

A Reading and Study Guide for  
The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel  
by  
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# Introduction

After *The Holy Bible* and *The Book of Concord*, C. F. W. Walther's *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel* is likely to be the work that has most influenced those men in the Ministry of Word and Sacrament in what is The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. There are at least four reasons. First, the thirty-nine evening lectures are theologically precise and doctrinally orthodox, resting upon and flowing from the doctrine of justification. Second, the work is thoroughly practical and therefore of immense importance to both pastor as proclaimer and the parishioner as hearer. Third, the twenty-five theses were drawn forth from the crucible of the Church Militant in which one not only confesses the truth, not only condemns the lie, but also stands steadfast in the breach when those in the world and in the congregation call for compromise of the truth and tolerance for false doctrine and practice. Fourth, though more than 115 years since the lectures were delivered and over a century in print, the work is stunningly and soberly contemporary. As such, continued readings and study will benefit those who invest the time.

This guide was prepared to encourage the close examination and prolonged meditation on what Dr. Walther had to say. The work is not light reading. It has been a seminary textbook and rightly so. The ideal use of this guide would be by a pastor teaching a weekly class on the topic and using *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel* as the text. During the other days of the week each member would read the texts, study the points and address the questions during the other days of the week. Certainly private study by clergy and laity is encouraged. Circuit pastors' conferences could use it as for study by the brethren.

This guide was prepared based on the Dau translation and the pagination (the numbers in parentheses) is from an early edition of the same. The *Preface and Introduction* is helpful in terms of history and context.

Twenty years ago I read and studied Walther's *Law and Gospel* as part of my course work at the seminary. After a couple of years in the parish I used it as the basis for an advanced doctrine class. Then for fifteen years or so I consulted it now and then. While preparing this reading and study guide, I realize not only what a pastoral work the book is but especially how much it has influenced what the pastoral practice here at Our Redeemer.

The peace of the LORD be with you alway,

Rev. Michael L. McCoy  
Pastor at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Emmett, Idaho

## First Evening Lecture – September 12, 1884

As you read this first lecture, keep track of the words that Rev. Dr. Walther (Walther hereafter) used to describe those listening to him.

According to Walther, what is necessary to be “efficient teachers” in our churches and schools? (5)

In what were these teachers to be immersed?

How were these men to become “really practical theologians”?

What is the foremost and most important Christian doctrine?

Scripture Check:

Romans 3:21-28 -

Ephesians 2:8-9 -

Genesis 15:6 -

What doctrine is second in importance?

Those who seek to understand and apply this second most important doctrine are not able to do this alone. Who is necessary?

Walther states: “In one passage a free offer of life everlasting is made to all men; in another, men are directed to do something themselves towards being saved.” (6) Consider this statement as you compare the following episodes:

Mark 10:17-27 -

Acts 16:25-34 -

How is this apparent contradiction or riddle solved?

Now we are ready for the first thesis or statement:

### Thesis 1.

The doctrinal contents of the entire Holy Scriptures, both of the Old and the New Testament, are made up of two doctrines differing fundamentally from each other, viz., the Law and the Gospel.

What does Walther aim to demonstrate to his hearers?

Before listing the differences between the Law and the Gospel, it is necessary to point out what is *NOT* different. In what ways do they *NOT* differ? (6-7)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Now list the true points of difference between the Law and the Gospel.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

As you read the rest of the first evening lecture and work through this study guide, note the differences. Pay particular attention to the Scripture readings that demonstrate the differences and note anything that is new to you.

The Law and the Gospel are different with respect to the manner in which they are revealed to man. (7-8) Fill-in the following table:

	Law or Gospel?	How is it revealed?
Romans 2:14-15	_____	_____
Romans 16:25-26	_____	_____

What was the purpose of the Ten Commandments?

The Law makes demands and issues commands while the Gospel only offers and gives. Read Galatians 3:12 and John 1:17. (9)

Both the Law and the Gospel promise eternal life and salvation. Yet these promises differ. What is the difference?

Do both the Law and the Gospel promise God's grace and forgiveness?

Read Deuteronomy 27:26 and 1 Timothy 1:15. How does the Law differ from the Gospel according to their threats?

List three effects of the Law and three effects of the Gospel.

Effects of the Law:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Effects of the Gospel:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

To whom are the following to be preached, announced or told?

The Law:

\_\_\_\_\_

The Gospel:

\_\_\_\_\_

## Practical Application

1. Identify the following portions of Scripture as Law (L) or Gospel (G):

_____	1 John 2:12 -	I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for His sake.
_____	Exodus 20:15 -	You shall not steal.
_____	Isaiah 53:5 -	But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; upon Him was the punishment that made us whole, and with His stripes we are healed.
_____	Luke 10:27 -	You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.
_____	Genesis 3:11 -	Have you eaten of the Tree of which I commanded you not to eat?
_____	Psalms 103:12 -	As far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us.
_____	Matthew 26:26 -	Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My Body."

2. Circle the Law and underline the Gospel in the following Scripture passages:

Romans 6:23 -	For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Psalms 32:3-5 -	When I declared not my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. I acknowledged my sin to Thee, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD; then Thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin."

3. These lectures were addressed to men who were studying to be pastors in the Lord's Church. Certainly anyone would profit from understanding how the Law and the Gospel do and do not differ. Would any of the following not benefit from such a study and focused meditation on *The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel* ?

a mother – a husband – an elder in Christ's Church – a Sunday School teacher –  
a babysitter – a used car salesman – a father – a grandmother – a soldier

4. An unmarried woman from the congregation telephones you and says that she wants to talk to you for a few minutes. She admits to you that she is pregnant and that she needs to talk to someone. How do the Law and the Gospel apply here? Which will you use in this particular situation?

5. A pastor has dealt with a certain situation and has used the Law when he should have only spoken words of forgiveness and the assurance of God's grace. You know the particulars of this situation. Will you use the Law or the Gospel with this pastor?

## Second Evening Lecture – September 19, 1884

This evening lecture is a continuation of the previous one in which the fifth and sixth difference between the Law and the Gospel are addressed.

In the introduction to this lecture one distinction is noted between those who are Christians and those who are not. Who is quite content with the knowledge of the mere outlines of Christian doctrine? (12)

A quotation is made from *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*. What is that quotation asserting? (13)

Striving to obtain the truth and to be assured of God's grace, mercy and peace is a characteristic of \_\_\_\_\_.

Walther was, among many other vocations, a parish pastor, seminary professor and president of the synod. He said, "A theologian who has not the greatest interest in the Christian doctrines is unthinkable." Ponder what would happen to a congregation, a seminary or a synod when the men who occupy such offices do not have an interest in Christian doctrine.

What is the threefold effect of the preaching of the Law? (13-14)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

As it applies to this effect, what took place with the Apostle Paul in Romans 7:7-9? (14)

The use of the first half of 2 Corinthians 3:6 (*for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life*) is often in terms of the negative, as if it were "bad." Is the fact that the Law kills "bad"? In your answer, relate this to 1 John 1:8 - *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

Is 1 John 1:8 the Law or the Gospel?



One of the reactions of the Law being proclaimed to an unbeliever is that the unbeliever wants to get away from the accusations and effects. What two examples of this are given in this lecture? (15)

What was the reaction of some of his hearers when Peter preached the Law on Pentecost?

What are the three effects of the Gospel? (15-16)

Upon the return of the prodigal son what does the father speak to him? (16) \_\_\_\_\_

- a.) the Law
- b.) the Gospel
- c.) both the Law and the Gospel

What good must does the Gospel require that we must furnish?

Walther said: “The Gospel does not say: ‘You must do good works, but it fashions me into a human being, into a creature of such a kind as cannot but serve God and his fellow-man.’” Does this square with Ephesians 2:8-10? (16-17)

What is the answer to the question that Paul asks of the renegade members of the congregation in Galatians 3:2 – *Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?*

To whom is the Law to be preached?

To whom is the Gospel to be preached?

Is the following statement that Walther makes the Law or the Gospel: “Woe to the preacher who would continue to preach the Law to a famished sinner!” ? (18)

What is Rev. Dr. Martin Luther’s (Luther hereafter) definition of the Law? (18)

What is his one-word definition of the Gospel? \_\_\_\_\_

What is his longer definition of the Gospel?

### Practical Application

1. Identify the following portions of Scripture as Law (L) or Gospel (G):

- |       |               |   |
|-------|---------------|---|
| _____ | Rev. 2:14 -   | But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam.   |
| _____ | Acts 2:38 -   | Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children. |
| _____ | Matt. 6:1 -   | Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them.   |
| _____ | Matt. 11:28 - | Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.  |

2. Is it true that the faith that God requires in the promise is also the faith that God gives in His promise? Relate this to the baptism of babies.

