

# MORSELS FROM THE SAVIOUR

Precious Biblical Food Translated from our Old orthodox Lutheran Fathers.

Vol.5.

April -June, 2017

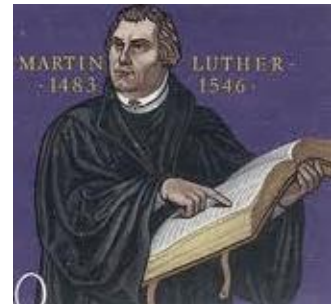
No.2.

**[Editorial Note:** This is purely a private endeavour by the undersigned in order to assist faithful orthodox Lutheran Christians to grow ever deeper in Christian faith and knowledge in these last days. As often as we can we would like to place before our readers portions of translated Biblical material from our orthodox Lutheran fathers which to our knowledge is not at present available to our readers in English. Pastor B L Winter, ELCR.]

## CONTENTS

- Page 1: What Do We Learn From Luther At Worms?** by Dr. F. Pieper - Part 11 (Conclusion).  
**Page 8: Walther: Sermon on Mat. 24:15-28** from Light of Life.  
**Page 15: Constantly Be Faithful To The Orthodox Lutheran Church** - Part 2 by Dr. E. Darsow Snr.  
**Page 20: Evangelical Lutheran Church: Lecture 14: Sharply Distinguishes Between What God's Word Commands and What It Leaves To Christian Liberty (Adiaphora) --Part 1.** by Dr. F. Pieper.  
**Page 25: Real Lexikon: Falling Away from the Faith** -- Pastor Eckhardt.  
**Page 29: Sermon Study on Eph. 6:10-17** - Part 5. Continued From **Morsels** Jan-March 2017.  
**Page 31: Only God's Word Is To Be Heard In the Church** -- Dr. F Pieper.

## **What Do We Learn From Luther At Worms?**<sup>1</sup> by Dr. F. Pieper Part 11.



## **THE SCRIPTURES ARE A CLEAR BOOK IN ALL MATTERS OF FAITH AND LIFE.**

**3. Scripture is also dark to those who are so prejudiced against certain Scripture doctrines, that they also no longer externally pay attention to the relevant words of Scriptures.** Thus, Christ's words regarding the Holy Lord's Supper remain hidden to many Reformed because of a false interpretation of these words which they have heard from their youth. When they hear or read the words of Christ, "**This is My body,**" in their thoughts they immediately substitute for these words: "This *signifies* My body," or "This is a *symbol* of My body," even though the words of Christ are the very opposite.

Furthermore, the objection against the clarity of Scripture has been raised by saying that we admit that there are dark passages in Scripture. Even **Luther** acknowledged it when he said: "It is indeed true that

<sup>1</sup> Taken from District Report, North Dakota-Montana, 1921, pages 9-47 which contained the original German Essay. This portion covers pages 43- 47 of the original.

some passages in Scripture are obscure (dark, BLW.).<sup>2</sup> But with these passages of the Scriptures the facts of the matter are thus: in the first place, these are such texts which a Christian can allow to remain dark, **without the Christian faith becoming uncertain because of them.** They are, in fact, texts which do not directly concern Christian doctrine, but include dates (for example, being able exactly to determine the location of certain cities), or they also describe old customs (shading of the colors in the priest's clothes, Ex. 28). Every intelligent person acknowledges that a Christian can allow such texts to remain dark **without the Christian faith becoming uncertain to him because of them.**



If, however, such dark passages **directly concern Christian doctrine**, then every Christian can and should be certain that **these passages contain nothing other than that which exists revealed elsewhere in Scripture in clear and universally understandable words.** Luther often says: "All Christian doctrines are expressed some where in the Scriptures with such clear words that not only the scholars (the learned, BLW), but also the uneducated understand them."<sup>3</sup>

So also Augustine taught<sup>4</sup>. But here, too, we believe this not merely because of what Luther and Augustine say, but above all **because the Scriptures so teach it.** Where do the Scriptures teach this? This occurs in all those passages in which it is said that Scripture is a lamp and a light for the path through life for all the children of God and not merely for the scholars (learned, BLW), as this is stated in passages like Psalm 119:10<sup>5</sup>; Luke 16:29<sup>6</sup>; etc.

### **CLARITY OF SCRIPTURE IS TAUGHT IN PASSAGES WHICH URGE CHRISTIANS TO JUDGE THE DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE OF THEIR TEACHERS.**

Furthermore, this is taught in all passages in which Christians are strongly urged to judge from Scripture and according to Scripture, whether their teachers and preachers remain with or depart from Scripture, as is found in passages like Rom. 16:17; Mat.7:15, etc.

When, therefore, **Luther** says: "If you cannot understand the dark (obscure) passages, then stay with the clear passages," then this is not excessive<sup>7</sup> speech, but in accordance with Scripture. This too is not an arbitrary statement, but is in accordance with Scripture, when Luther says that one should be ashamed to call the Scripture dark in this respect, since it so clearly reveals Christ and through Him the way to salvation. This it truly does. **We know from completely clear passages of Scripture who Christ is**, namely, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary. We know exactly **what Christ has done for us and for all mankind**,

**BEWARE**  
OF THOSE CHRISTIANS  
WHOSE FAITH IS BASED  
ON THEIR OWN IDEAS AND  
FEELINGS, AND WHAT  
THEY THINK IS RIGHT, AND  
NOT ON GOD'S WORD

namely, that by His perfect life, suffering and death He has obtained for us forgiveness of sins and salvation. We know exactly **how we can become partakers of the grace and salvation He has acquired for us**, namely, by faith, without the works of the Law. We also know exactly **how we can come to faith or be converted**, namely, by the operation of God's grace and almighty power in the Gospel. Faith comes through

<sup>2</sup> S.L. V:335; Christian Dogmatics, Pieper, I, 324.

<sup>3</sup> "**Luther**: 'If you encounter an obscure passage in Scripture, do not doubt that it certainly contains the same truth which is elsewhere stated in clear language' (St. L. V:338). Then **Luther** adds: 'If you cannot understand the obscure, then stay with the clear.'" [Christian Dogmatics, Pieper, I, 324].

