methodist minister in town informed me with a distinct note of self-satisfaction and duty-done in his voice that he had contributed his tithe the past year.

Protestant churches demand that the State pass laws to force all people to lead what in their opinion is a Christian life and to compel them to serve the Lord. In line with this legalism is the endeavor to make religious instruction in the public schools, prohibition, and the observance of Sunday compulsory for all. Religion is made a duty rather than the free exercise of a grateful heart that believes the Gospel.

Among the Methodists and those who left the Methodist Church to join more sanctified Holiness and Pentecostal groups like the Church of God, the Assemblies of God, and dozens of other groups of “sanctified believers” like them, the theory of perfectionalism is prevalent. They believe that people can become so steadily and uniformly devoted to God that they can be so perfect that they will not willfully commit sin, that they can be so filled with love that their souls are free from all selfish interests. In other words, this group of Protestants believes in a rare piety and superior saintliness. In order to produce this saintliness they also use legalistic methods, making rules that forbid the wearing of jewelry, the use of intoxicants, tobacco, and even of soft drinks, prescribe reading the Bible, praying, prayer meetings, occupying themselves with pious conversation, etc. When they believe that they can attain Christian perfection by keeping such rules, they are treading in the footsteps of the Pharisees, who in their scrupulous and painful concern for outward piety believed that the way to holiness and sinlessness lay in the observation of their many precepts and ordinances.

Among the Reformed bodies the Holiness sects also believe that every statement of the Bible must be taken in its literal sense. One group refuses to pay its ministers a salary on the basis of Matth. 19, 21, which reads, “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me.” Others refuse medical care, because Christ has promised to answer our prayers. Most of them practice foot washings. A large number believes that Mark 16, 17–18 is to be applied literally without noting the purpose of the promise, considering to whom it was addressed, or heeding the warning not to tempt the Lord. “They shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” You have read about fanatic Pentecostals in Kentucky and Tennessee who play with rattlesnakes in their services. Last year one of them died as a result of drinking poison on the strength of Mark 16. Such literal reading of the Bible passages without taking into consideration the circumstances under which they were written and the spirit behind them is Pharisaic. Remember the phylacteries.

In general, there is a tendency to externalism among the Reformed churches, of stressing outward organization, rules, and disciplines, public prayer, external piety and worship, reminding us of another characteristic of the Pharisees, who fostered a worship that was only external form.

Much of Protestantism was genuinely Christian. There was a clear testimony to the truth that Christ is our only Savior; they loved Christ with a deep devotion; God’s Word was held in the highest regard; a passion for souls made them zealous missionaries; much of their piety was fine and their own brotherliness merited imitation. But they did not escape the leaven of Pharisaism with its legalism, superior piety, and externalism. It seems to me that the fact that Protestant pastors can feel at home in Pharisaic lodges and can blithely cooperate with Pharisaic societies and organizations is evidence that they are no longer really aware of Pharisaism because they have been infected by it.

If Pharisaism has vitiated and undermined the Christian faith in the Church of Rome and much of Protestantism, we should be only deluded Pharisees ourselves if we should suppose that it could not creep into our Lutheran Church, even though our Lutheran confessions bar every door by which it could enter. Our greatest danger in our Lutheran Church is to be contaminated by the religion of the Reformed churches, which is tainted by Pharisaism. And that the literature of the Reformed churches which is found on every Lutheran pastor’s book shelves for lack of an adequate library of sound Lutheran theology in the English language, is to a certain extent responsible for certain unwholesome tendencies in sermons from Lutheran pulpits is not difficult to prove. Supposedly Lutheran sermons, especially by Lutheran preachers outside the Synodical Conference,

have contained too much of the moralizing ‘do good’ and ‘be good’ Reformed theology and not enough of the preaching of Christ for us, the Christ who redeems and justifies us. *Concordia Theological Monthly* (1933, 921): “The most alarming thing that I have noticed in sermons is the influence of Calvinism.... Not that it is to be found so much in preaching that which is false in a direct way, but rather in omitting that which should be brought out. For example, preaching sanctification without preceding justification, not recognizing the fact that the Holy Spirit works only through the means of grace, etc.” There is the ever-present danger of legalism, of making the Gospel a law and of making the Church a legislative body with power to regulate the lives and affairs of Christians by law instead of using the Gospel to increase the love of Christ in the hearts of the people and depending upon that love to do the works that need to be done. Some of us prefer to have some higher authority in the Church lay down a program for us and demand that we conform to it, penalizing those who do not (*e.g.*, the Synod Building Fund). We frequently prefer to be legislated into works of righteousness rather than to do them because our hearts “throb and surge with the Spirit’s power.” But legislating Christian life and conduct is Reformed Pharisaism; we must ever guard our freedom against it.

Tithing has strong backing in certain Lutheran quarters. There is an increasing tendency to regulate church contributions by the ten percent rule instead of regulating it by Christian love and gratitude alone, as if the Gospel cannot be relied upon to produce the proper fruits unless our love is forced into the mold of certain arbitrary requirement. “The Gospels mention tithing only three times, in three condemnations of the Pharisees all three scathing in their severity.” (Lenski, Luke 11.) Though all the Apostles were originally Jews, used to tithing, not one of them intimated with as much as one word that tithing might be an aid to Christian giving. When Paul encouraged the Corinthians to give generously for the relief of their brethren in Judea, he outlined a totally different method. It was the Pharisee who laid inordinate stress on tithing, even counting out every tenth garden seed in his zeal to give his legal portion to the Lord.

Another Pharisaic trend in Reformed churches, which is discernible in certain parts of Lutheranism, is the movement toward pietism with its appeal to the pious, holy feelings of Christians. Emotional and inspirational sermons which base their appeal on the emotions instead of on the solid foundation of God’s Word will produce Christians who not only believe that they are holy because they feel holy but are also holier than their fellow Christians. The over-emphasis on piety is Reformed and Pharisaic.

It will not do any harm to remind ourselves of the Pharisaic trait of exclusiveness, of considering themselves the elite in religious circles and Jewish society. It will not do our relations with other Lutheran synods any good and still less will it do us any good to esteem ourselves in the Wisconsin Synod as the “cream of the cream,” as the French saying has it, of Lutheranism. We have too many faults of our own—lukewarm charity, stubborn individualism, non-cooperativeness, intolerance, tardiness to exalt ourselves above other Lutheran bodies whose doctrine and practice we rightfully condemn. At the same time chauvinism, exaggerated patriotism and loyalty to the Lutheran Church, is unhealthy. It can engender a Pharisaic pride in a membership that is purely external, an empty boasting of belonging to the true church.

To mention another Pharisaism, there is the growing emphasis on ritual and ceremony under the guise of going back to Luther’s day when the Lutheran Church was just crawling out of its Roman Catholic shell and still outwardly observing many Roman Catholic ceremonies. In Synodical Conference churches we hear of perpetual lamps burning, custodians crossing themselves before exhibiting sacramental vessels to visitors, altar boys, marriage communion for the bride and groom, and, in general, the dangerous tendency to crowd out the sermon by expanding the liturgy. A Synodical Conference pastor was chiding those in his congregation who were criticizing the length of the altar service. He reminded his congregation that on the foregoing Sunday they had been required to kneel only eleven minutes and to stand only forty-seven minutes. No wonder a young man who left that congregation to join the Catholic Church felt very much at home in it. It behooves us to beware of drifting into Pharisaic ceremony, which is death to the true worship “in spirit and in truth” of which Jesus speaks. Rich, beautiful, historic liturgies may have a powerful appeal to our finer religious senses, but they are always fraught with the Pharisaic and Roman Catholic peril of being considered something good and God-pleasing in themselves.

One more thing—the publicity craze in the Lutheran Church today is reminiscent of the publicity the Pharisees loved so much. They desired to be seen of men and to have their deeds admired by the public. Likewise many of our zealous Lutherans, who want the public to “sit up and take notice” of what the Lutheran Church is doing, crave and solicit public approval and admiration of the great things Lutheranism is accomplishing. Here is a sample: “When the Tri-State Lutheran Conference met in St. Mark’s Church, McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania, the *Gazette* gave the meeting front page publicity with a picture of the conference and divine service,”—an item that filled the heart of the man from whose column I have quoted it with deep appreciation and keen delight. The Lord is in danger of playing second fiddle to the Lutheran Church.

There are dangers to our Lutheran Church from Pharisaism. We ought not to pride ourselves on being a lump of dough that no Pharisaic leaven can permeate.