3. Is 2 Corinthians 3:6 (*for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life*) parallel to the answer to the question in *Luther's Small Catechism* – “What does such baptizing with water signify? It signifies that the Old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts and, again, a new man daily come forth and arise, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever.”

4. Is a pastor violating the rule that the Law is to be preached to secure sinners and the Gospel to alarmed sinners when he preaches both the Law and the Gospel in a sermon? Why or why not?

### Third Evening Lecture – September 26, 1884

The necessity of pure doctrine is emphasized at the beginning of this lecture. Ponder this necessity according to the illustrations given. (20-21)

1. Christ the Narrow Path to heaven:
2. false doctrine as poison to the soul:
3. pure doctrine as wheat-seed:

An Aside: Is “once saved, always saved” pure doctrine or false doctrine? \_\_\_\_\_

Ponder the following quote:

“From what has been said you can gather how foolish it is, yea, what an awful delusion has taken hold upon so many men’s minds who ridicule the pure doctrine and say to us: ‘Ah, do cease clamoring, Pure doctrine! Pure doctrine! That can only land you in dead orthodoxism. Pay more attention to pure life, and you will raise a growth of genuine Christianity.’”

What is the chief end that the evening lectures were to serve (which this reading and study guide also seeks to serve)? (21)

With regard to the language and style of an author, what is a dangerous tendency?

According to Luther, what impression must the hearers of a sermon get?

When Christ invites those who thirst, who does He mean? (22)

One of the results of living under the Law is that man can find no rest and no grace by trusting in \_\_\_\_\_. (23)

When preparing to preach, what must the preacher have and do in order to win his hearers for the Kingdom of God?

Consider what Luther wrote:

*“If any one were well versed in this art, I mean, whoever could properly make this distinction, he would deserve to be called a Doctor of Theology.”*

*If any one were ...* Why “were” and not “was”?

*art ...*

Who is the Art Teacher?

What is the Art Teacher’s medium?

Where is the studio for the learning of this *art* ?

Read what Staupitz told Luther on a certain occasion. This is shocking until one ponders it in terms of the Law and the Gospel.

Is the difference between the Law and the Gospel easily distinguished in the following?

“The Law says: Thou shalt not sin; go ahead and be godly; do this, do that. But Christ says: Thou art not godly, but I have been godly in thy place. Take from Me what I give thee, - thy sins are forgiven thee.” (24)

Every sermon must be two sermons. Why? Does your answer here and now differ from what you wrote as an answer at the end of your study of the previous evening lecture?

Can people tell when the preaching comes from the heart ... whether the preacher really believes this stuff and desires only to proclaim the Law and the Gospel to their congregation for the well-being of every soul? (25)

Is the Law, in and by and of itself, good? How do you know this? (26)

When wrestling with your conscience that is terrified because of the Law, what should you not consult?

Luther proclaims: “Thus the donkey stays in the valley, while the conscience, with Isaac, goes up into the mountain, ignores the Law and its works, and keeps its eye only on the forgiveness of sin, on nothing but that righteousness which is exhibited and give to us in Christ.” (27) [You might want to read Genesis 22 and Hebrews 11:17-19.]

What does this mean?

What awaits Isaac and the penitent soul at the top of the mountain?

Not only in the sermon must the Law and the Gospel be kept apart, but above all, where else? (28)

### Practical Application

1. Identify the following portions of Scripture as Law (L) or Gospel (G):

\_\_\_\_\_ Acts 5:3 - But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land?”

\_\_\_\_\_ Psalm 23:3 - He restoreth my soul.

\_\_\_\_\_ Luke 1:19-20 And the angel answered him, “I am Gabriel, who stand in the Presence of God; and I was sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news. And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things come to pass, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.”

\_\_\_\_\_ Luke 1:28 - And he came to her and said, “Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!”

2. Ponder the following quotation from the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*:

“It is easy to determine the difference between this faith and the righteousness of the law. Faith is that worship which receives God’s offered blessings; the righteousness of the law is that worship which offers God our own merits. It is by faith that God wants to be worshiped, namely, that we receive from Him what He promises and offers. ... This is how God wants to be known and worshiped, that we accept His blessings and receive them because of His mercy rather than because of our own merits. This is the greatest consolation in all afflictions, and our opponents take it away when they despise and disparage faith and teach men to deal with God only by works and merits.” (Tappert, 114-115)

## Fourth Evening Lecture – October 3, 1884

The opening paragraph of this lecture informs of the necessity for the theologian not to yield at any point in any doctrine or to make concessions of the truth whatsoever. In terms of those who criticize such a stand, does this first paragraph find application today in the Church? (28)

What is it that does not wear down the Church, but ultimately builds up the Church and grants true peace?

What is the meaning of the phrase “holy war” as used by Walther? Does the beloved half-brother of our Lord encourage this in Jude 3-4 ?

Walther gives three examples of faithful men who would not budge on a single letter of doctrine and who would not compromise a single iota. List the three men, their opponents then and the doctrine in question. (28-29)

the faithful man

his opponents

the false doctrine

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What might have been the consequences if the men above had made even the slightest concession to these false teachers?

Who are the latter day followers of those who promoted the false doctrines listed above?

### Thesis 2.

Only he is an orthodox teacher who not only presents all the articles of faith in accordance with Scripture, but also rightly distinguishes from each other the Law and the Gospel.

This thesis is divided into two parts. The first part states what an orthodox teacher must present. What must an orthodox pastor present?

Read Galatians 5:6-11. According to verse 9, if we allow a smidge of false doctrine, what will happen the body of doctrine that is confessed as the truth?

What do Deuteronomy 4:2 and Revelation 22:18-19 indicate to the preacher concerning the Lord's Word? Does it mean or apply any less to a parent?

While the first part of Thesis 2 addresses the necessity of presenting all the articles of the Christian faith as revealed in the Scriptures, the second part declares the need for the distinguishing of the Law and the Gospel. Assume that a sermon has been written that has no false doctrine in it. Is it possible that it still may contain the truth and yet be wrong? Explain your answer. (31-32)

The final test of a proper sermon is ....

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ if it tickles the intellect
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ if it has no false doctrine in it
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ if none of the regulars fall asleep during it
- d. \_\_\_\_\_ if there is both the Law and the Gospel
- e. \_\_\_\_\_ if the sermon rightly distinguishes the Law and the Gospel

What has happened if the pastor has preached a sermon in which you might reply, "What he said was the truth, but my soul is not satisfied"? (32)

Read Luke 12:32-48. Now, focusing on verse 42 ( *Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his master will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the proper time?* ), what two things are expected by the master of the stewards whom he has called and left in charge of the household? (33)

1.

2.

Who or what are the following in the Luke 12:42-48?

1. the master: \_\_\_\_\_
2. the steward: \_\_\_\_\_
3. the household: \_\_\_\_\_
4. the provision for the household: \_\_\_\_\_
5. the faithful and wise steward: \_\_\_\_\_
6. the abusive and faithless steward: \_\_\_\_\_

What points of application are demonstrated in Ezekiel 13:18-22 that each pastor, that is, each steward of the mysteries of God, ought to keep in mind and put in practice? (33-34)

Zechariah 11:7 is one portion of Holy Writ where we hear the Messiah tell us that He is the Shepherd Who uses the Law and the Gospel. *I will feed the flock of slaughter, even you, O poor of the flock. And I took unto Me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock.* The Good Shepherd uses both properly. What is the mistake that most preachers make? (34)

In addition to the two ways in which the preacher may err above, there is a third substance that arises that produces poison for souls. What is it? (35)

Walther wrote:

“You may correctly state what the Law says and what the Gospel says. But when you frame your statement so as to commingle both, you produce poison for souls.”

At this point in this evening lecture, what did he say that must be remembered?

In the portion of God’s Word given by the Holy Spirit via the hand of the Apostle Paul to Pastor Timothy: *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, (2 Timothy 2:15).* What does *rightly handling the Word of Truth* refer to?



## Practical Application

1. Identify the following portions of Scripture as Law (L) or Gospel (G):

\_\_\_\_\_ John 1:14 - And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.

\_\_\_\_\_ Luke 24:43 - And He said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

\_\_\_\_\_ Gen. 4:6-7 - The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it.”

\_\_\_\_\_ Gen. 15:1 - After these things the Word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield, your reward shall be very great.”

2. Are the following parts of the *Luther’s Small Catechism* consistent with what was presented in the fourth evening lecture?

What is the Office of the Keys?

It is the peculiar church power which Christ has given to His Church on earth to forgive the sins of penitent sinners, but to retain the sins of the impenitent as long as they do not repent.

What do you believe according to these words?

I believe that, when the called ministers of Christ deal with us by His divine command, especially when they exclude manifest and impenitent sinners from the Christian congregation, and, again, when they absolve those who repent of their sins and are willing to amend, this is as valid and certain, in heaven also, as if Christ, our dear Lord, dealt with us Himself.