<sup>4</sup> Augustine: "In the clear passages of Scripture everything is found that pertains to faith and life" (*De Doctrina Christiana II*, p. 9) [Christian Dogmatics, Pieper, I,324]

<sup>5</sup> Psalm 119:105: "**Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.**"

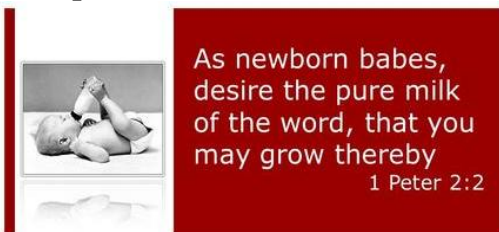
<sup>6</sup> Luke 16:29: "**They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.**"

<sup>7</sup> Exceeding the limits of what is right.

the message of preaching (the Gospel), Rom.10:17; Eph 1:19-20. Furthermore, **we know very well how we can do good works**, namely, by faith in the forgiveness of sins without the works of the Law, for this faith is active through love, Gal.5:6. Also nor are we in ignorance as to **how we are preserved in the faith** for salvation. We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, 1 Pet.1:5. We **know where our souls are going to when we die before the Last Day**, namely, not to purgatory, but into Paradise, Luke 23:43. We also know very well **what will happen to us when we experience the Last Day**; we shall be transformed in an instant, and transfigured to the heavenly glory, and thus be with the Lord for eternity, 1 Cor. 15:2ff. Tell us, dear man, dear Christian, what more do you want? Is this not clear and sufficient information?

**ARTICLES OF FAITH ARE INCOMPREHENSIBLE TO REASON, YET STATED IN CLEAR, PLAIN WORDS.**

In addition, one has objected to the clarity of Scripture (as for example Erasmus did against Luther<sup>8</sup>) using the argument that the main doctrines of Scripture, like the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and the Person of Christ, are incomprehensible to human reason. That is a very foolish objection. Of course the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is an incomprehensible mystery (to human reason). **No man can comprehend how there can be three distinct Persons, and yet only one undivided and indivisible God.** Also **it is completely incomprehensible how in Christ God and man can be the one Person.**

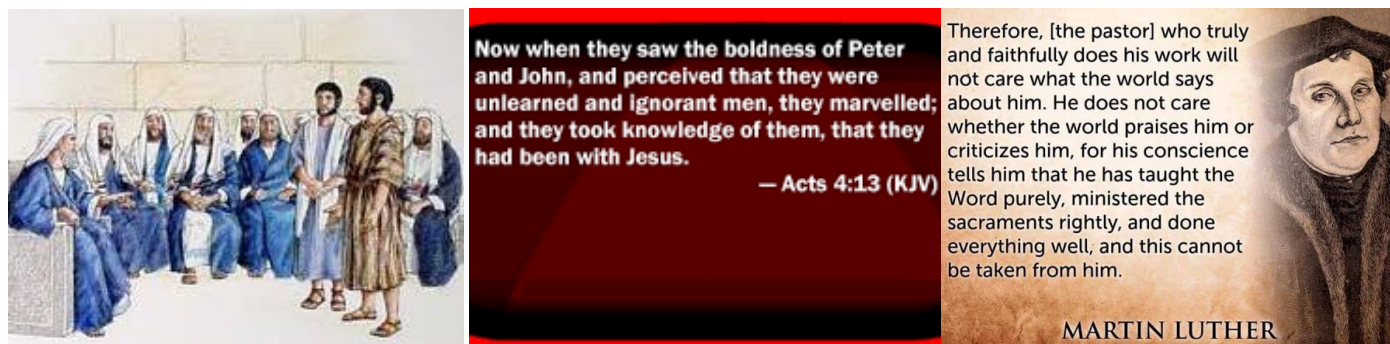


Never Be Satisfied

But these mysteries, which are so incomprehensible to narrow (limited) human reason, **are revealed in the Scriptures in such clear words that faith which relies on the Word of Scripture can apprehend** (seize, grasp) **them.** The articles of Christian doctrine are not articles of reason, but articles of faith. Whoever is foolish enough to want to comprehend the Articles of faith with his narrow (limited) reason, let him not charge Holy Scripture with darkness (obscurity), but let him accuse himself of foolishness. Then he finds the right place, namely, the actual seat

(place) of where the darkness exist.

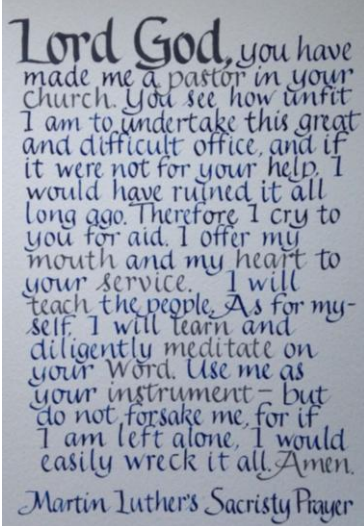
**PASTORAL OFFICE IS NOT TO MAKE BIBLE CLEAR, BUT TO TEACH THE CLEAR WORD OF GOD.**



But -- so reads another objection to the clarity of Scripture -- what is the purpose for the pastors and public teachers, if Scripture is clear to all Christians? The Office of the Ministry is **nevertheless a divine ordinance**<sup>9</sup>! Don't these words mean that Scripture is not entirely clear? It is to be answered in this way: **Scripture teaches both: (1) that the public Office of the Ministry is God's ordinance, and (2) that the**

<sup>8</sup> See Luther's Works S.L. XVIII:1682 ff. "Luther answers Erasmus: '**Scripture simply confesses** the Trinity of God, the humanity of Christ, and the unpardonable sin. **There is here no obscurity or ambiguity whatever. But how these things are, Scripture does not say, nor is it necessary to be known.** The sophists employ their dreams here; attack and condemn them, and acquit Scripture' (St. L. XVIII, 1682 ff.). Like Luther, our theologians distinguish in the doctrines of faith between the *that* (τὸ ὄν) and the *how* (τὸ πῶς). The former is clearly revealed in Scripture; the latter we should not attempt to fathom." (Christian Dogmatics, Pieper Vol. I, 326).

<sup>9</sup> A Divine Institution.



**Holy Scripture is clear.** That the public Office of the Ministry is not a human invention, but a divine institution can be seen, for example, from Titus 1:5ff<sup>10</sup>, where the Apostle Paul commands Titus to see to it that the cities in which Christian congregations had arisen were supplied with elders (presbyters) or bishops, that is, **pastors**. That Holy Scripture calls itself clear, we have already proven in detail from Scripture, Psalm 119:105<sup>11</sup>; Luke 16:29<sup>12</sup>, etc. The fact that the Divine Institution of the Office of the Public Ministry does not contradict the clarity of Scripture is also shown to be irrefutable from the fact that, according to the divine ordinance (command), all Christians are to test (prove) on the basis of Scripture whether or not the doctrine of their preachers agrees with Scripture. From the Divine Institution of the Pastoral Office we see how very precious the salvation of all of us is to God. Our salvation is so precious to Him that He has, so to say, **done something extra. Every one of us can already come to the Christian faith and remain in the Christian faith alone by means of Scripture**<sup>13</sup>. But in order that no-one indeed may fail to

reach his life's goal, God in addition, has appointed public watchmen<sup>14</sup> who by virtue of their Office are to watch over our souls with doctrine, admonition, reproof, and consolation from Scripture and with Scripture, Heb. 13:17<sup>15</sup>; Ezek. 3:18<sup>16</sup>.