As long as the Gospel is still preached in at least its essential form in both Roman Catholic and Reformed church bodies, *i.e.*, as long as the heart of the Gospel, that Jesus Christ is mankind’s only Savior, is publicly taught, the Holy Spirit with His cleansing power will be at work in such churches preserving many souls in saving faith despite the soul-destroying leaven of the Pharisees promulgated side by side with saving truth. But where any other type of religion is taught than the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which alone can oppose Pharisaism successfully and effectively, Pharisaism will flourish like the green bay tree. Natural religion does not have in itself the perception or the power to rise above Pharisaism. It knows no other way to approach God or to do His will. The hearts of men cannot be enlightened nor can their eyes be opened to the deadly doctrines of Pharisaism unless the Holy Spirit can operate through the Gospel. The farther men get away from the Gospel, the more surely they fall into the arms of Pharisaism. And so we find it to be the case in such semi-religious bodies as the lodges.

When we use the adjective “semi-religious,” we wish to distinguish lodges from wholly religious organizations like churches. Lodges may be organized primarily for social or business purposes. Many of them consider their fraternal insurance program their strongest inducement for membership. But because lodges do teach a religion, because they concern themselves with obligations to God, because they have public prayers, because their meeting places are called temples, because they have chaplains, priests, Worshipful Masters, because they talk about immortality and resurrection and heaven, because they equip their meeting places with Bibles and frequently quote Scriptures, they too will fall into the general scope of this topic, which is to expose Pharisaism wherever it is taught as a religious way of life.

Masonry is the mother of lodgery. In the past century and a quarter this fruitful mother has given birth to a large number of secret orders, all of which inherit their religious and moral character from this parent. Lodges like the Red Men, Knights Templars, Shriners, Eastern Star, and others, are directly controlled by the Freemasons. Many others were founded by Freemasons, who left the stamp of Masonry upon the character of the lodges they founded. Freemasons are still high-ranking members of their executive boards. Among such Masonic-influenced lodges are the Knights of Pythias, Modern Woodmen, Woodmen of the World, Moose, Elks, Eagles, Owls, Royal Neighbors, etc.

The religion of the Masonic order is work-righteousness, which in turn is Pharisaism. “It is the object of the speculative Mason, by a uniform tenor of virtuous conduct, to receive, when his allotted course of life is passed, the inappreciable reward, from his Celestial Grand Master, of ‘Well done, thou good and faithful servant’.” (*Lexicon*, pp. 450. 451.) Buck, *Mystic Masonry*, p. 175, says: “To transform means to regenerate, and this comes by trial, by effort, by self-conquest, by sorrow, by disappointment, failure and a daily renewal of the conflict. It is thus that man must work out his own salvation.” The conclusion of a prayer from the *Masonic Burial Services* reads, “... and in Thy favor, may we be received into Thine everlasting kingdom, to enjoy, in union with the souls of our departed friends, the just reward of a pious and virtuous life. Amen.” “Possibly the boldest statement of all is this bit of poetry which the *Quarterly Bulletin* of April, 1922, dedicated to the Masonic dead of the State of Iowa:

Their lives, a pattern perfect,
Whereby to shape our own,

Will be their pass to enter
 Before that great white throne.
 ‘Well done, ye faithful servants!’
 The welcome words will be,
 And thus at the hands of the Maker
 Receive their Master’s Degree.”

(*Is Masonry a Religion?*—Theo. Graebner.)

In all Masonic religious literature there is not a word about repentance, about salvation through Christ, about forgiveness, about saving faith as a requirement for salvation. The Freemason believes in “virtuous conduct,” “working out his own salvation,” “the just reward of a pious and virtuous life,” “their lives a pattern perfect,” as the way to eternal life. By his character, by his good conduct, by his good works, he merits heaven. What is this if it is not Pharisaic work-righteousness? Freemasonry has no more room for Jesus Christ in its religion than the Pharisees had for Him in their self-righteous system. Freemasonry is Pharisaism through and through—to its hypocritical end.

A few quotations will suffice to show that other lodges adhere to the work-righteousness principles of their Masonic teachers. *Credo of the Loyal Order of the Moose*: “I wish to live here and now up to my highest and best, believing that this is the fittest preparation for a life to come.” Knights of Pythias ritual: “So live that, when you come to the river that marks the unknown shore, your hands may be filled with deeds of charity, the golden keys that open the palace of eternity.” The invocation from the Red Men’s ritual: “Enable us to prove by our good works that we are brethren, and show the stranger that with us virtue, charity, love, peace, freedom, and friendship dwell.” Daughters of Rebecca: “Her zealous work in the interests of our beloved Order and her life, laden with gentleness and kind deeds, has won her the plaudits of the good Master.” A recent burial ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars: “Let us, each one, be so loyal to every virtue, so true to every friendship, so faithful in the remaining marches, that he will be ready to fall out and take his place in the Great Review hereafter, not in doubt, but with faith that the merciful Captain of our salvation will call him to the fraternity which on earth and in heaven remains unbroken.” From the *Authentic History of the BPOE* (p. 436): “He may know no more of isms, prayer books and catechisms, or of creed affiliations than a goat. But his neighbor never quarrels with the conduct of the morals of the fellow with the antlers on his coat.” “When he dies and goes above, Brother Elk, To the golden Lodge of Love, Brother Elk, Does St. Peter hesitate? No, he swings the pearly gate: ‘Come in, you don’t have to wait, Brother Elk.’ “ If we can believe their rituals, no lodge member in good standing will have to stand in line at the pearly gates. Heaven is certified to them on the basis of their excellent works and virtuous lives. Pharisees would have been good lodge brothers.

The charity of the lodges is generally modeled after the Pharisaic pattern. Of Pharisaic charity Jesus said, “If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men” (Matth. 5, 46; 6, 1. 2). Pharisaic charity and benevolence was restricted to their own select group, and it was ostentatious to the point of nausea. They made sure that their gifts had all the publicity possible. Isn’t lodge charity very much like that? It often doesn’t go out to all men as God prescribes, being restricted to the members of the order who have paid their dues and premiums faithfully. Each member is willing to impart some good to his fellows, expecting to receive good equally. They give what has been paid for. A revealing limitation of their charity is the refusal of Masons, for example, to admit into membership “old men in their dotage, all deformed persons.” The Odd Fellows exclude “the deaf, the blind, and all others that on account of their poverty cannot pay their dues.” Such applicants for membership are liabilities who can’t be counted on to pay as much as they get. In this sense lodge charity is as exclusive as Pharisaic charity. At the same time it trumpets its other claims before the world after the fashion of the Pharisee. There is Mooseheart, the home for the widows and orphans of members of the Moose Lodge. It’s been the prize exhibit of the Moose Lodge for many years and has gained them many members. Typical of the fanfare surrounding lodge charity to local hospitals was a picture I saw in the *Elks Magazine*. When the Elks

Lodge of Garrett, Indiana, presented a \$586.00 check to Sister M. Sylvia of Sacred Heart Hospital to pay for the hospital's oxygen machine, they lined up eleven Elk officials for the news picture, assuring the local ample publicity in the community. The *Elk Magazine* in which this picture was published displayed a dozen more charity pictures in the same ostentatious way. Pharisees cannot help but do such things to be seen of men.

We turn our attention from the Pharisaic lodges to youth organizations. The De Molay, which is nothing but a junior Masonic order, a preparatory school for Freemasonry, which sponsors and controls it, learns its Pharisaic work-righteousness religion from its parent. Concerning membership in that order Dr. Theo. Graebner writes, "... the boys who join it are not only in danger of being lost to the Church, but are lost already, having openly joined those who teach another way of morality and salvation." That other way is, of course, the Pharisaic way. And if girls can become Pharisees too, then Job's Daughters, the girls' novitiate for the female Masonic Order of the Eastern Star, will not fail to train them as boys are inculcated in De Molay. Other junior orders, like those of the Elks, Foresters, Knights of Pythias, which are supervised by parent lodges, fall into the same condemnation. Pharisaism is their official religion.

Without having attempted to present more than a very general and scanty summary of Pharisaism in lodgery's senior and junior orders, we shall proceed to examine a much-discussed problem child among the youth organizations, the Boy Scouts of America, including at the same time the Girl Scouts of America, their feminine counterpart. The aim and purposes of the Boy Scouts of America are given in their constitution. Article II reads: "The purpose of this corporation shall be to promote, through organization and cooperation with other agencies, the ability of boys to do things for themselves and others, to train them in Scoutcraft, and to teach them patriotism, courage, self-reliance, and kindred virtues, using the methods which are now in common use by Boy Scouts, by placing emphasis upon the Scout Oath and Laws for character development, citizenship training, and physical fitness." Article III, Section 1, reads: "The Boy Scouts of America maintain that no boy can grow into the best kind of citizenship without recognizing his obligation to God." In the first part of the Boy Scout's Oath or Pledge the boy promises, "On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country, and to obey the Scout Law." "The recognition of God as the ruling and leading power of the universe, and the grateful acknowledgment of His favors and blessings, are necessary to the best type of citizenship and are wholesome things in the education of the growing boy... The Boy Scouts of America therefore recognize the religion element in the training of the boy, but is absolutely non-sectarian in its attitude toward that religious training. Its policy is that the organization or institution with which the Boy Scout is connected shall give definite attention to his religious life."