3. Compare the quotes above with Luke 12:32-48.
4. Is it kind, caring, loving and Christ-like to withhold forgiveness from someone who is sorry for their sins and who seeks to be forgiven in the Name of the LORD?
5. Is it kind, caring, loving and Christ-like to let someone who has sinned and who continues in the sin and/or the denial of the sin to withhold forgiveness and confront with the Law.

## Fifth Evening Lecture – October 17, 1884

Throughout this lecture, Walther references the writings of a Lutheran theologian named Johann Gerhard (1582-1637). Gerhard is one of, if not the, greatest theologians in the 17th century. He was both a parish pastor and a professor of theology. His *Sacred Meditations*, published at the age of 24 in 1606, is one of the finest devotional writings in Christendom. This work, along with many of his other Scriptural, pastoral books, have been translated in English and are available from Repristination Press. Anyone interested in more information, contact them at <mailto:HUNNIUS@aol.com>

This lecture begins with a discussion that God works through means both in the Kingdom of Power (secular government) and the Kingdom of Grace (the Church). In the opening paragraph there are two amazing demonstrations of God's love. What are they? (36)

- 1.
- 2.

Walther speaks that God is employing and entrusting qualified men to be pastors in His Church. With respect to what is entrusted to those listening to his lecture, what amazing comparison between the temporal and the eternal does he make? (36-37)

However, what is of primary importance?

Johann Gerhard wrote, "the distinction between the Law and the Gospel must be maintained 'at every point.'" At what two points, above all, must this be kept? (37-39)

- 1.
- 2.

Explain what the theologian means when he writes the following:

1. "The Gospel demands nothing of us; it only says: 'Come, eat and drink.'" (38)
2. "True, to many the Gospel becomes a savor of death unto death, but that is not the fault of the Gospel. (38)

3. "A hedge must be made around Mount Sinai, but not around Golgotha." (39)
4. "Forgiveness of sin must not be proclaimed to impenitent and secure sinners."

Johann Gerhard wrote, "there are several reasons why this distinction between the Law and the Gospel must be accurately defined and strictly adhered to." List the three reasons and put the explanation of them into your own words. (40-41)

What is the summary of the point under discussion in this section? (41)

### Practical Application

1. Identify the following portions of Scripture as Law (L) or Gospel (G):

- |       |               |   |
|-------|---------------|---|
| _____ | Rom. 2:9 -    | There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil.   |
| _____ | Isaiah 40:2 - | Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. |
| _____ | 2 Tim. 4:2 -  | Preach the Word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and teaching.  |
| _____ | Rev. 22:21 -  | The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints.   |

2. Compare the Fifth Evening Lecture with the following:

To obtain such faith God instituted the office of the ministry (preaching ministry), that is, provided the Gospel and the Sacraments. Through these, as through means, He gives the Holy Spirit, Who works faith, when and where He pleases, in those who hear the Gospel. And the Gospel teaches that we have a gracious God, not by our own merits but by the merits of Christ, when we believe this.

*The Augsburg Confession, Art. IV, Justification*

## Sixth Evening Lecture – October 24, 1884

Prior to the presentation of Thesis III, Walther tells of a Lutheran theologian who gave the following description of seminary students:

"When they arrive at the university, they know everything. In their second year of study they become aware of some things they do not know. At the close of their last year of study they are convinced that they know nothing at all." (41)

What might be several reasons why this is true? (Thesis III and 1 Corinthians 8:1-2 might be of help in coming up with the reasons.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

### Thesis 3.

Rightly distinguishing the Law and the Gospel is the most difficult and the highest art of Christians in general and of theologians in particular. It is taught only by the Holy Spirit in the school of experience.

What does this thesis not mean? (42-43)

As a result, what is quite easy? (43)

What is quite difficult?

The practical application and the use of the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is beyond the reach of any of us alone. Who is the teacher and where is the classroom for acquiring this art?

The difficulties of mastering this art confront the minister from two aspects. What are they?

Does the answer in the previous question demonstrate that the distinguishing and the practical application of the Law and the Gospel would be of benefit to all Christians?

After King David had been restored in the grace of God he sang Psalm 51:10-11. Sing those familiar verses and ponder what King David's attitude was. Why would it be thus?

Read Luke 5:1-11. What was Peter's reaction when he understood that He was in the Presence of the Incarnate God? (44) Why?

An Aside: Now read John 21:1-8. What was Peter's reaction when he understood that the Incarnate LORD was on the shore? Why? What was different between this and the previous episode? (In other words, what had taken place between these two events?)

Read 1 John 3:19-20. It is possible that the Law and the Gospel are at war in you and that your heart tells you not to believe the Gospel. What should you do when this happens? (45)

Read 2 Corinthians 3:4-6 and fill in the following.

The ability to be able to distinguish, use and apply the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ comes only from the \_\_\_\_\_. The "written code" is \_\_\_\_\_ while the "life" that the Spirit gives is \_\_\_\_\_.

What does Luther regard as a high art and not easily attained? (46)

In his Table Talk, how many people on earth does Luther say there is who know how properly to divide the Law from the Gospel? (47)

What is the "forma" of a Christian ... that is, what makes a person a Christian? (49)

In Thesis III, mention is made that rightly distinguishing the Law and the Gospel is taught only by the Holy Spirit in the "school of experience." Read the last paragraph in this lecture. What does this say about a young man who comes into the congregation as a pastor on his first Call?

### Practical Application

1. An example of the practical application of the art of distinguishing the Law and the Gospel is given. Nathan the prophet demonstrated this for the benefit of a soul named David. Read the entire chapter of 2 Samuel 11 to get the background. As you do, write down some of the sins that were committed by King David.

- |    |    |
|----|----|
| a. | e. |
| b. | f. |
| c. | g. |
| d. | h. |

2. Nathan is the spiritual leader in Jerusalem (the palace pastor?). He knows of David's horrible sins against God his fall from the state of grace. What does David need to hear, the Law or the Gospel?

3. Continue reading the Word, 2 Samuel 12:1-15, and answer the following:

- a. How does Pastor Nathan gain King David's attention?

b. Do you perceive the exercise of the Spirit-taught art of applying the Law in such a pastoral way as to eliminate all loopholes, excuses, deflections and delays?

c. In verse 5, who pronounces the penalty? What is the decision?

d. What does Nathan announce that cuts right to the heart of David?

e. Is this the Law or the Gospel?

f. David is contrite (truly sorry for his sins and looking to the LORD for forgiveness) and makes confession to Nathan the prophet. Write out David's confession.

g. Identify the Gospel.

h. Are there any conditions for the forgiveness?

i. Is there a point in the historic liturgy of the Church when the pastor makes the same announcement? Is it pure Gospel or are there conditions?

j. Following the announcement of forgiveness, we note that the consequences of David's sins remained. Do the consequences of our sins contradict the fact that forgiveness is ours?

4. Read three of King David's psalms ... 6, 32 and 51 (note the superscription of Psalm 51). These psalms were written after his confession AND absolution. What was King David's demeanor? Is someone able to have great joy and not be happy?

5. Compare the Sixth Evening Lecture with the following:

It is taught among us that private absolution should be retained and not allowed to fall into disuse. However, in confession it is not necessary to enumerate all trespasses and sins, for this is impossible. Ps. 19:12, "Who can discern his errors?"

*The Augsburg Confession, Art. XI. Confession*

## Seventh Evening Lecture – November 7, 1884

To review the previous lecture and in anticipation of this seventh one, Walther begins with an admonishing encouragement that points out two paths that are to be avoided. What are these two?

- 1.
- 2.

Is it possible that a man may graduate from the seminary and be placed into a congregation as pastor and still not be able to distinguish properly the Law and the Gospel? Why or why not? (50)

Is it true that once a theologian properly distinguishes the Law and the Gospel, that one will always do so?

Which theologians demonstrate the point? (50-51)

- 1.
- 2.

What was the purpose of this Seventh Lecture? (51)

In what must the preacher be well versed? (52)

What must a minister be able to distinguish? (53)

How ought every hearer react at the sermon?



What must the preacher understand?

According to Walther, what is the reason people love to read Luther's sermons?

What truth did Aegidius Hunnius discover on the page torn from a devotion book that comforted him? (56)

What was it that had originally caused such despair in Hunnius' soul?

What makes pastoral ministrations very difficult? (57)

In order that a pastor may correctly judge and treat people, what is of utmost importance?

What important point is made with respect to Erasmus? (58)

### Practical Application

1. Comment on the following assertions:

"Any one sinning purposely and knowingly falls from grace."

"Sin does not harm a Christian."

2. What is the difference between:

"Good works are not necessary; only faith."

and

"Good works are not necessary to obtain salvation."