### **DISUNITY OF THE CHURCH IS NOT DUE TO THE LACK OF CLARITY OF GOD'S WORD, BUT MAN'S PERSISTENT REFUSAL TO ABIDE BY THE CLEAR WORD.**

Finally, one may refer to the objection to the clarity of the Divine Word which is *drawn from the disunity within external Christendom*. It is said, how can Scripture be clear, since there has been so much

<sup>10</sup> Titus 1:5, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee."

<sup>11</sup> Psalm 119:105: "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, guiding his footsteps past the abysses of so many and severe dangers, and a light unto my path, not with a dim and uncertain illumination, but with a direct and clear ray, which makes every foot of the way unmistakable."

<sup>12</sup> Luke 16:29, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."

<sup>13</sup> John 5:39, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me."

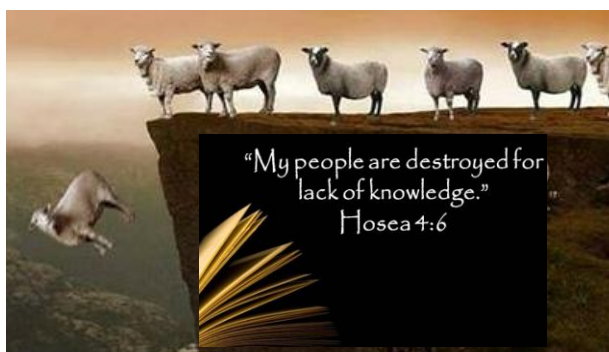
<sup>14</sup> Someone has correctly stated: "Christ instituted the Office of the Ministry not to render the Bible clear, but to teach the clear Word of God."

<sup>15</sup> Heb. 13:17, "Obey [πειθω: listen to, yield, comply (Thayer). When your leaders speak on the authority of God's Word, they have the right to expect obedience. Greek: keep constantly obeying) them that have the rule over you (Greek: your spiritual overseers. Luther: euren Lehrern = your teachers), and submit (Greek: constantly be submitting) yourselves: for they watch for your souls (Greek: keeping watch over your souls and continually guarding your spiritual welfare), as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief (Greek: not with a constant sighing, groaning): for that is unprofitable for you [Luther: denn das ist euch nicht gut = for that is not good for you; Greek: unprofitable; by Litotes: hurtful, pernicious (Thayer)]."

**Kretzmann:** "Here he speaks of the teachers, pastors, ministers that have charge of their spiritual welfare at the present time. They should yield themselves trustfully to their teaching, as long as they teach the Word of God, the pure Gospel of the salvation of all men, as this was being done by the teachers in Judea. Christians should always remember what a great responsibility was resting upon these men and is resting upon the true pastors today, that they must render an account to the Lord on the last day for every soul that was entrusted to their pastoral care. It is a solemn word for both the teachers and the hearers. Since it is in the interest of the souls of the people that faithful pastors discharge their duty, therefore the parishioners should make it their object thus to conduct themselves toward their pastors at all times that the latter may perform the work of their office cheerfully and joyfully and not groaningly, with sighs and laments; for such a condition of affairs would surely react in such a manner upon the hearers as to deprive them of at least some of the benefit which God intends for them through the ministry of the Word, Luke 10:16; Ezek. 3:17-21."

<sup>16</sup> Ezek. 3:18, "When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand."

controversy (disputing) in the Christian Church from the beginning which is followed by separation (division)? The only correct answer to this objection we have already given earlier from Scripture. All disagreement and division (in the visible church) come from the fact that one **departs from the clear Word of Scripture**. There are **teachers** arise who do not remain with the Word of God, Acts 20:29<sup>17</sup>, and the **hearers** refrain from being governed by and from judging according to God's Word, Rom.16:17<sup>18</sup>. It is foolish and Godless to condemn Holy Scripture while they should only condemn themselves.



This is what our Luther taught in such a powerful way in his writings, namely, that Holy Scripture is clear, and that whoever only looks into the Scriptures and does not allow the words of Scripture to be pushed aside, but embraces them in faith, **cannot go astray**. This is what some of Luther's words testify, as Walther cites in "The Evangelical Lutheran Church is the True Visible Church," page 57 (English; German: 66 ff.).

**Luther** says: "Scripture should be the judge to prove all spirits in the church (1 Thes. 5:21), for this above all things all Christians must know and regard as true, that Holy Scripture is a spiritual light, far clearer than is the sun (Ps. 119:105; 2 Peter 1:19), especially in those matters which are necessary for a Christian to know as serving his salvation." [(Reply to *Erasmus' Tract On the Freedom of the Will* [1525], XVIII, 2137; SL XVIII. 1742). Translated by Dr. J.T. Mueller in True Visible Church of God on Earth (Walther) page 57).]

And again **Luther** says: "But if anyone of them attacks you and says: You must have the interpretation of the fathers, for Scripture is obscure, **you must reply that this is not true. No clearer book has ever been written upon earth than Holy Scripture**, which, compared with all other books, is like the **sun** compared with all other lights. **They say this only to lead us away from Scripture and to exalt themselves as masters over us** so that we should listen to their dreams. It is indeed a great and atrocious shame and vice perpetrated against Holy Scripture and all Christendom, to say that Scripture is obscure and not so clear that everyone may understand it and teach and prove from it **his faith**. Note this: Would it not be a great shame for you and me to be called a Christian and **yet we would not know what we believed? But if I know what I believe, I know also what is written in Scripture, for Scripture teaches no more than Christ and the Christian faith**. Hence if the believer only listens to Scripture, it is so clear and lucid to him that he could say without the glosses of all fathers and teachers: **'That is true, and that I also believe...'**" [Translated by Dr. J.T. Mueller in "True Visible Church of God on Earth" (Walther) pages 57,58).]