Scouting, then, according to its constitution, has a strong moral and religious element, which it employs in character building and citizenship training. "Character development is the real objective of the Boy Scout movement." "The entire organization is a machine capable of working wonders in the moral regeneration of the American boy." Scouting, to quote another appraisal, gives boys "a true appreciation for the moral and spiritual values in life." With this presentation of Scouting the Manual, "Scouting in the Lutheran Church," agrees as it concludes a paragraph on "What Is Scouting," with the words, "Add to that (the romance, nature-lore, service, character building, and citizenship training) the religious emphasis of the Scout Promise and Law, which recognize above all else the necessity for the fulfillment of one's duty to God, and the picture of Scouting is complete."

The conclusion we are interested in drawing from these remarks by or about the Boy Scout organization is this: Scouting has a religious character. It has definite pronouncements on "God," "duty to God," "obedience to the basic Ten Commandments and God's larger command to brotherhood," "growing in favor with God and man," "active part in things religious and spiritual," "the real man in conscious harmony with his God," and others. Scouting uses moral and spiritual means to develop character and to train for citizenship. That puts it into competition with the Church, which also uses spiritual means to develop character. The important questions are: Does Scouting do this in the same way as the Church? Does Scouting enable a boy to do his duty to God and man as the Church does? Does Scouting produce boys who grow in favor with God and man as the Church does? In answering these questions, I shall follow out the lead given in the manual, "Scouting in the Lutheran Church," in its appraisal of "The Soul of Scouting." "Every educational system implies a philosophy, every

institution has its own spirit, or better, its soul, by which it lives and expresses itself. The soul of Scouting, its vital principle and its living expression, is the Scout Promise and the Scout Law.” If we want to know how Scouting purposes to accomplish its moral and spiritual aims, we can do no better than to examine its Oath and Law. They will tell us how Scouting goes about attaining its lofty objective of making its boys model children of God. The Scout Oath and Scout Law are Scout doctrine.

The Scout Oath reads: “On my honor I will do my best—1. To do my duty to God and country, and to obey the Scout Law; 2. To help other people at all times; 3. To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.” Since points two and three are really included in point one, and because they refer to duties not primarily in the field of religion (physically strong, mentally alert), with which we have no quarrel, we shall ignore them here. So the Boy Scout swears (promises) on his honor to do his best to do his duty to God (we omit country because that is a civic matter), and to obey the Scout Law. By “duty to God” the Boy Scout means: Believe in God; obey His basic Ten Commandments and His larger command to brotherhood; keep yourself in conscious harmony with God and your fellow men; take an active part in the work of the Church; respect the convictions of others in matters of custom and religion. In other words, the Boy Scout believes that he can do everything or practically everything that God requires of him. He believes that he is able to fulfill God’s basic Ten Commandments, to do and to be, as God wants him to do and to be. He believes that he can become a good child of God by promising to be and by trying his best to be.

He intends to do his duty to God “on his honor.” That means, as the “Handbook for Scoutmasters” explains it, that the Scout can be trusted to be truthful and honest. He has it in himself to do as he promises. On the basis of his good character, his dependability, his moral principles, he can do what God requires of him.

On his honor, by all that he is, he also swears to keep the Scout Law. The Scout Law has twelve points: 1. A Scout is trustworthy. 2. A Scout is loyal. 3. A Scout is helpful. 4. A Scout is friendly. 5. A Scout is courteous. 6. A Scout is kind. 7. A Scout is obedient. 8. A Scout is cheerful. 9. A Scout is thrifty. 10. A Scout is brave. 11. A Scout is clean. 12. A Scout is reverent. Note the wording in each part of the Scout Law: “A Scout *is* trustworthy, a Scout *is* helpful,” etc. It’s not merely a way of suggesting to him that he ought to be trustworthy, helpful, etc., as we suggest to tearful little Johnny when we say, “Big boys don’t cry.” The “Handbook for Scoutmasters” comments, “The Scout Law is a statement of facts, of what is expected of a Scout. ‘A Scout IS Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful,’ etc.” In other words, Scouts are what they promise to be. They are as good as they say they are in their Scout Law. This is not an unfair conclusion to draw. We are not misrepresenting them at all when we hold that they believe they are fulfilling their Scout Law and really are clean in body and thought, or reverent toward God, for example. Not when the Handbook boldly declares, “Before a Scout can qualify for a higher class, ‘definite, concrete, satisfactory evidence,’ must be furnished by ‘parents, school teacher, employer, pastor, Sunday school teacher, Scoutmaster, member of his Troop Committee, or others,’ that the Scout has *actually* put into practice in his daily life the ideals and principles of the Scout Oath and Law, the motto ‘Be Prepared’ and the Daily Good Turn.” Is the Scout as good as he promised on his honor to be? He must be or he will never get to be a first-class Scout or achieve any of the other higher ranks of Scouting. Even if he is actually not a model boy, he certainly is taught to think that he is. Doesn’t the fact that he has been advanced to a higher rank presuppose such an achievement as living up to the Scout Oath and Law?

Much is made of Point Three of the Scout Law—“A Scout is helpful.” In order to be truly helpful, a Scout must, as this point is interpreted, “do at least one Good Turn to somebody every day.” The “Good Turn” is important, for the Handbook for Boys reads, “The final test of a good Scout is in his doing of Daily Good Turns.” These Daily Good Turns receive added prominence in the Boy Scout’s eyes when he records them, reports on them at his meetings, and receives credits for them. “Boy Scouts will take entries of service hours in a diary, on the dates upon which service has been rendered.” (“Scouting in the Lutheran Church.”) Doing a Daily Good Turn is a hallmark of Scouting, a distinctive feature of this youth movement, which it considers its own particular contribution to the means by which a boy grows “... in stature, in strength, in knowledge, in wisdom, in favor with God and man.” As well imagine a sergeant without stripes as a Scout without his Good Turn. The Good Turn is of such vital importance in the Scout program of character development because

Scouting holds that each boy's good deeds are a means of developing the elements of good in him. By daily practice in doing good, he becomes a better and better child of God and citizen of his country. That is Scouting if the Oath and Law are its soul.

Now is such Scouting Pharisaic? Comparisons may be odious, but they must be made. The Pharisee believed in doing his duty to God; so does the Boy Scout. The Pharisee believed in doing his duty to God by being righteous and doing good; so does the Boy Scout. The Pharisee believed that he could keep the Law and the ordinances and precepts of his Tradition; the Boy Scout believes that he can keep God's basic Ten Commandments and his Scout Law. The Pharisee believed that he could become righteous by keeping the Law; so does the Boy Scout believe that he can achieve moral excellence by keeping his Law. The Pharisee believed that he could satisfy God's requirements by righteousness of the Law; so does the Boy Scout. The Pharisee expected men to praise him for his faithful observance of the Law; so does the Boy Scout who is advanced on the basis of credits earned by keeping his Law. The Pharisee prayed and gave his alms ostentatiously; the Boy Scout copies down his Good Turns and reports on them. The Pharisee neglected the basic Ten Commandments in keeping his Tradition (e.g., Corban); the Boy Scout tends to neglect the basic Ten Commandments in his Good Turns (e.g., on page 26 of the "Handbook for Boys" fifty conspicuous Good Turns are listed, but none of them is everyday chores for parents). The Pharisee made his worship of God outward and mechanical; the Boy Scout does his duty to God and his fellowmen by a mechanical Good Turn a day. The Pharisee believed that he had no original sin; so does the Boy Scout. The Pharisee sought righteousness before God without repentance, forgiveness, faith in Jesus Christ as the Redeemer from sin, the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in his heart, as does the Boy Scout. The Pharisee considered himself to be a member of an exclusive group, better than others. Scouting leads the Boy Scout to believe that he is better than other boys. The Pharisee's phylacteries, fringes, and tassels inflated his self-esteem; so does the Boy Scout uniform ("When the Scout wears the uniform he feels just a little more important"—"Scouting in the Lutheran Church"). The Pharisee's religion made him self-righteous; so does the Boy Scout's. The Pharisee's religion led to hypocrisy; so does the Boy Scout's.