3. In dealing with people the pastor must make judgments with one person hearing nothing but Law and another hearing nothing but Gospel. Does this violate the Word of the Lord Who says, "Judge not, that you be not judged" in Matthew 7:1?

## Eighth Evening Lecture – November 14, 1884

The opening paragraphs of this lecture address the Scriptures, specifically with respect to whether or not the Bible is clear; who the author of Holy Writ is; and how a particular passage is Law or Gospel. Are there, even and especially today, those who maintain that there is one meaning that is plainly given, while at the same time, there are one or more secret meanings that are in hidden code? If “yes,” give the example(s) that come to mind.

In 1884 what was the current teaching among the Romanist theologians? (59)

What, therefore, were some of the consequences of that current teaching?

What Scripture passages are referenced to demonstrate that it is impossible, without the Holy Spirit, for anyone to understand the Holy Scriptures unto his salvation, no matter how great a scholar?

- 1.
- 2.

What is the primary requirement for a saving, beneficial knowledge of the Holy Scriptures? (60)

### Thesis 4.

The true knowledge of the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is not only a glorious light, affording the correct understanding of the entire Holy Scriptures, but without this knowledge Scripture is and remains a sealed book.

What impression occurs when reading the pages of the Holy Bible while still ignorant of the distinction between the Law and the Gospel?

How is the following statement concluded: "The moment we learn to know the distinction between the Law and the Gospel, it is as if the ...."? (62)

What entered the Church when the Law and the Gospel began to be confounded?

In what century did this begin to take place throughout the Church?

Walther states: "the birth of the Reformer dates from the moment when Luther understood this distinction." Ponder the words of the Reformer as he describes the time when the Holy Spirit revealed that the Gospel was not the Law, in what is commonly called Luther's Tower Experience:

Meanwhile in that same year, 1519, ... I had conceived a burning desire to understand what Paul meant in his Letter to the Romans, but thus far there had stood in my way, not the cold blood around my heart, but that one word which is in chapter one: "The justice of God is revealed in it." I hated that word, "justice of God," which, by the use and custom of all my teachers, I had been taught to understand philosophically as referring to formal or active justice, as they call it, i.e., that justice by which God is just and by which he punishes sinners and the unjust.

... Why does God heap sorrow upon sorrow through the Gospel and through the Gospel threaten us with his justice and his wrath?" This was how I was raging with wild and disturbed conscience. I constantly badgered St. Paul about that spot in Romans 1 and anxiously wanted to know what he meant.

I meditated night and day on those words until at last, by the mercy of God, I paid attention to their context: "The justice of God is revealed in it, as it is written: 'The just person lives by faith.'" I began to understand that in this verse the justice of God is that by which the just person lives by a gift of God, that is by faith. I began to understand that this verse means that the justice of God is revealed through the Gospel, but it is a passive justice, i.e. that by which the merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written: "The just person lives by faith." All at once I felt that I had been born again and entered into paradise itself through open gates. Immediately I saw the whole of Scripture in a different light. I ran through the Scriptures from memory and found that other terms had analogous meanings, e.g., the work of God, that is, what God works in us; the power of God, by which he makes us powerful; the wisdom of God, by which he makes us wise; the strength of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God.

I exalted this sweetest word of mine, "the justice of God," with as much love as before I had hated it with hate. This phrase of Paul was for me the very gate of paradise.

Translation by Bro. Andrew Thornton, OSB  
(c) 1983 by Saint Anselm Abbey.

Is the following a proclamation of the Law or the Gospel: "You must now quit Sinai and go to Golgotha." (63)

What does this statement mean? "If these two doctrines are not kept separate, the merit of Christ is obscured." (64)

What will happen if the teacher teaches that the Law has been abolished? (65)

Write out the primary passage of Scripture that establishes Thesis 4. (67)

### Practical Application

1. Identify the following portions of Scripture as Law (L) or Gospel (G):

- |       |               |   |
|-------|---------------|---|
| _____ | Rom. 4:5 -    | And to one who does not work but trust Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness.   |
| _____ | 1 Cor. 6:9-10 | Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the Kingdom of God. |
| _____ | 1 Cor. 6:11 - | And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.  |

2. We are now convinced that the Holy Spirit is the Author of the entire Bible, and as such, the Bible contains neither error nor contradiction. Consider, therefore, a couple of those texts that seem to contradict one another and offer an explanation.

- ♦ Proverbs 26:4 and Proverbs 26:5
  
- ♦ Luke 24:51 and Matthew 28:20

## Ninth Evening Lecture – November 21, 1884

Preceding the next thesis, Walther discussed the Antichrist. The term "antichrist" is used in two ways. Identify them in the following Scripture references:

1. generally – Matthew 24:24 and 1 John 2:18b
2. specifically – 1 John 2:18a

What are six marks of the Antichrist listed in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Imagine someone who claimed himself to be God's spokesman. He insisted that his word was true and that he had to be obeyed, especially the following statements. Would you deem him to be the Antichrist?

"If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in the divine mercy which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified, let him be anathema (accursed)."

"If anyone says that by the said Sacraments of the New Law, grace is not conferred through the act performed, but that faith alone in the divine promises for the obtaining of grace, let him be anathema."

"If anyone ... says that there are two parts of penance, to wit, the terrors of conscience ... and the faith, generated by the Gospel, or by the absolution, whereby one believes that his sins are forgiven him through Christ, let him be anathema."

Whoever teaches, "as if indeed the Gospel were a bare and absolute promise of eternal life, without the condition of observing the commandments, let him be anathema."

"No one can know with a certainty of faith ... that he has obtained the grace of God."

"It is altogether necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to \_\_\_\_\_."

## Thesis 5.

The first manner of confounding Law and Gospel is the one most easily recognized – and the grossest. It is adopted, for instance, by Papists, Socinians, and Rationalists and consists in this, that Christ is represented as a new Moses, or Lawgiver, and the Gospel turned into a doctrine of meritorious works, while at the same time those who teach that the Gospel is the message of the free grace of God in Christ are condemned and anathematized, as is done by the papists.

An aside: Socinian, named after Laelius Socinus, refers to someone who holds to a 16th century sect that is unitarian in that it denies the Divinity of Jesus.

What are the two testimonies (witnesses, items of evidence) that demonstrate that the papists are doing what the thesis charges? (69-70)

- 1.
- 2.

The following Scriptural couplets are referenced to help you answer the questions, “Did the Son of God come into this world in order to be a new Lawgiver and to give us new laws?” (70).

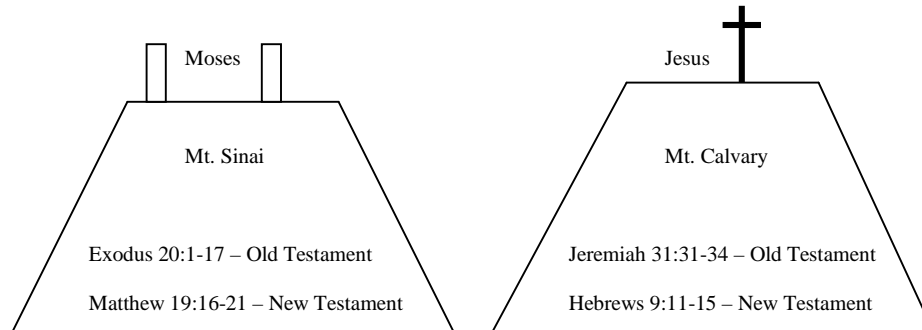
1. Consider Matthew 22:34-38 in connection with Deuteronomy 6:4-5.
2. Consider Leviticus 19:18 in connection with Matthew 22:39.

In view of your previous answer, read Matthew 5:21-26 and explain the meaning of the words of Jesus when He said, “You have heard that it said to the men of old, ... But I say to you ...”

Are the requirements of the moral Law of the Old Testament different from the moral Law of the New Testament?

Read Genesis 3:15. This is the “Protoevangelium,” that is, the “First Gospel,” the first declaration of the Gospel in the Bible. According to this passage, who is Christ? What would/did He come to do? (70-71)

Having understood the first promise of the Savior in Genesis 3:15, now read Revelation 7:13-17. Is the Gospel of the Old Testament different than the Gospel of the New Testament?



Might one be able to construct a similar drawing using Galatians 4:21-31?

Does the entire life of Jesus demonstrate quite plainly what God’s Good News is? (72)

According to John 3:17, why did God send His Son into this world? (73)

Is putting up a cross in a sanctuary, making the sign of the cross and preaching Christ as a new Lawgiver a hypocrisy of the highest order? (74)

Considering that the Law of God is written in the heart of man from the Fall, how many basic religions are there in the history of the world?

In what way is the Law easier than the Gospel, and what does this mean? (76)

In what way is the Gospel easier than the Law, and how does this apply?