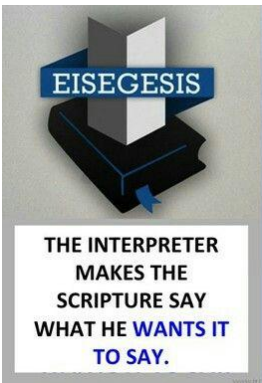
### PROPER USE OF BIBLICAL EXEGESIS

What Luther here says seems to be against (the use of) **Exegesis (Exposition)**. How does it stand with us, **do we despise Exegesis?** We urge and promote much Exegesis. But this is the way Exegesis is conducted among us: We professors do not even imagine that we bring light to bear on the Scriptures, but **our entire Exegetical work<sup>19</sup> consists in that we direct the eyes of our students to what stands written in Scripture**. They

<sup>17</sup> Acts 20:29, "**For I know** (Greek: to know with certainty) **this, that after my departing shall grievous** (Greek: = βαρύς = **barus** - violent, fierce, cruel, vicious, ferocious and treacherous) **wolves enter in among you** (It is very difficult to deal with false teachers who rise up from among the flock, BLW), **not sparing** (Greek: φείδομαι = **phaidomai** = **not** to treat leniently = by **Litotes**, to treat harshly, severely) **the flock.**"

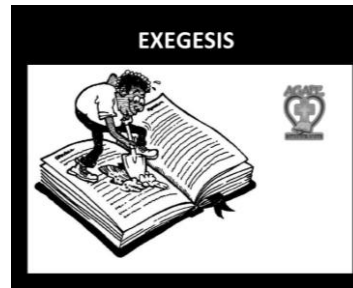
<sup>18</sup> Rom.16:17, "**Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause** (keep on causing, BLW) **divisions and offences contrary to** (alongside of, BLW) **the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them** (have no church, prayer and altar fellowship with them, BLW)."

<sup>19</sup> **Dr. F. Pieper:** "All exegesis, whether it be in general the **unfolding of the sense of Scripture** or in particular the **explanation of (or rather the attempt to explain) the more difficult passages of Scripture**, is based on the fact that the **entire Christian doctrine is revealed and set forth in Scripture passages so clear that the learned and**



## EXEGESIS

- 'ex' means 'out of'
- Exegesis draws meaning out of a text



They are to study Scripture without bringing into it their own human opinion. Even the clear passages of Scripture have been concealed by false teachers with

false interpretation. And here it is also part of our work, for example, that we say to our students: This is what the Roman Catholic teachers have placed into this text of Scripture; now let us at once be certain that really is taught there in that text. In this way we direct the eyes of our students to the clear word of Scripture when we are doing Exegesis and so they are also to judge whether I as a professor am continuing in (remaining with) the Word of Scripture. This is the only correct position towards Holy Scripture. Our faith is not to be based on human exegesis, but on **nuda Scriptura**, on the **bare words of Scripture**, as Luther says. Thus we Lutherans do not even interpret Scripture according to Luther's exposition, **but we base our faith on the words of Scripture itself**. We use Luther in so far as he shows us what Scripture teaches.

### DO WE TRULY REGARD THE BIBLE AS GOD'S WORD?

Finally, there are still some questions we are to ask ourselves for self-examination to prove whether we too personally regard the Holy Scriptures most devoutly **as God's Word and the only source and norm of Christian doctrine**.

**1. Every time we open our Bible do we always consider it a Book in which not man, but the sovereign God Himself, the Creator of heaven and earth and the Saviour of mankind, is speaking to**

---

**unlearned alike can understand them; they do not stand in need of 'exegesis' for explanation.** If Scripture did not have this quality, it would not be for all Christians 'a lamp unto their feet and a light unto their path,' nor would all Christians be able to establish the truth of their faith by Scripture and in the light of Scripture to mark and avoid false teachers." (Pieper **Christian Dogmatics**, I, 359).

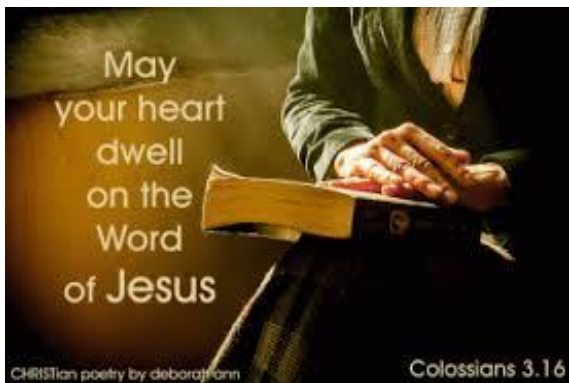
Again **Pieper** states: "The **first and foremost duty of the exegete** consists in **holding the flighty spirit of man to the simple word of Scripture** and, where he has departed from it, to **lead him back to the simple word of Scripture**. Luther says that the sole purpose of all his writings and particularly of his exegetical works is to lead back into Scripture, to get every Christian and every teacher to base his faith on the bare Scripture...." (ibid, p.360).

Again **Pieper** states: "Thus our day, too, needs exegetes—they do not have to be in every case professional theologians—who by God's grace possess principally four qualities: 1) they **know Scripture to be God's own Word and treat it accordingly**; 2) they have learned, from Scripture's own testimony, that **Scripture is clear**; 3) they concentrate their efforts upon the *manuductio ad nudam Scripturam* (Getting down to the bare Scriptures, BLW); 4) they **uncover the deceit practiced when men propose**, under the good name of exegesis, to shed light on Scripture by means of their human opinions." (ibid p.361).

Again **Pieper** teaches us: "Luther is unalterably convinced that God gave Holy Scripture such a form that the entire Christian doctrine is revealed and submitted in passages which need no 'exegesis' (exegesis in the sense of removing obscurities). **He who would determine the meaning of the clear passages through still other passages engages in a work of interminable adjustments, makes the entire Scriptures uncertain and obscure, and converts them into an inextricable chaos.** Yes, there is the rule: 'One passage must be explained by another,' but, as Luther adds immediately: 'Namely, **a doubtful and obscure passage (*locus ambiguus et obscurus*) must be explained by means of a clear and certain passage.**' The clear passage needs no further explanation." (ibid, 363).

Finally **Pieper** states here: " Exegesis, in its double function of the *enarratio* (exposition, BLW) of the Scriptural content and of **the removal of obscurities by means of the clear passages**, is a **most serious and sacred occupation**. The Scriptures are the Word of God, and adding to them or subtracting from them is **strictly forbidden** to everyone (Deut. 4:2). Whoever attempts to shed more light on dark passages of Scripture than Scripture itself offers in its clear passages is adding to God's Word. And whoever obscures clear passages by bringing in obscure passages is taking away from God's Word. Let the exegete particularly study the words εἴ τις λαλεῖ, ὡς λόγια θεοῦ, (1 Pet. 4:11). **What he cannot speak as God's Word, he should leave unuttered.** If he is not certain that he is speaking God's Word, he should say so and—following Luther's advice—leave the passage unexplained." (ibid, pages 364, 365).

us? As long as we live here on earth God is an invisible God to us. But **in His Word He speaks to us**. In this life we can approach God for our salvation **only in His Word**. Let us remember this when we open our Bible or listen to the words of the Bible so that we may reverently adore God in His Word and say: "**Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth**" (1 Sam.3:9).