The Boy Scouts of America (and their feminine counterpart, the Girl Scouts of America) are the Junior Order of the Pharisees. Their work-righteous principles, shallow, unscriptural conception of duty to God, external, mechanical means of attaining righteousness, exclusiveness, pride, and hypocrisy identify them with the Pharisees of old, as the *Chicago Tribune* keenly analyzed years ago when it declared, "A simpler and more effective way than this to manufacture Pharisees is not on record!" And Boy Scouting has manufactured them. The sad realization of this fact prompted a contributor to the *Presbyterian* to remark, "I am bold to say that more good would be accomplished if one boy were taught that he is a sinner and has a soul to be saved than to teach a million boys to say that they are 'brave, true, honest, reverent'."

Scouting has made one of the fundamental purposes of its movement the development of good citizenship. It "points the way of good citizenship through service." ("Scouting in the Lutheran Church.") Scouting aims to make our future citizens loyal, cooperative, reliable, obedient to constituted authority, thrifty, progressive, charitable, and law-abiding. But Scouting is not alone in its endeavor to train good citizens. Other organizations, societies, and agencies have also made the upholding of the ideals of good citizenship and training for citizenship their professed purpose—among them are our public schools, patriotic organizations, civic clubs, young people's organizations, etc. In their own way the Lions, Rotarians, 4-H, Homemakers, American Legion, Junior Chambers of Commerce, and similar groups try to promote better citizenship among their own members and in their communities. In doing so they are fostering a certain kind of righteousness—civic righteousness, the righteousness a state desires to inculcate in its citizens. Since the word "righteousness" should have become suspect in our ears by this time, we shall continue our investigation of this brand of righteousness also to determine whether it is Pharisaic or not. Is the morality taught by the public school Pharisaic? Is civic righteousness a kind of self-righteousness? May Christians promote and support such righteousness and morality? It is such questions that we shall attempt to answer in taking up the subject of civic righteousness as it is related to Pharisaism.

Just what is this civic righteousness? In brief, we may say that the fact that this world is still fit to live in is due to civic righteousness. Although man by nature is an enemy of God, wholly inclined to evil, a wild beast,

so that Scripture can conclude, "... the whole world lieth in wickedness"; nevertheless things run along pretty well in this world. Its inhabitants work with each other and for each other. Crime is a problem, but most of us have not been directly or indirectly affected by it in our daily lives. On the whole, men are courteous and friendly to each other, and they can trust each other. That this world is a tolerable place in which to live in spite of the corruption of men's hearts is due to a blessing of God, civic righteousness. God makes such civic righteousness possible by two of His institutions—the family and the government. As long as these function, there will be relative order and quiet in the world. In order to preserve these important institutions which uphold law and order among men, God planted certain desires and impulses in the human heart—the desire for self-preservation; love for home, family, and country; ambition; and especially a sense of honor. Men will generally be decent citizens because they have a sense of honor; they do not want to lose their self-respect or sacrifice their good name. As a result of the divine establishment of these two institutions and the God-given impulses that preserve them, we have a civic righteousness among men, so that we find a certain degree of loyalty and patriotism, responsibility, honesty, cooperation, charity, obedience, courtesy, thrift, and morality in this world.

This civic righteousness is a good thing for the human race. It is a good thing for the social well being of a community. Life in a community where civic righteousness is not being practiced will be intolerable. Life, home, and property will be in constant jeopardy, and human society will be like a pack of vicious, snarling dogs.

It is also a good thing in God's government of the world. Certainly as those laws of the land are good that are in agreement with God's moral law, so all morality and righteousness is good that is in agreement with the Law of God written in the heart of natural man. St. Paul avers that the Gentiles can do by nature such things as are contained in the Law of God (Rom. 2, 14). Certainly, then, God approves of their civic righteousness inasmuch as it agrees with His moral Law, which demands honesty, charity, obedience, loyalty, etc. God wants civic righteousness upheld according to the Fourth Commandment, for the practice of civic righteousness will flow from obedience to the Fourth Commandment. Where the authority of family and government are respected, there will be such righteousness.

Our Confessional writings declare (Apology, Art. IV): "Now we think concerning the righteousness of reason (civic righteousness) thus, namely, that God requires it, and that, because of God's commandments, the honorable works which the Decalog commands must necessarily be performed... We cheerfully assign this righteousness of reason the praises that are due it ... and God also honors it with bodily rewards." Civic righteousness would not be rewarded if it were not a good thing.

We can therefore appreciate the work of the 4-H Club, which seeks to develop the talents of rural boys and girls for greater usefulness, teaches them how to live with their neighbors and to cooperate with them, to share responsibilities for community improvement, builds their health for a better America, instills a love of home and country in them. Those are fine, worthy ideals; and all honor to those who succeed in some measure in inculcating these principles of civic righteousness in our rural youth. We can respect the Lions, Kiwanis, and Rotarians for what they are attempting to do to improve human relations in their communities. If they endeavor to "promote the theory and practice of good government and good citizenship; to take an active interest in the civic, commercial, social, and moral welfare of the community; to encourage efficiency and promote high ethical standards in business and professions" (quoted from the Lion's Club Magazine), they are serving a good purpose in their communities. We cannot condemn service men for trying to promote better Americanism. We can give the public schools credit for their part in promoting civic righteousness. "The state must, for its own preservation, provide education for its people. It must not only try to produce intelligent citizens, wise and learned officials, judges, and so on; it must also inculcate moral principles. The state must teach that honesty is a good policy, must teach that murder is a crime, and that obedience is a fine civic virtue. The welfare of the state depends on the civic virtue of its citizens. In fact, it is God's will that the state teach and enforce the law which God has written in the hearts of all men." ("Christian Education," E. E. Kowalke. *Lutheran School Bulletin*, May, 1940.)

As citizens who also have certain duties toward the affairs of this world and our government, we Christians may not only take part in such efforts to promote civic righteousness, but we may also do all within

our power to maintain and promote it. Thereby we are also helping to suppress the evil and promote the good in human society. Jeremiah once urged his people, "Seek ye the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof ye shall have peace." It is a part of our responsibility to the country in which we live and whose benefits we enjoy to seek its peace and welfare by doing our part to uphold moral and civic standards in it. The peace we uphold we shall also enjoy. Christians may belong to civic clubs and organizations and be active in them unless there are other features of such organizations which are objectionable, such as prayer fellowship with the heterodox and ungodly, unionist services, gross worldliness, and the like. Sorry to say, such objectionable features are increasing instead of decreasing. But where they do not make membership in such organizations taboo for a Christian, their children may join 4-H clubs and the FFA, their wives may belong to homemakers' clubs, they may be Lions, Rotarians, Kiwanis, J.C.'s, Legionnaires. They may serve on public school boards or as city officials, ever seeking the peace of the city, the land and the world in which they live.

Now the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and lodges also emphasize civic righteousness. We do not indict them for that. They accomplish much good as character builders. But we do condemn them for making civic righteousness self-righteousness and a fulfillment of one's full duty to God. In other words, they make civic righteousness a saving virtue when it is not even the beginning of the kind of righteousness men should have before God. On the spiritual level civic righteousness is of no value, and any attempt to elevate it to the spiritual level can only lead to self-righteousness before God. Before God no one can boast that he is righteous because he practices civic virtues or natural righteousness. A good citizen is not righteous before God because he is a good citizen. If he thinks he is, he is a Pharisee. The public school does well to teach its pupils that they should be honest, loyal, law-abiding, but it is spreading Pharasaic leaven when it teaches the pupils that honesty, loyalty, and obedience are the way to heaven. A Christian can be a good citizen, but his good citizenship does not make him a Christian; it is only a fruit of his sanctification, not a righteousness by which he wishes to merit God's favor. His civic righteousness is a Christian duty, nothing more.

In essence, civic righteousness is not self-righteousness or Pharisaism. It can become Pharisaism when people trust in it for their salvation. Then we must part company with them.

III.

Our Lord's original warning, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees," fell on uncomprehending ears. The dull-witted disciples completely misunderstood His words. They had forgotten to take bread with them as they crossed the Sea of Galilee. Now, when Jesus mentioned the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees in His warning to them, they reasoned among themselves saying, "It is because we have taken no bread." They thought that Jesus was warning them not to buy bread made with the yeast the Pharisees and Sadducees used in their baking. In other words, they were to boycott all Pharisee and Sadducee bakeries. Jesus had to speak sharply to them, reminding them of the ease with which He could provide bread for them if He so willed. "Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?" Would He let them starve with such provident power at His disposal? It was only when he added, "How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees," that the meaning of the word 'leaven' finally dawned on them. "Then understood they how that He bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."