Walther acknowledges that there are some human beings who live their entire lives subject neither to the Law nor to the Gospel. To what does he liken them? (76)

## Practical Application

1. Identify the following portions of Scripture as Law (L) or Gospel (G):

\_\_\_\_\_ Matt. 5:17-18 – [Jesus is speaking:] Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished.

\_\_\_\_\_ John 19:30 – When Jesus had received the vinegar, He said, “It is finished”; and He bowed His head and gave up His Spirit.

2. Would the following be of benefit in an adult information class on what we believe, teach and confess?

We ought not assume immediately that the church of Rome accepts everything that the pope or cardinals or bishops or some theologians or monks advance. To the prelates their own authority is obviously more important than the Gospel of Christ, and everybody knows that most of them are openly Epicureans. It is also obvious that the theologians have mingled more than enough philosophy with Christian doctrine. Their authority ought not seem so great as to end all argument, when there are so many manifest errors among them, such as the idea that we can love God above all things by purely natural powers. Despite its obvious falsehood, this teaching has spawned many errors. The Scriptures, the holy Fathers, and the judgment of all the faithful are consistently against them. Therefore the knowledge of Christ has remained with some faithful souls. This in spite of the fact that prelates and some theologians and monks in the church have taught us to seek forgiveness of sins, grace, and righteousness through our works and new devotions, obscuring the work of Christ and making of Him not the propitiator and justifier, but only a legislator.

*Apology of the Augsburg Confession*  
ARTICLE IV. JUSTIFICATION, Tappert, 391-392

All Christians ought to beware of becoming participants in the impious doctrines, blasphemies, and unjust cruelties of the pope. They ought rather to abandon and execrate the pope and his adherents as the kingdom of the Antichrist. Christ commanded, “Beware of false prophets” (Matt. 7:15). Paul also commanded that ungodly teachers should be shunned and execrated as accursed, and he wrote in II Cor. 6:14, “Do not be mismatched with unbelievers, for what fellowship has light with darkness?”

To dissent from the consensus of so many nations and to be called schismatics is a serious matter. But divine authority commands us all not to be associated with and not to support impiety and unjust cruelty. Consequently our consciences are sufficiently excused. The errors of the pope’s kingdom are manifest, and the Scriptures unanimously declare these errors to be doctrines of demons and of the Antichrist.

*Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*  
Tappert, 391-392



## Tenth Evening Lecture – November 28, 1884

Walther begins this lecture with a description of two resolutions. What are they? (77)

- 1.
- 2.

What is the chief task for those who enter the sacred ministry? (78)

### Thesis 6.

In the second place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the Law is not preached in its full sternness and the Gospel not in its full sweetness, when, on the contrary, Gospel elements are mingled with the Law and Law elements with the Gospel.

Write out this thesis in your own words.

Read Galatians 3:11-12. What does the Law have to say about grace? (79)

Is it correct to say that a person who stretches out his hand to receive God's gift has done a good work? Explain your answer.

Are there any concessions when one is proclaiming the Law? (80)

Is the preaching of the Law aimed at the outward physical actions or the inward spiritual condition? (81)

What did Walther say about little children hearing the Law? (83)

## Eleventh Evening Lecture – December 5, 1884

The Word warns of false teachers in the Church and Walther speaks of the damage that false doctrine can do. What does God require of His undershepherds? (88)

### Thesis 7.

In the third place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the Gospel is preached first and then the Law; sanctification first and then justification; faith first and then repentance; good works first and then grace.

What are the four perversions that are examined in this evening lecture?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Look up the following sections in the Bible and demonstrate that the Law is preached first and the Gospel is announced second.

1. Mark 1:15 –
2. Acts 20:21 –

Read Psalm 130:4. Which part bespeaks justification and which part is sanctification?

In Acts 2:38 does Peter violate the proper sequence of Law and Gospel?

In Ephesians 2:8-10 does Paul violate the proper sequence of Law and Gospel?

### Practical Application

Study and comprehend the section titled “Incorrect Sermon Outlines.” [Sometimes it is helpful to understand correct sermonizing by examining sermons that are wrong.]

## Twelfth Evening Lecture – December 12, 1884

According to the lecturer, what is the worst fault in modern preaching? (99)

Is it sufficient when what one has preached has been the Word of God?

Therefore, while it is important that sermons do not lack a special aim, what is equally important? (100)

### Thesis 8.

In the fourth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the Law is preached to those who are already in terror on account of their sins or the Gospel to those who live securely in their sins.

As a review, write out the six points of difference between the Law and the Gospel. (101)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

To whom must the Gospel be preached?

To whom must the Law be preached?

Read the following sections from Holy Scripture and state why there was no Law used with the particular people:

Luke 7:36-50 (the woman) –

Luke 19:1-10 (Zacchaeus) –

Luke 15:11-32 (the younger son) –

Luke 23:39-43 (the 2nd thief) –

### Practical Application

1. Read through the remainder of this evening lecture and study/note carefully the examples of proper pastoral care ...

... from Luther to Spalatin.

... from Staupitz to Luther

... from Luther to Spenlein

2. Both parts of this thesis are taught in the Word of God and in the Lutheran Confessions. For example, take out your catechism and read the questions and recall the answers:

What is the Office of the Keys?

Where is this written?

What do you believe according to these words?

## Thirteenth Evening Lecture – January 9, 1885

What is the first, foremost requisite for successfully preaching a Christian sermon? (111)

How would you reply to someone who said, “Your sermon made a Christian out of me?”

What is the second requisite for effective preaching? (112)

What is the second part of the thesis presented in this evening lecture? (113)

What is the meaning of Matthew 7:6? (114)

How does Matthew 11:28 support the second part of the thesis? (115)

Is there a prescription that we are able to give to people concerning a certain degree of penitence? Why or why not? (118)

“In leading a person to salvation, God may permit him to obtain faith without previously passing through a great deal of anguish and fear; but He always compensates for that later.” What does this mean, and why? (119)

Is shouting at mass of people, “Believe, only believe in Christ and you will be saved,” the equivalent of holding up a “John 3:16” sign at a football game? (124)

By preaching faith only and saying nothing about repentance, what will such preaching finally produce? Explain. (124)

## Fourteenth Evening Lecture – January 16, 1885

The introduction to the next thesis addresses the difference between the Reformed Church and the Lutheran Church. In view of the present day state of the Lutheran Church, it is informative and sobering to read this section. Write down any applications that you might make to what you behold taking place in either of the Churches today. (125-127)

What do Claus Harms' warning mean? (125)

Which doctrine is the fundamental difference between the confession of the Reformed Church and the confession of the Lutheran Church? (126)

What question can not be answered correctly by the Reformed Church? (127)

Even if there are those in the Reformed Churches who affirm that a person is saved by grace alone, what is discovered when their practice is examined? (127)

### Thesis 9.

In the fifth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when sinners who have been struck down and terrified by the Law are directed, not to the Word and the Sacraments, but to their own prayers and wrestlings with God in order that they may win their way into a state of grace; in other words, when they are told to keep on praying and struggling until they feel that God has received them into grace.

Read Acts 2:36-39. For the hope of forgiveness and salvation where does Peter direct the people? Why? (128-129)

Read Acts 16:19-34. How do Paul and Silas answer the question of the terrified Philippian jailer, and where do they direct this man to go for God's grace? (129-132)

Read Acts 22:12-16. Where does Ananias direct Saul (Paul) with respect to hope and forgiveness? (132-134)

Based upon the faulty practice of directing people to their own wrestlings, prayers and works to find peace and rest with God, what are the three awful errors that this exposes in the doctrine of these sects? (135-136)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### Practical Application

1. In the end, is the Reformed practice of directing the individual to personal wrestlings and prayer any different from the practice of Roman penitence?
2. In the third to the last paragraph in this lecture, Walther observes that it would be awful if one had this thought before falling asleep: "If God were to call me hence to-night, I would not be sure whether I should die saved." This has been used in the *Kennedy Evangelism Explosion* program in the form of a question. "If you were to die tonight are you sure beyond a shadow of a doubt that you'd go to heaven?" Take a look at that program and find out where it directs the person who is convinced that he is a sinner and that Jesus has died for him. Are the last steps Law or Gospel? Read Thesis 9 again.
3. In the second to the last paragraph in this lecture, there is an interesting theme – how we picture God's attitude toward us is how He is. Are we able to make it a general rule, such that, we are able to say, "What we do with God, He will do with us?" For example, "I behold You, dear Jesus, as the Lamb of God Who has taken away my sins." "Yes, I am the Lamb of God. I have taken away your sins." or, "I do not want to come into Your Presence and eat of Your Supper, now or forever." "Indeed, you may not come into My Presence and you may not eat of My Supper, now or forever." or, "You are my Redeemer." "Yes, I am your Redeemer." or, "I have accepted You as mine." "I have accepted you as mine."
4. Walther shows that the pastoral heart will not tolerate any false doctrine. One of the reasons is that false doctrine will ultimately negate the Gospel. Read more about the pastoral heart in the last paragraph in this lecture.