**2. Do we diligently read the Scriptures?** That is our plain duty. Holy Scripture is God's letter to us human beings. Letters of kings and eminent persons are read more than once. God's letter to us humans we are to read a hundred times and a thousand times. Is the Bible read in our home more than any other book? Or is it the Book which is the least read of all books?

**3. Do we listen diligently to God's Word when it is proclaimed in public worship?** Do we stay away from the public worship of our congregation only then at those times when God Himself calls us to stay away by virtue of the works

of love?

**4. Do we let God's Word dwell richly among us also when we converse and associate with our brethren in the faith?** Christians can and should also talk about the things that belong to their secular and temporal calling. They will also discuss current events. The world judges these things wrongly. Christians need not hold false views when judging the events in the world. They can and should judge all these things in the light of the Word of God. For this purpose God has written the letter of His Word to us.

**5. Are we diligent in committing to memory as many words (and texts) of Scripture as possible, so that God's Word is ever present with us as a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path even when we do not have our Bible with us?**

**6. Are we diligent in the spreading of the Bible and in the training of teachers and pastors who make it their exclusive life's calling to teach God's Word?**

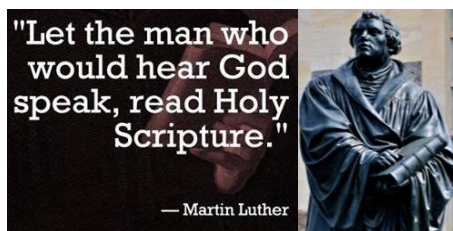
These and other admonitions arise from the truth that Holy Scripture is God's own Word and the only source and norm of the Christian faith.

Thus, at this year's (1921, BLW) Synodical Convention by studying Luther at Worms we have been permitted to be reminded of the two main parts of the Christian religion:

**1. of the Article of Faith concerning the obtaining of forgiveness of sins and salvation by faith in Christ without the works of the Law.** This is the article of which our Lutheran Confession says that it is "the highest, foremost Article of all Christian doctrine," (Apology of the Augsburg Confession Triglotta page 121 German section.) from which article therefore "nothing can be yielded or surrendered... even though heaven and earth, and whatever will not abide, should sink to ruin." (Triglotta, page 461, paragraph 5). (**Sola Gratia**).

**2. of the Article of Faith that we are not to base our faith on the word of men, in spite of the reputation they might have, but alone on God's Word, that is, on Holy Scripture. (Sola Scriptura).** We can also learn many other lessons from Luther at Worms, for example, the lesson, how a Christian, who is certain of the grace of God and who with the eye of faith alone looks at God's Word and overcomes the world; furthermore we learn the lesson that the Christian Church is not built by external (physical) force, but by the teaching of the Word of God (Luther's firm rejection of all secular power in the support of his work). But with this somewhat detailed exposition of the first two main parts of the Christian Religion, it may be enough for this year.

(CONCLUSION - *Italicised emphasis is Dr. Pieper's. Headings have been added, paragraphs divided up and pictures added.*)





## Sermon from Walther's<sup>20</sup> Light of Life<sup>21</sup>

On 25th Sunday after Trinity.

Text: Mat. 24:15-28.

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be and remain with you all! Amen.

Dearly beloved Brethren and Sisters in Christ Jesus!

The world is not eternal; there is a day in which it will at once pass away, a day when the last person among all men will have been born and there will be no-one after him, when the sun will have risen for the last time and never go down again, when the hand on the clock of the time of the world will have expired, the last chimes of the bells in the world have sounded, and, behold, that which supports the heaven shall quake so that the stars shall fall from the firmament to the earth, as a fig-tree casts off its figs when it is moved by the storm-wind; the heavens will depart like a closed book<sup>22</sup>; flames of fire will fill the air currents and the seas will be evaporated, and all the countries with their mountains and rocks, cities, villages, palaces, and huts will be turned into ashes, and finally it will be no longer<sup>23</sup>.

When this great, terrible day comes, when this last hour of all the visible creation will strike, no person knows, not even an angel, indeed, not even an archangel who stands at the throne of God, but only He who created the world, and has counted and determined the days of its age already from eternity. But the fact that the world has already reached the time of old age (near to the end of its existence), that the six work days of the inhabitants of the earth (time of its existence) have just about run their course and the great Sabbath of Eternity is before the door, to put it briefly, that **we are living in the last time**, this is so undeniable that only he who does not believe in God's Word can doubt it.

Scripture specifies **two chief distinguishing marks of the coming of the last day** and these are the **preaching of the Gospel** among all peoples and the **great falling away from God's Word in Christendom**.

Christ says, "**This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come**" (Mat.24:14). But has this not already occurred? Has not Christ's message resounded in all countries and even in the so-called new world? There are many indeed who believe that the end may not be so near, since so many Gentiles and Jews are not converted. But Christ clearly says that **not all will be converted**, but that the voice of the Gospel will only be heard everywhere as a witness (testimony) to all. That means: Though also many Christians here in this world would not accept the sound of the Gospel, which had also penetrated their ears, yet it would testify and bring action against them for rejecting it on the last day, so that if they had only wanted, they could have come to the Light of the Gospel, but they loved the darkness of paganism and Judaism more than the Light.

The **second distinguishing mark of the nearness of the Day of the Lord** is given by St. Paul in his second epistle to the Thessalonians in the following words: "<sup>3</sup>**Let no man deceive you by any means: for**

---

<sup>20</sup> 1811-1887.

<sup>21</sup> Because Concordia Publishing House has now published the full translation of Walther's **Pastorale** into English we have discontinued translating it and instead have started on Walther's Sermon book entitled "**Light of Life**". This portion of translation is taken from pages 654 to 665 and is continued from the last issue of **Morsels**.

<sup>22</sup> Compare Rev.6:14, "**The heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together.**" **Kretzmann**: "And the heaven was removed like a rolled-up scroll.... The firmament of the heavens... **will not escape in the last great disturbances of the universe**. Just as a roll of parchment is rolled up and laid aside, so the firmament will be removed."

<sup>23</sup> 2 Pet. 3:10.



that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed, the Son of Perdition; <sup>4</sup>Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God... <sup>10</sup>because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. <sup>11</sup>And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion (a powerful deception, BLW), that they should believe a lie" (2 Thes.2:3,4,10,11). Even though at the time of the apostle this great universal apostasy from the faith was still far from establishing itself in the midst of Christianity, yet we now have it **so close before our eyes**. For over a thousand years (now about 1200 years, BLW) the **very Antichrist** has sat in the temple of God, on his throne. And now that it is in the evening of the world, according to the prophecy of the Prophet **Zechariah**<sup>24</sup>, after it had become light again, the darkness of unbelief has now broken in over Christendom as never before. For although **under the rule of the Papacy** Christendom was covered by a great darkness, yet all Christians still confessed that Christ was the holy Son of God and the reconciler of the world. But now there are thousands and thousands of baptized Christians who deny His work of reconciliation and mock His blood (shed for our redemption).