As was often the case, the disciples were unobservant and slow of comprehension. But I wonder whether we have the right to sit in judgment over them. You and I are not always alert to the menace of Pharisaism or aware of the peril it poses for our Christian faith. We find ourselves taking a generous attitude toward the goodness of natural man. We are impressed by the results he achieves. The Moose maintain their monument of charity at Mooseheart, the Elks add a wing to the children's hospital at Omaha, the Eagles make a sizable contribution toward the cancer research fund, prominent Masons are high on the list of contributors to the Community Chest, the local Odd Fellows lodge sponsors a special Christmas party for a leukemia victim, the

Royal Neighbors send sunshine baskets to the neighborhood shut-ins, the Boy Scouts volunteer to clean up the village park, the WCTU succeeds in closing a notorious night spot. Newspapers play up these things with pictures and feature articles. We are impressed. The shining deeds of the Pharisees are on many a roll of honor, bronze plaque, and in many a book of memory. The accomplishments of those who give with an eye to the approval of men and to compensation in heaven often make the fruits of faith appear meager and scanty. The kindness and consideration of an unchurched neighbor who believes in a religion of doing good makes the friendliness of many church people appear cold by comparison. The consecration of our Lutheran people is in painful contrast to the piety and devotion of the Catholic family next door.

We are easily taken in by this outward show of Pharisaism. Such Pharisees should be twofold children of hell? It is hard for us to adjust our thinking to that. And our lack of zeal in prosecuting the false leaven of Pharisaism for its anti-Christian character is directly traceable to the favorable impression its works have made on us. We find it hard to convince ourselves that such a goodly outside hides a satanic falsehood. It is difficult to believe that organizations that are so active along humanitarian lines and do so much good must be shunned as anti-Christian.

Christ must speak sharply to penetrate our credulous and gullible minds as He once did to the slow-witted disciples who did not grasp the meaning of His warning against the Pharisees. When Jesus branded the street-corner prayers of the Pharisees hypocrisy, He did so not only to teach the hearers of His Sermon on the Mount the difference between genuine prayer and ostentatious, formal prayer, but also to instruct us that we be not deceived by their show of godliness. When He rebuked the Pharisees who objected to the disciples' plucking heads of grain on the Sabbath Day and eating them because they held it to be a breach of the Sabbath Law, which enjoined rest on that day, Jesus exposed their false legalism for us to see that we might judge it as He did wherever we find it—a legalism that blinded men to the true spirit of the Law—the fear and love of God. When He berated them for teaching for doctrines such commandments of men as their many hand washings, their gifts to the temple in place of keeping God's commandments, He condemned the Pharisaism of today for what it is—a presumptuous replacing of God's commandments by human laws and precepts and a hypocritical attempt to achieve a better holiness than God Himself requires by means of man-made regulations and ordinances. When Christ denounced them in the 23rd chapter of Matthew for disobeying the Scriptures, being blind to the Gospel, perverting the Law for self-righteous purposes, doing their works to be seen of men, displaying religious vanity and pride, covering up an ungodly life with outward piety, stressing only the external things in the Law, making more of physical cleanliness than cleansing of the heart, justifying themselves, He did it to counteract any inclination on our part as well as on the part of the disciples of that day to be charitable and broadminded toward Pharisaism. When He reprehended them as, "ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" did He want us to excuse their faults, overlook their shortcomings, and explain things in their favor?

Jesus knew the Pharisees far better than we ever can. His keen, discerning eyes penetrated through their sham, deception, and hypocrisy to their false, unbelieving hearts. He saw them as they really were—the foes of the Gospel, deniers of the truth, despisers of the Law, disparagers of God's righteousness, enemies of the cross of Christ, disdainful of repentance and faith. If the Pharisees were right, then the Way of Life through Himself alone that Christ taught was utterly wrong. If the Pharisees were right, then the Son of God undertook an unnecessary mission to redeem the souls of men when they were able to redeem themselves. If the Pharisees were correct in their self-righteous claims, there never has been any need for the penitent transgressor to say, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." If the doctrine of the Pharisees was true, it was a lie that righteousness was of faith alone and salvation was through Christ alone. The Pharisaic way and Christ's way were absolutely incompatible.

Paul saw that clearly. He would not have written his Letter to the Galatians if he had not recognized Pharisaism and Christianity as mutually exclusive. In this letter, which is a masterly defense of justification by faith and an appeal not to revert to Jewish doctrines and ideas, he outlaws the creed of Pharisaism which teaches salvation by works in such direct statements as, "By the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified" (2, 16), and "As many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse" (3, 10). He condemned the Pharisaic worship

of ceremonies, “Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain” (4, 10). He pointed out the great gulf between Christianity and Pharisaism, “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace” (4, 4). He showed the folly of righteousness by law, “If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.” In his letter to the Philippians, Paul, who was once a Pharisee himself, confesses that the righteousness which he once had was blameless outwardly, but that he counted all those things loss for Christ. He abandoned Pharisaic self-righteousness for the righteousness of faith to “be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (3, 9). Self-righteousness and the righteousness of faith are poles apart. In Colossians he censures Pharisaic precepts such as “Touch not, taste not, handle not” (2, 21. 22), and deflates the Pharisaic boast of a superior morality and higher worship because they keep laws and commandments above and beyond those God has given. Paul too maintains that there can be no understanding between Christianity and Pharisaism. It can be only one or the other. As a man loves Christ, he must hate Pharisaism.

It is not only the believer in Christ who can see the incompatibility of Pharisaism and the Gospel of Christ. A determined defender of the Pharisees, R. Travers Herford, a rank unbeliever, comes to the same conclusion, even if it is from the side of unbelief. “The collision between Pharisaism and Jesus was the mutual impact of two irreconcilable conceptions of religion.” (*Pharisees*, p. 208.) “That Rabbinical Judaism and Christianity are fundamentally irreconcilable, differing both in their standard of reference and in the terms by which their contents are described, is a fact plain to be seen by any competent and impartial student of religion.” (*Pharisees*, p. 236.)

The Pharisee taught righteousness by works; the Gospel offers righteousness by faith. The Pharisee taught self-righteousness; the Gospel proclaims righteousness through Christ. The Pharisee taught worship by means of outward ceremonies; the Gospel promotes worship in spirit and in truth. The Pharisee taught a strict outward observance of the Law; God looks for fear and love in our hearts. The Pharisee taught the need of added traditions of men; the Bible declares, “In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” The Pharisee taught a law morality superior to what God’s Law required; the Gospel alone can regenerate men’s hearts to do God’s will. The Pharisee taught the natural goodness of man; the Bible teaches the total corruption of man. The Pharisee taught that man could do his whole duty to God; the Gospel teaches that without faith it is impossible to please God. To go on can do no more than prove what these contrasts have already proved—Pharisaism is the absolute opposite of Christianity. Pharisaism is anti-Christian. A Pharisee cannot be a Christian any more than Pius XII can be a member of St. Matthew’s. The need for Christ’s warning should be evident to every Christian because Pharisaism is so utterly contrary to the Christian faith.

When Jesus characterized the doctrine of the Pharisees as leaven, He did it with a purpose. “Leaven,” described the nature of false doctrines of Pharisaism. The action of leaven or yeast is familiar to all of us. We have seen our mothers add yeast to a mixture of flour and water, knead the dough, and then set it aside to “rise.” If the mixture was placed in a warm place, it rapidly swelled in size, revealing the powerful action of the yeast, or leaven. The yeast permeated every particle of the dough, creating by chemical action thousands of tiny bubbles of gas, which made the dough light and porous. The action of the yeast was silent, invisible, and mysterious. We could not see what was taking place inside the dough, although we could observe the effects of the yeast’s action.

Invisible and mysterious in its working, yet powerful in its action and transforming in its effect is also the leaven of false doctrine. When Jesus termed the doctrine of the Pharisees a leaven, He implied a warning in the very word “leaven.” Introduce leaven into dough and it will produce definite changes in the dough. Introduce the leaven of false doctrine into the body of a church’s teaching, and it will have a far-reaching effect on that church’s doctrine. Let the leaven of the Pharisees enter a church, and it will permeate and transform its entire doctrine if allowed to continue unchecked. Pharisaism has a leavening power, which will insidiously corrupt and destroy the truth a church teaches until it has leavened the entire body of doctrine. Like yeast in dough, it works invisibly, but its effect is powerfully evident.