## Fifteenth Evening Lecture – January 23, 1885

What answer does Walther anticipate when he asks:

How could the Christian doctrine be called the evangel, that is, glad tidings, if those who accept it must be in constant doubt whether their sins are covered, whether God looks upon them as righteous people, and whether they will go to heaven? (138)

With what does the Lord require His followers to wrestle? (139)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

With what do we not have to wrestle?

Why is the doctrine of doubt the most horrible error into which a Christian can fall?

What is the danger of Pietism? (140-150)

What are the three rules that Fresenius insisted the sinner must observe? (143-144)

Are the three rules “Law” or “Gospel”?

“Modern theology is completely under the control of this error that man converts himself by spiritual powers that are conferred on him.” (146) That was said in 1885. Is there much difference in modern theology today? What evidence do you find of this in “Christian” book stores?

Whenever penitent people asked “What must we do to be saved?” the apostles gave no other answer than ... (150)



## Sixteenth Evening Lecture – January 30, 1885

What doctrine and practice of the Lutheran Church is particularly offensive to the Reformed Church? (151)

What is the Reformed view of (151-152) ...

... Baptism

... the Lord's Supper

... Absolution

The Lutheran pastor will point and direct the penitent to the truth of God's promise that the Lord offers and gives in the means of grace (Word and Sacrament). Why does the Reformed not have this view? (153)

Does the Bible proclaim and does the Lutheran Church believe, teach and confess baptismal regeneration?

What was Zwingli's main theological focus? (154-157)

Luther declared that all schismatics and heretics run contrary to the First Commandment and they stumble at Jesus Christ. Ponder on any contemporary examples of what follows from Luther (161):

“All heretics meet in a grand *ensemble* at this article. Let us, then, abide by this article, ‘Thou shalt have no other gods,’ and let us diligently bear in mind its object and scope. For if we put it out of our sight, we are opening the doors wide to all schismatic spirits. *God never purposed to set up His worship in this world without external means.*”

How do the Anabaptists try to make Baptism part of the Law instead of the Gospel (162)?

Read the last paragraph of this lecture and note the pastoral words of Law and Gospel.

## Seventeenth Evening Lecture – February 6, 1885

At the Marburg Colloquy, what was the one difference in doctrine that prevented brotherly and churchly fellowship between Luther and Zwingli? (165)

What did Zwingli believe concerning Christ and His Supper?

In response to this, what did Luther say to Zwingli?

What is the characteristic mark of the Church? (167)

Write out the six doctrinal bases on which the Lutheran, that is, the Biblical practice of absolution rests. (169-170)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

The Romanists turn the Absolution, which is pure Gospel, into Law by making certain demands upon the penitent. What are these three demands? (171)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Complete the following: “A true Lutheran relies on God’s Word and is unconcerned even though \_\_\_\_\_.

## Eighteenth Evening Lecture – February 13, 1885

Does the crucifixion of Christ proclaim the certainty of the forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation? (178-179)

How important is the Walther's Ninth Thesis? Why? (180)

What is Luther's direction to those who desire God's forgiveness? (183)

Where does God tell us that He has forgiven us? (185)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

What does Walther state regarding a layman and the declaring of the truth of the absolution or the forgiveness of sins? (187)

Is the removal of sins based on a mysterious power of the pastor?

Comment on the following: “Cling to the words of Christ, and *be assured that God has no other way of forgiving sin than by the Word which He has commanded us to speak. If you do not seek forgiveness in His Word, it is in vain for you to stand gaping towards heaven for grace, or for what they call ‘inner forgiveness.’*” (190)

What does Luther say about “inner forgiveness” of the fanatics? (192)

## Nineteenth Evening Lecture – February 20, 1885

What was one of the most important of the many doctrinal differences that were discussed between the so-called Pietist and the Orthodoxists? (193)

Is there an intermediary state, or is a person either converted or not converted?

Which group has picked up on the system of keeping on praying and struggling *until they feel* that God has received them into grace? (195)

Is there any place for *feeling* in the Christian? (201)

Does faith proceed from feeling, or does feeling follow from faith?

Read 1 John 3:19-20 and comment on man's inward feeling and God's assurance through His Word of Truth? (201) [ By the way, is 1 John 3:19-20 the Law or the Gospel?]

What pastoral counsel does Walther advise when a faithful congregational member comes to the pastor claiming of great spiritual misery, claiming even that he cannot believe at all? (202)

No matter what other false doctrines the fanatical sects may teach, what grievous error do they have in common? (207)

## Twentieth Evening Lecture – February 27, 1885

The introduction to this lecture is of such churchly character and pastoral content that everyone in the congregation should read it, and particularly so if a congregation is receiving a candidate from the seminary. One is reminded of the Apostle Paul's two pastoral epistles to Timothy ... letters written to the young pastor but surely intended to be read to the congregation.

“Its import [1 Cor. 9:22] is that a minister must not be satisfied with merely proclaiming the truth; he must proclaim the truth so as to meet the needs of his people.” (208) Are “the needs of his people” different than “the felt needs of his people”?

### Thesis 10.

In the sixth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the preacher describes faith in a manner as if the mere inert acceptance of truths, even while a person is living in mortal sins, renders that person righteous in the sight of God and saves him; or as if faith makes a person righteous and saves him for the reason that it produces in him love and reformation of his mode of living..

What does the first part of this thesis refer to, and to what religious body does it chiefly refer? (210)

Read John 5:39-47. The Jews to whom Jesus spoke had sought salvation based on what?

Is it correct to state that the first part of this thesis can be summed up as follows? “Knowing is not enough. Acceptance and trust are required for saving faith.” In your answer, incorporate James 2:19.

What does the second part of this thesis refer to, and to what religious body does it chiefly refer? (210)

Demonstrate that “Once saved; always saved” is false doctrine.

Ponder on and make applications to the statement: “Faith and good conscience must be companions.”

## Twenty-First Evening Lecture – March 6, 1885

What is the primary source from which the objections to salvation by the grace of God through faith in Christ spring? (222)

What has happened when faith is described in such a way that it makes a person righteous and saves him because it produces in love in him and a reformation of his way of living? (223)

At the same time, what do the Holy Scriptures emphatically testify concerning good works?

What is one definition of faith? (224)

Which of the following is false doctrine without any hope and which is the truth? (225)

\_\_\_\_\_ First a person becomes godly, then he is saved.

\_\_\_\_\_ First a person is saved, then he becomes godly.

What are the real good works? (226)

Is an unbeliever, that is, the non-Christian, able to do good works?

What brings Walther to the conclusion that "the Roman doctrine of justification is nothing else than a complete denial, annihilation, and condemnation of the Gospel." (231)

On the basis of Thesis 10, comment on Ephesians 2:8-10.

Read Philippians 3:8-9. Paul writes of two righteousnesses. What are they and are they both real?

Comment on the following:

Righteousness based on the Law is DO, while righteousness based on the Gospel is DONE.

## Twenty-Second Evening Lecture – March 13, 1885

Read the first paragraph of this lecture. What has changed in Christendom? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever heard a sermon in which the Law was not used to accuse the Old Adam of his sin, but was used as a means to feel sorrow on account of the love of God felt in the heart ... a sorrow that drives a man to do the will of God in order to please Him?

### Thesis 11.

In the seventh place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when there is a disposition to offer the comfort of the Gospel only to those who have been made contrite by the Law, not from fear of the wrath and punishment of God, but from love of God.

Since the Fall, what is the single function of the Law? (236)

Is one able to possess the knowledge of sin without the love of God in his heart? (237)

Read the paragraph beginning with the reference to 2 Cor. 3,6. (238) This Bible verse is often used in the sense that the first part is bad and the second part is good. Both the Letter and the Spirit are good, or as Luther says, "The Law killeth, but the Gospel giveth Life." Read this paragraph six more times. (Don't let the Greek stop you. The words are, "This is My Body.")

Peter and Judas both had deep, heart-felt sorry for their sins of denial and betrayal. What did Peter have that Judas did not have? (241)

Agree or Disagree? Anyone who is truly sorry should only be offered the forgiving and comforting Gospel? Does 2 Corinthians 7:10 speak to this?

Who alone is able to produce genuine godly sorrow? (246)

In the introductory paragraphs of this lecture, Walther describes the religious setting of his day. Modernism placed science on the throne and theology was made to sit at its feet and await the order of philosophy. What were the marching orders of philosophy that has led to our post-modern world?