There is no doubt in this respect that **the apostasy from Christ has now reached the highest peak**; we live in the last time. Soon the curtain, which hangs before eternity, will fall and the day of the universal Judgment of the world will dawn (begin, BLW). O what a serious, disastrous time! Whoever believes that we are so near to the end of the world, should he not in this connection ask, "LORD, what are we to do that the Day of Your Appearance does not overtake us and catch us unprepared like a snare entraps an animal? What are we to do that we do not lose the salvation of our souls in the dangers of the last time?" On this question our Gospel for today gives us the answer. Let us now hear it with reverence.

**Text: Mat. 24:15-28.**

<sup>15</sup>When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

<sup>16</sup>Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

<sup>17</sup>Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:

<sup>18</sup>Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

<sup>19</sup>And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

<sup>20</sup>But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

<sup>21</sup>For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

<sup>22</sup>And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

<sup>23</sup>Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

<sup>24</sup>For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

<sup>25</sup>Behold, I have told you before.

<sup>26</sup>Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.

<sup>27</sup>For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

<sup>28</sup>For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together."

---

<sup>24</sup> **Kretzmann** on Zech.14:7,8: "But it shall be one day, a most singular day in every way, **which shall be known to the Lord**, He alone being acquainted with its true nature, **not day nor night**, because the lights of heaven will have lost their power to shine; **but it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light**. This picture represents the Church of the Middle Ages gradually sinking into darkness as the light of the Word of God was obscured by its leaders. Fortunately, however, the Lord, through the Reformation, caused the glorious light of His Gospel to shine forth once more. **And it shall be in that day**, after the restoration of the light of the Word in its original position, **that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem**, from the Church of the Lord in its renewed state, cp. Ezek. 47:1."

The text which was just read deals with two things: It is a prophecy both of the destruction of Jerusalem as well as of the last time of the world. The disciples had placed the following question before Christ, "**Tell us when will this happen,**" namely, the destruction of Jerusalem, "**and what will be the sign of Your Coming and of the end of the world?**" Now Christ in our Gospel answers these questions in such a way that it is difficult to say what exactly applies only to the destruction of the holy city and what exactly applies to the last day of the world. Why does Christ no doubt so closely connect the destruction of Jerusalem with His coming on the last day? It is certainly because the **destruction of Jerusalem was a model<sup>25</sup> for the destruction of the world.** The theme for our meditation today therefore is:

**THE TIME OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM IS A RICHLY INSTRUCTIVE EXAMPLE OF THE LAST DAY.**

It is such because it shows us:

- [1.] in what sad and perilous state the Church will find itself in the last time; and**
- [2.] how at the same time Christians can successfully escape the dangers of the last time.**

Gracious God and Father, You have allowed us to be born into this world in this last time of the world. It is certainly a very dangerous time. But now you are also reaching out the arm of your grace over all us sinners, even now Your Church still stands firm, also your dear Son will be with us with His Word and His holy Sacraments right up until the end of the last day. Therefore we pray thee, let Your Face (the Face of Your grace) shine upon us so that we may regain our strength. Take us into your special care, so that we shall not perish at this time of (spiritual) darkness, unbelief, and temptation. Enlighten, pardon and convert us to Your dear Son, and preserve us in Your grace unto our end. For this we will glorify and praise You there in heaven from eternity to eternity. Amen.

**1.**

**WE LEARN IN WHAT SAD AND PERILOUS STATE THE CHURCH WILL FIND ITSELF IN THE LAST TIME.**

The time of the destruction of Jerusalem is an example and a prelude<sup>26</sup> as to what will happen on the last day. Of the first, **the destruction of Jerusalem**, Christ, however, says two things: in the first place, Christ says that it will be **exceedingly horrible**; in the second place, it will consist of **great tribulation**.

To be specific Christ begins His description with the words: ""<sup>15</sup> **When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)** <sup>16</sup> **Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains**" (Mat.24:15,16). By these words Christ means to say that this is to be a sign that the destruction of Jerusalem is to occur when everything in and around the holy city and the temple concerning the detestable practices will be carried out. And so it then also occurred. Unheard of detestable abominations by which the city, which had formerly been chosen by God, was desecrated were the woeful precursors<sup>27</sup> of its near impending destruction. Shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem, not only had the Emperor Caius Caligula erected his statue for idolatrous worship in the temple building; furthermore, not only had the Roman armies when they had gathered around the area of Jerusalem and encircled it, erected everywhere on holy ground their ensigns and their banners on which nothing but pagan images of idols hung, but also after the killing of Christ the whole city had sunk ever deeper and deeper (into sin), and had become nothing more than an arena<sup>28</sup> of outrageous wickedness and abominations and horrifying evil actions, as never before, as long as the city and the temple had stood. The then reigning High Priest Ananias was a ruthless man who believed neither in God nor in the

---

<sup>25</sup> Something used as an example to follow or imitate.

<sup>26</sup> An action or event serving as an introduction to something more important.

<sup>27</sup> Something that exists before something else, and is related to it or influences its development.

<sup>28</sup> or theatre house.

Judgment and nor in eternity. Under his rule all the shame and vices covered the city as a flood. The measure of all the sins of the Jewish people was full, indeed overflowing, so that the corruption could not rise any higher<sup>29</sup>.

However, Christ says more about this time: "<sup>21</sup> **For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.** <sup>22</sup> **And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened**" (Mat.24:21,22). This has literally come true. The (impenitent) Jews despised Christ's counsel to flee to the mountains. It was not enough that the inhabitants of Jerusalem themselves remained. In this way also that many hundreds of thousands (foolishly) sought their refuge from the vengeance of the Most High. But Jerusalem became nothing more than the place where they were executed. Not only did a rebellion soon arise in the city amongst the inhabitants themselves; the rulers formed themselves into a group, whose leaders called themselves **zealots**, that is, zealots for God, they called themselves. But they filled everything outside the inner city wall with robbery and murder. Soon, too, pestilence and the most terrible famine arose because of the immense multitude of people crowded here. A quarrel often arose over a small piece of bread between a husband and wife, and a bloody conflict arose often between parents and children. Yes, it finally went so far, that mothers who could offer nothing but tears to their wailing little children, in despair took their own infants from their bosoms, slaughtered them and devoured them. In order to conceal and save only a little from the greedy Romans, many of the unfortunate ones swallowed their last pieces of gold. But scarcely had this become known among those who were doing the besieging, when they tore open the bodies of thousands of the captured Jews while they were still living in order also to gain the treasures which were still hidden.