We have concluded that Roman Catholicism is Pharisaic in its doctrine and in its effects upon the religious life of its members. Today Catholicism is Pharisaism in full power. But it was not always so. The Pharisaism of the Roman Catholic Church was a gradual process, beginning with the introduction of the first leaven of Pharisaism. Fifteen centuries ago a Catholic monk by the name of Pelagius taught that natural man had great powers for moral good. If a man willed to do right, even in his sinful state, he could do so, and be saved. Grace was no longer needed to save man, and salvation by Christ was a rather superfluous effort on the part of God. In the controversy between Pelagius and Augustine this error, which destroyed the very essence of Christianity, was condemned by the Church. But others, called Semi-Pelagians, made a compromise between the teaching of Pelagius and the teaching of salvation by grace alone, giving man's free will and divine grace joint credit for his salvation. This teaching was also condemned at first, but it nevertheless succeeded in establishing itself in the Roman Church, where it is taught to this day. The leaven of self-righteous Pharisaism was introduced into the doctrine of that Church. Like leaven, it spread its influence farther and farther, corrupting and vitiating ever more of the doctrine of that Church. Once works were acknowledged as being necessary for salvation, the Pharisaic teaching of salvation by works was developed farther and farther. Tradition was added to Scripture, offering the faithful more opportunities for the performance of good works by keeping an ever-increasing number of the commandments of the Church. The number of ceremonies was increased, inasmuch as taking part in them came to be considered a good work. The more ceremonies there were, the more good works. And all the while the performance of the works the Church commanded became more and more external. All that mattered was that the act was performed, even if the true spirit of worship was not there. New saints were constantly created, as were the possibilities for prayer. Some of the faithful made the performance of the Church's good works a life's profession, and they became monks and nuns who devoted themselves to living the holier life. As a consequence, the leaven of Pharisaic work-righteousness corrupted more and more of the once Christian teachings of the Church of Rome until everything the Pharisaism of old represented—externalism, legalism, tradition, ceremony, ostentation, self-righteousness, hypocrisy—is conspicuous in the Roman Catholic Church today. The leaven of Pharisaism has done its evil work.

What the leaven of Pharisaism did to the doctrines of the Church of Rome it can and will do to any church that harbors such leaven. The leaven of Pharisaism will corrupt true doctrine, as yeast will leaven dough. Let our Lutheran Church begin to stress ritual and liturgy, as if God is better served by a more elaborate liturgy, and the leaven of Pharisaism will be at work. It will suggest other ways to serve God better. The Church will prescribe little additional ceremonies, little supplementary duties, little extra services. Then that leaven will be at work making the performance of these additional ceremonies, supplementary duties, and extra ceremonies more and more external as if by merely doing them once is pleasing God, and at the same time tend to make all worship of God more external. It will be generating a false Pharisaic pride in the worshipper by making him believe that he is serving God more perfectly and more devoutly than his fellow Christians. It will tempt to a greater outward display of worship and ceremony.

Let our Lutheran Church stress outward progress, and it will have admitted the leaven of Pharisaic externalism. It will not be far from making outward growth and advancement in the kingdom of God the essential thing rather than that the Church grow in knowledge, faith, and love. That leaven will work farther; it will make the attainment of external goals so important and desirable that it will not always be careful to use God-pleasing means to reach them. It will make Lutheran Jesuits who believe that the important thing is to hoist the flag of their synod in a certain community where they are not yet represented, even if they violate the love they owe a sister congregation already there. The external end will justify the means used to attain it. Or that leaven will make outward growth in a synod something of which to boast. It will tempt a synod to employ its size and numbers to impress others, to intimidate them, to apply pressure to get what it wants, to "throw its weight around," so to say. The Church that harbors the Pharisaic doctrine of externalism will have to contend with things that are the logical conclusions of such externalism.

Let the Lutheran Church ally itself with organizations that are Pharisaic in teaching and practice, and the leaven of the Pharisees will have its pernicious effects on our Church. It will tend to make us value outward accomplishments more and the quiet way of the Spirit less. It will tend to blunt our sensitivity to anti-Christian

Pharisaism because we shall be constantly impressed by its outward goodness and morality. It will encourage Pharisaic good works among us because the example of these organizations will be constantly before us.

Let the Lutheran Church cease to be penitent and grateful for divine favor, and it will lapse into a spirit of smug self-satisfaction, comfortable in its own good opinion of itself. Our Lutheran Church is not proof against the dangers of Pharisaism. If we admit it and tolerate it, its leaven will not spare the body of precious doctrine God has granted us, nor the clean practice we still have to such a remarkable extent. This Pharisaic leaven bears constant watching.

IV.

It ought to be evident that we shall always have to contend with Pharisaism from within and without. It becomes of vital concern to us how we may contend with it. If we do not contend with it wisely and effectively, we shall be like the boxer Paul describes as “one that beateth the air.” There is a contending with Pharisaism that is not contending at all, because the Pharisaic leaven remains to spread its baneful influence farther and to undermine increasingly more of Christian doctrine.

It will not avail us to contend with Pharisaism by ignoring it as if it did not exist or we had nothing to fear from it. Many do not concern themselves about Pharisaism, not even taking the trouble to identify it or diagnose it, because they and their church bodies are already saturated with it. When a man no longer worries about freezing to death in an arctic storm, he is already too frozen to care whether he fights to keep from freezing to death or not. When a church no longer damns Pharisaism, it has succumbed to it. The free association of Protestant churches with such Pharisaic organizations as lodges and scout organizations, the membership of Protestant clergymen in Pharisaic societies and their leadership in Pharisaic youth organizations, are evidence that Protestantism has absorbed too much of Pharisaism to be concerned about its menace to Christianity. And if we Lutherans are no longer allergic to Pharisaism and sense its hostility to our Christian faith, we likewise have become too familiar with it.

Others may be able to identify Pharisaism and can label its errors, but they feel themselves incapable of contending with it as many a Czech opposes Communism but feels helpless to hinder it. Perhaps many in Protestant churches still recognize the anti-Christian nature of Pharisaism but shrug their shoulders when they are asked why they do not take steps to counter it. They may hope to escape harm from it even though they are exposed to its dangers, or they may not consider it broad-minded to fail to cooperate with groups that do good works in the community even though they may not approve of everything they do. But whatever their reasons, they (and among them are also Lutheran bodies) do not contend with Pharisaism. Think of the many Lutheran synods that have run up the white flag of surrender to the lodges, for example.

We find others who take a strong confessional stand against everything Pharisaic. They condemn it for what it is—death to Christian faith and God-pleasing worship. They brand it false doctrine and heresy when they observe it in Masonry and lodgery. They are quick to perceive it in every self-righteous religion. We should expect them to take an uncompromising stand against Pharisaism wherever it is taught as a way of life. And yet we find them tolerating Pharisaism to a degree in that they are satisfied when lodges “tone down” or “eliminate much that is objectionable” in their rituals and religious teachings, instead of refusing to accept anything less than a complete elimination of everything objectionable. They tolerate the paying of dues without “attending lodge meetings or permitting their business relationships to degenerate into a fraternal relationship.” They tolerate the Pharisaic code of work-righteous Scouting by retaining the Scout Promise and Scout Law even if they try to explain away their Pharisaic spirit. Toleration of the leaven of Pharisaism is not contending with it. It is granting it the right to continue its evil influence.

Others go several steps farther. Instead of merely tolerating Pharisaism under certain conditions, they approve of many things it does. Scouting is held in high esteem because of its beneficial influence on growing boys and girls. The excellence of the leisure time program offered by the Boy Scouts of America has won the admiration of social workers, educators, and churchmen. The humanitarian program of the lodge commands respect and praise. The good that Pharisaism accomplishes in Catholic and Protestant churches makes it seem

unjustifiable to say that their works are obnoxious to God. How can they be when they do so much good in this world? This deceptive goodness of Pharisaism has been confused with real virtue, the genuine fruits of faith, by many people. “They all believe in doing good. What’s the difference?” And so men approve of good in Christian Church and Christless lodge alike.

Cooperation follows approval. If you approve of what the next person is doing along the same lines you are, you want to cooperate with him. If he has the kind of program you can use, you want to work together with him and you may have something to offer him in return. Lutherans have done that with the Boy and Girl Scouts in America. What they have accomplished in recreational, physical, and moral training of boys and girls has so much impressed them that they have sought ways and means of coordinating Scouting with their church’s program for its youth. There were objectionable features in Scouting. There were unionistic services where all Scouts, regardless of church affiliation, attended church together. The Scout organization was prevailed upon to discourage this practice. Then there was the Pharisaism of Scouting. Many Lutheran churches forbade their boys to belong to community Scout troops. However, there was the responsibility of doing something about the Pharisaism of Scouting if its local troops could be brought under church control. Of course, it was too bald and crass to be accepted without revision and amendment. After investigation, however, practically all sections of the Lutheran Church, except ours, came to the conclusion that, “under proper guidance the Boy Scout program may be successfully integrated with the program of the Church for the moral and spiritual development of its growing boys and girls. The Scout Law and Pledge (Oath) contain no elements which cannot with proper instruction and motivation be utilized in the Lutheran Scout Troops.” (Scouting in the Lutheran Church, p. iii.) The National Council, Boy Scouts of America, was willing to let the Lutheran Church take charge of the moral and spiritual training of boys and girls in church troops. “Scouting recognizes the essential part that religion must play—but for Scouting to attempt to provide directly and immediately this religious element in the training of youth would be a presumptuous intrusion into the field and function of the Church.” And so it appeared that Lutheran synods could coordinate Scouting with its program for boys and girls with their church program for their boys and girls. The Church, under the leadership of its pastor, would provide the spiritual anti moral features. Scouting would provide the benefits of the physical and recreational training and the mental stimulation inherent in the Boy Scout program and maintain the policies of procedure, organization, and leadership.