## Twenty-Third Evening Lecture – March 20, 1885

What is the most important official act of a servant of the Church? (247)

What are the differences between a Lutheran pastor and a Romanist priest in this area?

What are the five purposes in preaching?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

In achieve this task, what must happen? (248-249)

### Thesis 12.

In the eighth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the preacher represents contrition alongside of faith as a cause of the forgiveness of sin.

Is contrition (sorrow for sin) a cause for the forgiveness of sin? (249)

What are the two reasons why it is a mingling of Law and Gospel when someone says that the doctrine of contrition is a cause of the forgiveness of sins? (249-250)

- 1.
- 2.

What should be done if we may assume, in all reasonableness, that a person has been loosed from his self-righteousness and wants to be saved by grace alone? (253)

Ought we to distinguish daily repentance and repentance which precedes faith? Why, or why not? (254)



## Twenty-Fourth Evening Lecture – April 10, 1885

This lecture speaks of those who may be very well intentioned preachers who desire to proclaim Christ, but mingle Law and Gospel by preaching “faith, faith” instead of “the faith, the faith.” What is the difference?

### Thesis 13.

In the ninth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when one makes an appeal to believe in a manner as if a person could make himself believe or at least help toward that end, instead of preaching faith into a person’s heart by laying the Gospel promises before him.

What is the error that this thesis is directed? (260)

What is the point of the account of a small congregation of Indians who had the Gospel proclaimed to them, but they had never heard the word “faith” pronounced? (261)

What might easily happen if a pastor emphasized faith over and over and over?

Is the following a true statement? “To say that faith is required for salvation is not saying that man can produce faith himself.” (262) [Think of similar statements in the medical or legal professions.]

What is the overall false doctrine of Melancthon? (262-265)

Look up the definition of the word “synergism.”

Is faith something that the person does, or is it something God works in us at all times?

What does your answer in the previous question mean with respect to infants, Christians who are in comas, believers who have Alzheimer’s Disease, or you when you are asleep?

## Twenty-Fifth Evening Lecture – April 24, 1885

What is the most difficult and arduous task of a pastor? (265)

The minister who does this will experience the truth of an old saying. What is it?

Why is the Church here on earth termed “the Church Militant”? (266)

### Thesis 14.

In the tenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when faith is required as a condition of justification and salvation, as if a person were righteous in the sight of God and saved, not only by faith, but also on account of his faith, for the sake of his faith, and in view of his faith.

What do the papists mean by “faith”? (268)

What does this mean? Put it into your own words.

What does God’s Word really mean when it say that someone is justified and saved by faith alone? (269)

What are the only two causes of salvation that we believe, teach and confess? (271)

1.

2.

What does Gerhard mean when he wrote: “It is one thing to be justified *on account of* faith and another to be justified *by* faith”? (273)

Is faith a work of and a gift from God?

## Twenty-Sixth Evening Lecture – May 1, 1885

In order to be a true Christian, what is an indispensable requisite? (275)

In order to be a true minister, what is needed in addition to faith?

Write out the meanings of words that rationalistic preachers re-define.

repentance and conversion: \_\_\_\_\_

sanctification: \_\_\_\_\_

the anger of God: \_\_\_\_\_

the predestination of God: \_\_\_\_\_

the Gospel: \_\_\_\_\_

### Thesis 15.

In the eleventh place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the Gospel is turned into a preaching of repentance.

There are words in Scripture that have a “wide” meaning and a “narrow” meaning. (277-279) Write out the wide and the narrow meanings to the following:

	narrow meaning	wide meaning
repentance	_____ _____	_____ _____
Gospel	_____ _____	_____ _____

Indicate whether the following are referring to the wide (W) or the narrow (N) meaning.

Repentance:	Mark 1:15	( )	Gospel:	Mark 16:15	( )
	Acts 2:38	( )		Romans 1:16	( )

According to Thesis 15, a commingling of Law and Gospel takes place when the \_\_\_\_\_, that is, the \_\_\_\_\_ is turned into \_\_\_\_\_. (279)

## Twenty-Seventh Evening Lecture – May 8, 1885

What is meant by *the law of faith* ? (286-287)

How are we to understand the word “obeyed” in Romans 10:16 – *They have not all ‘obeyed’ the Gospel* ?

According to Luther’s description of the Gospel as the last will and testament of Christ, the Gospel is not a doctrine teaching us how we may make ourselves worthy in the sight of God, but \_\_\_\_\_. (291)

The mere regarding of the Gospel as a truthful record is not justifying faith. What must a person believe?

Concerning the previous question, is the difference between a truthful record and personal belief in this Good News, the first two words of the Apostles’ Creed?

Write out the five marks of the Gospel in the strict sense or narrow meaning. (294-295)  
[Be sure to read the Scripture references and how it demonstrates the mark.]

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

## Twenty-Eighth Evening Lecture – May 15, 1885

The introduction to Thesis 16 provides churchly and brotherly counsel that addresses sermon preparation, focus and delivery. In addition, Walther recognizes and speaks to the human weakness of the preacher, and offers guidance on occasions when the preacher mis-speaks. The reading of this excellent introduction will benefit both pastor and parishioner. (296-299)

### Thesis 16.

In the twelfth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the preacher tries to make people believe that they are truly converted as soon as they have become rid of certain vices and engage in certain works of piety and virtuous practices.

What is the essence of the grossest form of commingling of Law and Gospel? (299)

What does “repent” mean? (300)

Which of the Scripture verse commentaries on pages 300 – 302 was the most enlightening to you?

In what situations might believing pastors make a mistake and slip into a horrible commingling of Law and Gospel? (303)

Does Christianity maintain that we do good works and, as a result, are born again; or, are we born again and then do what is pleasing to God? (304)

According to Luther, everything a regenerate does is \_\_\_\_\_. (305)

Do good and pious works produce a good and pious person? (306)

Do good and pious intentions produce a good and pious person?

## Twenty-Ninth Evening Lecture – May 29, 1885

In the words prefacing Thesis 17 the difference between the lukewarm/cold and the faithful servant of the Word is demonstrated from the Scriptures. This section is sobering.

One grievous sin that a minister commits is when he does not take his stewardship of the mysteries of God seriously. What also is a grievous sin? (308)

### Thesis 17.

In the thirteenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when a description is given of faith, both as regards its strength and the consciousness and productiveness of it, that does not fit all believers at all times.

What is the ultimate aim of a true servant of the Word? (308)

Once again, which of the Scripture verse commentaries on pages 308 – 311 was the most enlightening to you?

The Christian does indeed daily sin much in thought, word and deed. Which petition of the Lord's Prayer acknowledges that and requests the assurance of God's pardon? (311)

The blessedness of a Christian does not consist in pleasant feelings. In what does the blessedness of the Christian consist? (312)

True or False: (312-313)

- \_\_\_\_\_ After becoming a Christian, a person retains his natural temperament.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It cannot be said that to be Christian, a person will never commit a gross sin.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A true Christian will be as patient as Job.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A person can be a Christian and, at the same time, fear death.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pride will not plague a Christian since it would violate the First Commandment.

Whenever a preacher draws the picture of a Christian, what practical exercise is suggested? (313)

## Thirtieth Evening Lecture – June 5, 1885

The previous lecture demonstrated how Law and Gospel can be confounded by an exaggerated view of Christianity ... basically, the Christian does not sin. The next thesis addresses a confounding due to an opposite emphasis.

### Thesis 18.

In the fourteenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the universal corruption of mankind is described in such a manner as to create the impression that even true believers are still under the spell of ruling sins and are sinning purposely.

In your own words, re-write Thesis 18.

What must the hearers of a sincere preacher always hear? (319)

When a preacher speaks of *abominable sinners*, which people must he not refer to? (320)

What declaration of God may every Christian apply to himself or herself? (320)

Which of the Scripture verse commentaries on pages 320 – 322 was the most enlightening to you?

What is described as *lip faith* ? (322)

## Thirty-First Evening Lecture – June 12, 1885

Note the reactions to and explanations for the origin and continued existence of sin. (324)

What is the chief cause of the almost universal rejection of the Gospel in our time?

What is the consequence when a person does not have a real knowledge of what an awful thing sin is? (325)

### Thesis 19.

In the fifteenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the preacher speaks of certain sins as if they are not of a damnable, but of a venial nature.

What is the definition of *mortal sins* ?

Does Walther give a list of mortal sins? Why or why not?

What is the definition of *venial sins* ?

What does this mean? “There is no sin venial in itself; but there are such sins as will not hinder a person from still believing in Jesus Christ with all his heart.” (327)

What two truths does a Christian believe and confess? (328)

- 1.
- 2.