A great number died miserably through the sword; others were consumed in the flames (when the city was destroyed), others died due to their great fear and terror at the nameless<sup>30</sup> horrible end of their cause; others in despair hurled themselves down to their (death) from the towers of the temple and from the walls of the city; others were crucified; others were thrown to the wild animals; in this way after the bloody destruction of Jerusalem in this city alone a million and one hundred thousand Jews had met with the most wretched death. After considering this there is more: already before the siege a still much greater number had perished just as miserably in the other cities of the holy land. This was truly indeed a tremendous catastrophe and a tribulation with which the human race has never as yet been afflicted by God. What the Jews had outrageous called down upon themselves at the sight of the scourged and thorn-crowned Son of God, their Messiah, "**His blood be on us, and on our children**" (Mat.27:25), that they now had to experience in the fullest and most terrible degree. If God had not yet seen (that these things were coming), if He had not shortened these days of this affliction, no one would have been saved among the Jews.

See then, my beloved, this is the model and prelude to the last time in which we live. Just as once before the destruction of Jerusalem the abomination of desolation stood in the holy place of this chosen city, just so the abomination is now the thing which foreshadows the destruction of the whole world in the holy place of the great temple of the Christian Church. Of this Christ prophecies with the words in our text: "<sup>24</sup> **For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect**" (Mat.24:24). This was first fulfilled by the foundation of **papacy**. This was, and still correctly is, the **true abomination of desolation in the holy place**. What an **abomination** it is that a Roman bishop who should have **humbly fed sheep of the Savior with the Gospel** declared himself to be the representative of Christ, and at the same time raised up himself to be a lord over all the kingdoms of the world and to be a ruler of consciences, forbade Christians from reading the Bible, changed the institutions of Jesus Christ<sup>31</sup> and raised his human laws over God! What an **abomination** in the holy place is the **Mass**, in which the priest pretends daily to offer up again the Son of

---

<sup>29</sup> Since they had become increasingly wicked, God's patience for them to repent had run out and the time for His punishment had come.

<sup>30</sup> Too terrible and indescribable to mention.

<sup>31</sup> The Lord's Supper, Marriage, etc.

God as a sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead! What an **abomination** is the worship of the Host<sup>32</sup>, the idolatrous adoration of images, pictures and relics, and the prayers to Mary and other deceased saints! That this is all happening in the midst of the Church of Jesus Christ is truly a **greater abomination** than that which Emperor Caligula had done in once having erected his statue in the Jerusalem Temple!

But it is not only the papacy which has filled the Christian church with abomination. What position have those come to who now call themselves **Protestants**? The pure Gospel has almost fled from all their churches and schools. Instead of protesting against dependence of man's word in the church, almost all teachers of Christianity are now protesting against relying on God's Word. Either a person now teaches the **most bare-face unbelief**, makes Christians **suspicious of trusting the Bible**, denies Christ's Godhead and His Work of sacrificial atonement for salvation and mocks everything that is holy, yes, is often so very completely without shame or fear that one speaks in derision frankly and freely against the supreme God in heaven and even declares God's Law and the voice of conscience as useless ghosts.

Or, on the other hand, where the Holy Book of the Bible is still highly praised, there a person creates for himself a new fanatic religion **according to the perverted thoughts of his heart** and one calls this miserable, sorry work of his one's own Christianity. Therefore, just as Judaism had fallen into its terrible condition at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, so visible Christendom has fallen into even worst conditions in these last miserable times. **Yes, as certainly as God's Word is true, so certainly now in most of the pulpits and altars of the Christian Church stands the prophesied abomination of desolation.**

Now it is certainly true that Christians do not often face such judgments of God as once the unfortunate Jews had done in the destruction of their holy city. But who can deny that God's judgments are now more grievous and terrible on Christians than once on the Jewish people? Is it not a **terrible punishment** that God has now given His Christendom so much that she is not able to know what belongs to her peace<sup>33</sup>? Is it not a **terrible punishment** that God allows powerful false teachings to come, that now millions of souls who believe in lies are seduced? Is it not a **great judgment of God** that more and more false prophets have arisen and more and more sects arise so that almost nobody knows where he is able to seek only the Truth and where he can only find the right way to God? There is no question the times of Noah, the times of Lot, the times of the destruction of Jerusalem have returned and are upon us. Soon the Judge of all flesh (people) will appear and the period of grace for the world will have come to an end.

## 2.

### **WE LEARN HOW AT THE SAME TIME CHRISTIANS CAN SUCCESSFULLY ESCAPE THE DANGERS OF THE LAST TIME.**

In the second place, therefore, let us learn from the example which is held before us in our text for our present time, nevertheless, how the Christians can successfully escape the dangers of these last times.

---

<sup>32</sup> Consecrated bread.

<sup>33</sup> Luke 19:41-44: "And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

On the expression "the things which belong unto thy peace" Kretzmann states: "If the inhabitants of the capital city had but known, if they had but had the right understanding, if they had not deliberately hardened their hearts! In extraordinary fulness and brightness their day of grace had come upon them, since the Son of God personally had come into their midst and brought the glorious Gospel of their redemption to them. But now the day of grace was drawing to its close, and still the understanding pertaining to their salvation was hidden before their eyes. Because of their unbelief and hard-heartedness the time of grace was rapidly coming to a close, and the salvation which they had foolishly sought by means of works was as far from them as ever. And not only the fact of their unbelief and hard-heartedness caused the bitter tears of the Lord, but also the fact that He knew the fate of the city, saw the final destruction taking place before the vision of His omniscience."

As great, my beloved, was the danger of perishing at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, so it was still certainly quite possible to escape her. The first means for this is given by Christ with the words: "<sup>16</sup> **Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains**" (Mat.24:16). But how this means of escape is to be seized without delay Christ shows us further when He adds: "<sup>17</sup> **Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house**" (Mat.24:16). Since the houses in the east had a flat roof from which an inner and outer staircase led down, thus Christ means to say that a person should immediately go down the first outer staircase without hesitation and think of nothing but flight. Christ also indicates this by the words: "<sup>18</sup> **Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.** <sup>19</sup> **And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!**" (Mat.24:18,19). With the last cry of woe Christ does not want, as many have fancied, to declare that the estate of marriage is something sinful, but He only says that then such people as the pregnant women and those women who are nursing their children are worthy of pity, since for them more obstacles than others hinder a hasty flight.