Did the Lutheran Scout Committees get all they bargained for? Did they get a free, uncompromised hand in regulation of the spiritual and moral affairs of Scouting, so that Pharisaism would be eliminated? No. For one thing, the Pharisaic Scout Pledge and Law could not be altered. Lutheran Boy Scouts as well as their non-Lutheran brothers must recite the Pledge and Law at troop meetings. Even if Lutheran Scoutmasters try to place the correct interpretation upon “duty to God,” “a Scout is kind, helpful, clean,” etc., and explain good works as fruits of sanctification, the Pharisaic form of the Pledge and Law must be memorized and adhered to. Can that be without the effect of leaven? One of the aims and purposes of Scouting, according to its Constitution and By-Laws, is to develop character. When the Local Council Boy Scout official inducts the Lutheran Scoutmaster and the Troop Staff, they must promise to fulfill the aims and purposes of the Boy Scout movement and the aims and purposes of the Church. Does the Boy Scout movement develop character in the same way as the Church does? Scouting hopes to develop character by means of its Pharisaic Pledge and Law, especially by its practice of the “Good Turn.” The Lutheran Church develops character by repentance and faith. Are the two the same? Scouting sees no conflict. But should not all Lutherans see it? To try to develop character the Boy Scout way and the Lutheran way at the same time is equivalent to trying to make good Lutherans the Catholic way and the Lutheran way at the same time. If someone objects and insists that Scouting is only concerned that character be developed, let the Church do it as it pleases, and that it does not insist on having it developed the Pharisaic way; we are constrained to ask, “Why does Scouting refuse to give up its Pledge, Law, and the ‘Good Turn’? Why does it demand conformity with its merit system if character may be developed only in the Lutheran way?”

Boy and Girl Scouts rise from rank to rank in Scouting as the National Council of Boy Scouts of America prescribes. Such advancement is via the merit system. A Scout must earn his next highest rank, not

only by tying the required number of knots, hiking a specified number of miles, carrying out a certain number of projects, but also by giving evidence that the principles of the Pharisaic Scout Promise and Law have been put into practice in daily life. For example, no Lutheran Boy Scout can advance in rank in the Boy Scouts of America until he has done a required number of “Good Turns,” of which he must keep a record. The pastor must initial the entries. The Boy Scout organization will not permit this requirement to be by-passed. Even if the principle of the “Good Turn” is interpreted and explained the Lutheran way, will a Lutheran Boy Scout’s meritorious deeds not speak louder to him than his Scoutmaster’s words, provided that the Lutheran Scoutmaster knows how to interpret good works the Lutheran way?

The *Pro Deo et Patria* award for faithful service in the Lutheran Church is a special citation and badge granted to Lutheran Scouts who serve the Church in any capacity for 150 to 200 hours, know the cardinal doctrines of the Church, give evidence of daily Bible reading and regular church and Sunday school attendance, and carry out a special project approved by the pastor. Has the Lutheran Church made Scouting Lutheran, or has Scouting made the Lutheran Church conform to its Pharisaic requirements in this spiritual matter?

“Scouting in the Lutheran Church,” recommends the Scout uniform for its Boy Scouts because “he feels just a little more important.” Is that Lutheran or Pharisaic Scouting? At a suggested investiture ceremony, when tenderfoot Scouts are admitted into full membership in the Scout Troop, impressive ceremonies are held in the church. The Scouts are reminded of their solemn Scout Pledge, asked to recite the Scout Oath and the Scout Law. Has the National Council of Boy Scouts of America relinquished all control over the moral and spiritual side of Scouting in the Lutheran Church? And do you see that select group of boys, often in a special uniform, prominently placed in front of the church, publicly acclaimed for what they have done and will do? Can you see them set apart from the rest of the congregation, whose members are all supposed to be one in Christ, and not wonder whether the leaven of the Pharisees is not at work in the hearts of the boys who are made to feel that they are an exclusive society, a higher type of juvenile church member? To deny this is to deny that yeast will work in bread dough standing on the top of the kitchen stove. Or do you see those three youths who recently stood before the altar of a Lutheran church in Detroit to receive their *Pro Deo et Patria* awards in “impressive ceremonies” and not wonder whether all they had ever learned about the humble, self-effacing good works they were to do for Jesus without looking for a reward, prompted by love and gratitude alone, was not vitiated and corrupted by the leaven of Pharisaism at work in their hearts, telling them that the merit system, the reward system, are Lutheran too? Isn’t there something repulsively Pharisaic about the scene? Are we really wrong when we venture to say that the leaven of Pharisaism has affected those who see nothing objectionable or un-Lutheran in such ceremonies?

Has the Lutheran Church spiritualized Scouting for its own Lutheran troops? It has tried to Lutheranize Scouting, which it knew was Pharisaic. It has endeavored to eliminate its Pharisaic principles by taking charge of the spiritual and moral aspects of the program. It has received permission to interpret the Scout Oath and Law in the Lutheran way. But it has achieved no more than to attempt to put new patches on old garments. It has attempted to put Lutheran Gospel patches on the old Pharisaic Boy Scout uniform. The patches have not made the worn-out uniform good and acceptable before God. That uniform of Pharisaic good works, of self-righteousness, of externalism, of legalism, must be discarded altogether; and the new robe of Christ’s righteousness offered in the Gospel must be put on before any Boy Scout can become a God-pleasing Scout. If Pharisaism could have been patched up or revamped to make it acceptable Christianity, why didn’t Christ do it instead of saying, “Beware of the leaven of Pharisees,” and going on to condemn them to lower depths of hell than prostitutes, extortioners, and murderers? Because Christ saw that Pharisaism is ever the enemy of the Gospel, knowing neither repentance, nor faith, nor forgiveness without which no soul can be saved. God Himself could not “spiritualize” the Pharisees. Only a complete rebirth by the Spirit could suffice. Jesus said, “No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment.” The tailor knows better than the Lutheran who tries to patch up a Boy Scout uniform with Gospel “motivation, means, and end.” Are those who attempt to coordinate the Pharisaic Boy Scout movement with the Church and to spiritualize its Pharisaism without completely and entirely eliminating every speck of Pharisaic leaven, contending with Pharisaism? I submit that they are not. They have compromised with it. Can dough compromise with leaven? The leaven will work

farther, and those who have tried to combine Pharisaism and Christianity in Boy Scouting will be in grave danger of yielding more and more to its Pharisaic spirit.

What about civic righteousness? We have seen that civic righteousness need not be Pharisaic. It can be occupied solely with serving the welfare of the community. The good it does is not to be repudiated and rejected along with Pharisaic good works. Can the Church then cooperate with organizations that teach civic righteousness or support societies that make service to the community their noble aim and exalted purpose? Can our Lutheran Church underwrite and promote the program of the Lions, Kiwanis, 4-H, FFA, and other civic and service organizations? Members of Christian congregations may be members of such organizations, inasmuch as they are also citizens of the community.

A Christian church, however, does not hold citizenship in the state. It holds citizenship only in Christ's kingdom. Of His kingdom Christ said, "My kingdom is not of this world." Since Christian churches belong to that spiritual kingdom, they cannot be of this world nor take an active part in this world's affairs as if they were of this world. It is not the business of the Christian Church to enter into civic affairs; its business is that of Christ's kingdom—saving souls.

Let us view the problem of the Church's cooperation with agencies that support civic righteousness from another angle. The Church may hope to use civic righteousness in its own interests by building on it as if it can use this natural, social righteousness as a stepping-stone to developing true Christian character, or as if it can perfect civic righteousness to comply with God's standards. Unfortunately, from the spiritual standpoint, civic righteousness is not only worthless, but sin. St. Paul says in Romans 1 that the Greeks, who advanced civic righteousness to the greatest height it is possible to achieve, were holding down and suppressing "the truth of God revealed to them." Their vaunted civic righteousness was not only worthless on the spiritual level; it was hostile to Christianity. Can the Church build Gospel righteousness on such righteousness? Can anyone build a skyscraper on a heap of ashes?