Is absolution necessary AND available for venial sins? (330)

When do small sins become great, mortal sins? (332)



## Thirty-Second Evening Lecture – June 19, 1885

This lecture is of particular importance for us today. The discussion of fellowship and union, of the one holy, catholic and apostolic Church, and of the application of these to the individual Christian would be of great benefit to the sons of God.

### Thesis 20.

In the sixteenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when a person's salvation is made to depend on his association with the visible orthodox Church and when salvation is denied to every person who errs in any article of faith.

Read Matthew 16:18. Who or what is the rock? (334)

What does “being built upon Christ mean?

What does this mean? “We may see people going to church, but we cannot see whether they belong to the Church.” (336)

What doctrine is overthrown when a person's salvation is made dependent on membership in and communion with the visible orthodox Church? (337)

With respect to the Lutheran Church, what abominable fanatical notion must be far from us?

Complete the following: “The Lutheran Church claims to be the *only Church that has the pure doctrine*, but \_\_\_\_\_.”

In what sense do we say that the Lutheran Church is the true visible Church? (343)

## Thirty-Third Evening Lecture – September 4, 1885

What are the three requisites of a theologian? (343)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### Thesis 21.

In the seventeenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when men are taught that the Sacraments produce salutary effects *ex opere operato*, that is, by the mere outward performance of a sacramental act.

What is the definition of *ex opere operato* ?

Re-write this definition in your own words.

Does the Word of God benefit a person who does not believe? (347)

Recall the catechism answer to the question: “How can water do such great things?”

How does this catechetical response apply to Thesis 21?

Who, alone, can give a person true faith? (348)

## Thirty-Fourth Evening Lecture – September 11, 1885

The first paragraph is an accurate description of what was taking place in the Church 120 years ago. Does this paragraph accurately describe what is taking place today? (348)

What is the contempt of the pure doctrine also in contempt of/for? (349)

1.

2.

In Jude 3, what is the author instructing his readers to contend for? (349)

Why must we not only defend the truth but also oppose every doctrinal error? (351)

God offers forgiveness of sins, righteousness and eternal life. Of what benefit is it if it is not received? Is the accepting of a present a work? (352)

Must one believe in the promise of God in the Lord's Supper in order to receive the blessing that God intends? (353)

What is to urge a Christian to go to Communion? (354)

Do we maintain that people are saved by the mere external use of the Sacraments? (355)

As it relates to Thesis 21, what does the following mean?

“Baptism, according to Lutheran teaching, is not regeneration, but *effects* it, *produces* it; it is a *means* of regeneration.”

Do Baptism, the Lord's Supper and Absolution have God's command and the promise of grace? (357)

Does Walther affirm that Absolution is a Sacrament? (357)

The Word produces faith, brings us forgiveness of sins, and give us the grace of God and salvation. Is this also true of Baptism and the Lord's Supper? (358)

## Thirty-Fifth Evening Lecture – September 18, 1885

The introduction encourages the preacher to proclaim the Gospel – that Jesus is the Way of salvation and that there is no other savior. It also condemns those false shepherds who ignore the Gospel and point people to the Law. Who are the worst offenders of this and what is heard from the pulpits? (361)

What is easy to avoid and what is difficult to avoid in the preaching of Christ? (362)

### Thesis 22.

In the eighteenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when a false distinction is made between a person's being awakened and his being converted; moreover, when a person's ABILITY to believe is mistaken for his not BEING PERMITTED to believe.

Look up the definitions of a *pietist* in several dictionaries.

What are the three categories that Pietists place all people? (363)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

According to the Scriptures, there are only two categories. What are they?

- 1.
- 2.

Compare the conversion of the first Pentecost hearers, the Ethiopian official and the Philippian jailor. (365-366)

Is repentance the work of man or a gift from God? (367)

Is the longing for mercy is an indication of faith? (369)

## Thirty-Sixth Evening Lecture – September 25, 1885

In view of the Good News of our salvation, what would one think that all people would joyfully desire and receive? (370)

Read the account of Elijah and the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18 and concentrate on it from the perspective of the people. What were they willing to accept? What did it take to convince the people that the LORD is the only God?

Walther likens the prophets of Baal in the time of Elijah with the Pharisees in the days of Christ. How are they alike? (371)

In addition to making a false distinction between awakening and conversion, what addition error do the so-called Pietists and fanatical sects put forth? (372)

Is conversion a process over a period of time with steps, or is it a point in time? (373)

What are four consequences when a man is told that he may not yet believe? (373-375)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Is mistaking the inability to believe with not being permitted to believe is contrary to the practice of the apostles? What is the difference? (376)

According to Luther, what is missing in all other churches? (378)

When a pastor absolves some one, who is doing the absolving? (379)

## Thirty-Seventh Evening Lecture – October 2, 1885

What is one of the most important and necessary qualities of a pastor? (379)

In what is false zeal of a minister rooted? (380)

What is the difference between the preachers of false, man-made teachings and the preachers of the pure doctrine of God's Word? (381)

### Thesis 23.

In the nineteenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when an attempt is made, by means of the demands or the threats or the promises of the Law, to induce the unregenerate to put away their sins and engage in good works and thus become godly; on the other hand, when an endeavor is made, by means of the commands of the Law rather than by the admonitions of the Gospel, to urge the regenerate to do good.

Is the purpose of the Law, after the Fall, to make men godly? (381)

Before the Fall, what was the reason why Adam and Eve had to have the Law in their hearts? (382)

At the present time what purpose does the Law have? (383)

If any one is prompted by the Law to do certain good works, why does he do them? (385)

In what two ways is the confounding of Law and Gospel in Thesis 23 often found even in the orthodox Church? (387)

- 1.
- 2.

What is the only way of improving corrupt congregations, that is, ones that have been subjected to this coercion of the Law to do works? (388)

## Thirty-Eighth Evening Lecture – October 23, 1885

What is the chief aim of a Christian pastor? (391)

What does baptizing a person mean?

What does absolving a person mean?

What does administering Communion to a person mean?

What is the reason that so many in our day live in uncertainty about their being true Christians? (392)

### Thesis 24.

In the twentieth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the unforgivable sin against the Holy Ghost is described in a manner as if it could not be forgiven because of its magnitude.

Who works faith in the heart of the person through the Word of the Gospel? (395)

What is characteristic of the sin against the Holy Spirit? (396)

Are a repentant spirit and contrite heart characteristics of someone who has committed the sin against the Holy Spirit? (397)

A person who has committed the sin against the Holy Ghost is condemned not so much on account of this sin, but rather, on account of \_\_\_\_\_. (400)

What are the general and the specific causes of such an individual's damnation?

general cause: \_\_\_\_\_

specific cause: \_\_\_\_\_

## Thirty-Ninth Evening Lecture – November 6, 1885

Is Diderot's quotation regarding kings and priests a valid criticism based on the historical record and practice? (401)

What are the two reasons why Walther is not deterring men from entering the holy ministry? (402)

- 1.
- 2.

### Thesis 25.

In the twenty-first place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the person teaching it does not allow the Gospel to have a general predominance in his teaching.

What is the first proof that the Gospel ought to have general predominance? (403)

Mark 16:16 (*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.* ) is pure Gospel. Why? (404)

Are the following passages are pure Gospel? Why, or why not?

John 14:6 – (Consider a case where there is only one medicine that will cure a disease and no one will be cured without that one medicine; or, where there is only one way out of a room on fire and no one will get out except by that one door. Is this good news of a great joy?)

Acts 4:12 –

1 Corinthians 2:2 –

In addition to the preacher being conscious of his orthodoxy and his ability to present pure doctrine correctly, what must be done lest his hearers be spiritually starved? (406)

Etch, post, engrave or otherwise write the following words on the (sacristy) door leading to the sanctuary or on the pulpit:

“On examining your sermon for both its Law and its Gospel contents, you may find that you have given the Gospel very little space. Now remember, if you come out of your pulpit without having preached enough Gospel to save some poor sinner who may have come to church for the first and the last time, his blood will be required of you.”



Dearly Beloved,

If, during or after the reading of *The Proper Distinction of Law and Gospel* and/or the ponderings prompted by this study guide, you are condemned by the Law that always accuses the old sinful Adam, and you are sorry for your transgressions of God's Holy Law, and you desire God's mercy and grace, then please hear the Good News ...

fear not, the Father sent His Son into this world to give His Life for you

fear not, the Incarnation of the Son of God is for you

fear not, the Active Obedience of Jesus the Christ is for you

fear not, the Passive Obedience of the Incarnate Son of God is for you

fear not, the Atonement for all your sins is complete and finished for you

fear not, the Resurrection of Emmanuel is for you

fear not, the Ascension of Jesus is for you

fear not, the Enthronement of Jesus is for you

fear not, the sending of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost is for you

fear not, this Gospel is for you

fear not, you are baptized

which means

You are forgiven in the Name of the Father and of the (☩) Son of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.