We may view the question of the Church's cooperation with agencies for civic righteousness from still another angle. By cooperating with and supporting organizations that foster civic righteousness, the Church is putting natural, civic righteousness, that can serve a good purpose in the community but is worthless before God because it is man-made righteousness, on the same plane with the righteousness of Christ, which alone avails before God, and the righteousness we live by faith. The Church must stand for righteousness by Christ, through Christ, and from Christ. If it supports civic righteousness, it creates the impression that civic righteousness is identical with the righteousness that is the fruit of faith and that a righteousness produced by a sense of honor and duty is as good and valuable as the righteousness that a Christian lives by faith in Christ. Will that not be confusing, even to Christians? Will Christians not conclude that God's righteousness and man's civic righteousness are both approved by the Church and that both are equally pleasing to God? Will they not wonder whether righteousness without the Gospel is also as spiritual as our Christian righteousness, which is our life of sanctification in response to the rich mercies of God? It is not clear testimony to the righteousness of the Gospel when Lutheran churches cooperate with secular agencies in promoting civic ideals and aims. A reputable jeweler can hardly afford to sell both paste diamonds and genuine diamonds without confusing or deceiving his customers. Neither can the Church afford to offer paste righteousness and genuine righteousness at one and the same time.

Every attempt to contend with the leaven of the Pharisees will fail unless we heed the warning of Christ, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees." We should know what the word "beware" means. The word "beware" implies a danger, first of all. The sign, "Beware of the dog," plainly tells us that a particular dog is not only capable of hurting us but is also likely to do so. We are warned to beware of a dangerous animal. The word "beware" also implies taking the proper precautions to protect against danger. "Beware of the dog" implies keeping our distance from the vicious cur to avoid being bitten by him. "Beware of false prophets" Jesus warns in His Sermon on the Mount. This certainly includes both recognizing the menace of their false teachings and having nothing to do with them. "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees" Jesus enjoins upon us who have the Gospel. Can "beware" mean any less than to be keenly aware of the danger of Pharisaic leaven to Christian doctrine and then also to avoid it, shun it, "have no truck" with it? "Bewaring" of the leaven of the Pharisees

does not mean to ignore, tolerate, approve, coordinate, assimilate, corrupting leaven. Our Lutheran Church must be on guard against this leaven in whatever form it may appear; whether it appears as Catholicism, as Protestantism, as false Lutheranism, as lodgery, as Scouting, or as sanctified civic righteousness makes no difference. Contamination by that pernicious leaven must be avoided. All such leaven that we discover in our midst must be purged out. We are to keep ourselves separated from Pharisaic organizations and agencies even if it means depriving ourselves of the desirable things they have to offer. Christ did not mean anything less when He demanded of the disciples, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.”

This is retreating action. There must also be advancing action, positive, aggressive action. There must be clear testimony to the total corruption of natural man. It must be reiterated in unmistakable terms that there is absolutely no goodness in unregenerate man. Strive as he may with all of his natural powers, he cannot perform even one single work that is good in the sight of God. All his shining virtues, all his splendid benefactions, all his sacrificial services are absolutely worthless, even sin before God. His finest righteousness is as putrid rags, reeking with filth. To weaken that teaching of man’s total depravity means to give Pharisaism with its falsehoods concerning the natural goodness of man an opportunity to enter.

Furthermore, there must be a clear distinction made between work-righteousness and Gospel righteousness. That distinction must be seen as a glaring contrast between a righteousness that is worthless and one that is infinitely precious. The perfect righteousness of Christ must be made to stand out in such beauty and glory that the righteousness of man will appear as a dark, forbidding shadow by comparison. The infinite value of the righteousness Christ won for us by keeping the Law we could never hope to keep with our best efforts must make man’s righteousness appear cheap and tawdry by contrast. His blood-bought righteousness of the cross must be seen in all its holy perfection while the righteousness of man betrays all its spots and blemishes. Our Savior’s righteousness must appear infinitely desirable to us even as the other fills us with loathing and disgust. We must understand why Jesus said, “Except your righteousness (which we have from Christ by faith) exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of God” (Matt. 5, 20).

Unless there is a clear conception of the cardinal tenet of our Lutheran doctrine, namely, justification by faith, there can be no comprehension of the deep gulf that exists between the righteousness that is ours by faith and that which our natural powers produce. It must be demonstrated conclusively that there can be no compromise, no reconciliation between self-righteousness and imputed righteousness. Luther writes: “What is Peter, what is Paul, what is an angel from heaven, what are all creatures over against the article of justification? If we know it rightly, we walk in the clearest light, but if we do not know it, we walk in deepest darkness. Therefore, when you see that this article is made uncertain or endangered, you dare not hesitate to oppose even Peter or an angel from heaven; for it cannot be exalted too gloriously.” (St. L. IX, 148.) If everyone who bears the Great Reformer’s name would, like Luther, exalt the doctrine of justification by grace, for Christ’s sake, through faith, our Lutheran Church would be far less vulnerable to Pharisaism than it is, and as we reluctantly observe on every hand.

Only when the all-sufficiency of the Gospel is recognized will it be possible to contend with Pharisaism. The Gospel must ever be preached as the only means, the only possible way to attain what the Pharisee hoped to merit by his works. Its claim to give eternal life to the believer dare not be reduced in the slightest degree to admit any possible need for any precepts and works to assure men of eternal life. Salvation by the Gospel cannot be 99.44% pure grace; it must be all of grace, a full 100% grace. If even a fraction of the credit for salvation is given to human effort, the leaven of Pharisaism will be at work. The Gospel does not need, nor can it afford to accept, any assistance from us in accomplishing its purpose. That can only mean that we have become ashamed of the Gospel and do not trust it to fulfill its glorious promises.

Since Pharisaism prides its “righteous” works and parades them before the world, we must teach good works as they are solely, acceptable before God. The gulf that exists between self-righteousness, works calculated to win divine approval and merit reward, and the good works of the Christian that are motivated by faith in Christ and love to Christ alone must be made so yawning that every Lutheran Christian will see it. But we must accomplish more than to train Lutheran Christians to distinguish between Pharisaic works and the

God-pleasing fruits of faith. Those fruits of faith must also be produced. To that end let the word of the Law be preached in its soul-searching severity so that men will repent of their damning sins, not the least of which are the sins of Pharisaism. And let the Gospel then be preached in all its heart-stirring, persuasive power that our blessed Savior may become altogether lovely and to be desired by the penitent sinner who longs for comfort and pardon for his transgressions. Then the blessed fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance, goodness—cannot fail to follow, and they will outshine the glittering works of the Pharisees as the sun outshines a candle.

It will behoove us to insist on the otherworldly, spiritual character of Christ's kingdom so that we do not lapse into the Pharisaic error of teaching an earthly kingdom of Christ. "My kingdom is not of this world" must be printed in bold letters across the top of every sermon page and at the mast-head of every Lutheran periodical, and not only emblazoned there but also heeded when the temptation arises to play down the importance of preparing souls for eternity and to make the mission of the Church also appear to be concerned with what makes for health and happiness here on earth, as so many sects have done. The church that becomes a social welfare agency and tries to sanctify this world becomes a kingdom of this world as the Pharisees conceived of it.

As we cherish everything God has given us in His pure Gospel, as we gratefully accept the only, true, saving righteousness, as we desire to bring the fruits of our faith in humble gratitude alone, may we heed our Lord's earnest warning, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees," and follow the guidance of His Spirit in resolutely contending with it. Its pernicious influence cannot be kept at bay by glorying in our Lutheran heritage, by parading with our confessional flag, or by beating the drums of Lutheran steadfastness and solidarity. It cannot be removed by priding ourselves on the fact that we are so Lutheran that no Pharisaic leaven can harm us. The leaven of the Pharisees will be purged out only as we pray more earnestly for the spiritual sight with which to see its dangers, only as we hold more firmly to the Gospel of free grace which makes work-righteous Pharisaism abhorrent to us, only as we order our life and conduct by the fear and love of God, only as we guard against any worship that does not flow from the heart, only as we keep our souls attuned to the spirit of His Word, not being content merely to keep its dead letter, only as we trust the all-sufficient Word to prescribe every duty and meet every problem involved in our relation to God. Only then shall we be able to contend with that leaven against which our Lord warns us so earnestly. May God in His merciful providence keep our dear Lutheran Church free from its pernicious influence by preserving us with His gracious Spirit.