But when Christ finally says: "<sup>20</sup> **But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day**<sup>34</sup>" (Mat.24:20), then He means to say they should ask God that flight would not be necessary at such a time when the fleeing was more difficult than usual. With these words Christ also indicates that the most rapid flight from the cities to the mountains was the only means of safety for the inhabitants of Judah. Therefore we also hear from history: only because the ill-fated Jews, apart from a few, did not accept this merciful advice of the Savior, they fell both to the sword of the vengeance of men as well as to the vengeance of God. On the other hand, the Christians, as soon as they saw the signs being fulfilled of the coming destruction of Jerusalem, hurried as soon as possible from Jerusalem, as from a sinking ship, before the Roman armies had yet arrived to Pella, beyond the Jordan in the region of King Agrippa, untouched by the Romans. Here they were safe far from the horrors of the war that raged through all of Judea and far from the horrors of the siege. In Pella they enjoyed a time of undisturbed peace.

Here, my beloved, you have the **right means** how also we can escape from all the dangers threatening our souls in this last miserable time. Namely, just as at the time of the world-wide Flood there was an **ark** which saved Noah and his family, just as Lot found a tranquil **Zoar** when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, and just as Christians found a mountain of refuge and a **Pella** of safety when Jerusalem was destroyed, so also we still have now a **safe sanctuary** for our souls into which we can flee and thus escape all destruction for time and eternity. This is our Ark, our Zoar, our Mountain and our Pella in the present danger -- **Jesus Christ and His Church**. Whoever flees there is safe. No error can then overcome us, for **Christ** and His Word is the Truth. No sin can then condemn us and sink us into eternal perdition, for **Christ**, together with His life, suffering and death, is our righteousness. No world, no tribulation, no temptation, no devil can overcome us, for **Christ** is our strength, our protection, our victory, our conquest. No death and no hell can devour us, for **Christ** is our way, our life, our salvation.

But, my beloved, remember this well, if we wish our souls to be saved in this last time and to be carried off to heaven as a precious treasure which Christ has acquired in His defeat of Satan, then it is not enough that we should only be glad to hear of Christ, His Word, and His Church, and to know how to speak many things. The mere knowledge and speaking about Christ is not the mountain where we find salvation. To Christ Himself (in faith) we must go; we must (in faith) come to Him so that we can say: "Christ is mine, I have Him, He has grasped me, and I apprehend Him, and I want (in faith) to adhere steadfastly to Him, and nothing, and nothing shall sever me again from Him. What does it help to know about a beautiful castle, to look at it with joy, and to have pleasure in it, if one does not enter into it? In such a manner one still remains a prey to the enemies. Hence we are only then in the safe Pella of the last time, when we not merely pass by Christ struck with wonder, but also let us open our hearts to Him, accept Him in faith and remain in His grace until our end.

---

<sup>34</sup> **Kretzmann:** "If the flight should fall on a Sabbath, when a false understanding of God's will might endanger their lives, or occur in a Sabbath year, when the land was lying fallow, they might have trouble in obtaining the necessary food on the way."

Christ says in our text: <sup>23</sup> **Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.** <sup>26</sup> **Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not"**(Mat.24:23,26). According to the prophecy of Christ people also in the last time will pretend everywhere to preach Christ and pretend to lead others to Christ. But there will be false Christs and false prophets. How then can he now beware of the false Christ who does not yet have the true Christ himself? Alas, many a man now truly rejects the false Christ of the sects, but an equally false Christ still dwells in his heart. He departs from the Sectarian Jerusalem, but does not go to the right mountain. He remains in the valleys of sin, in the love of the world, or in self-righteousness.

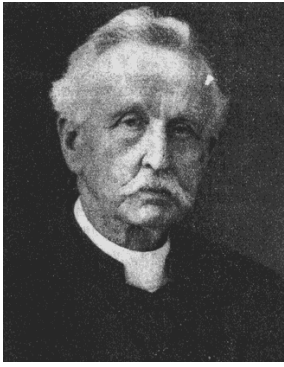
Here now, perhaps, many will ask me: "How shall we go about it so that we remain in the faith and do not go astray in this last time, that we shall not be lost in these days of great temptation, that we will not be deceived with a false Christ, so that we are found on the true high mountain of salvation, the true right Pella, namely, the true Christ?" The answer to this is brief. The true Christ is **everything** for the salvation of sinners. Receive Christ in faith for yourselves as your all in all for your salvation, then you have the right Christ and no one can deceive you. Recognize how serious your sin is and that you are lost sinners in your own sight. **Then let Christ and His merit be your sole righteousness.** Acknowledge your folly and blindness in all spiritual, divine things and **let Christ and His Word be your light and your wisdom.** Recognize your weakness and helplessness in your own power in your fight against sin and in your overcoming of the world and **let Christ and His comfort be your sole strength and power.** Do not go down into the chamber of your own heart if you are seeking the Truth. Do not wear the clothes of your own works if you are seeking righteousness. To summarize: Cast all your misery, all your corruption, all your sin, distress, death, and the fact that you deserve condemnation **on Christ and in faith accept Him as your One and All.** Then you will easily recognize all false prophets who want to preach to you and praise a false Christ, but **with the true Christ** you will be blessed in escaping all danger, die in peace and there enter with Him into eternal life.

So let me then in this connection place before every one of us some questions for self-examination. Have you, dear hearers, whoever you are, already recognized that you are now living in the **last** and therefore **most dangerous of all times**? Do you already have so much light that you know from your own experience that now, as Christ has prophesied, many false Christs and false prophets have arisen who appear with great signs and wonders so that if it were possible even the elect would be lead astray by error? Have you already become **spiritually awakened** in these last times of tribulation so that you have **sought with a heart-felt desire the pure, unadulterated truth of the Gospel and the true Christ**? Have you already realized that you are a poor, lost sinner and that you therefore **hunger and thirst for the righteousness which alone is valid before God**? In this time of confusion, doubt, and wavering between truth and error, do you yearn for a **firm foundation** for your faith and hope and have you already found this eternal, solid foundation in **Christ**? Has He already become for you a high mountain of salvation, a mighty fortress, your peace - your Pella?

Oh, let no one remain in the doomed Jerusalem of this world, for its destruction is near. Suddenly it will come to an end, **"for as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be"** (Mat.24:27). In faith flee to Him now, then you will also, when He shall appear in the clouds of heaven, be caught up with all the righteous in the air at His right Hand. For **"wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together"** (Mat.24:28). Amen.



## "CONSTANTLY BE FAITHFUL TO THE ORTHODOX LUTHERAN CHURCH"



[From "Der Lutherische Kirchenbote" (The Lutheran Church Messenger) official church paper of our former ELSA in Australia, July 18, 1901, Vol. 28, Number 14, Pages 105-106; by the late Dr. E Darsow<sup>35</sup>]

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, 'If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free' (John 8:31,32).

### WHY SHOULD AND MUST WE FAITHFULLY AND CONSTANTLY HOLD FIRMLY TO OUR PRECIOUS LUTHERAN CHURCH?

The answer reads:

*[1] Therefore, in the first place, because God demands that we avoid the church fellowship with those who falsify and pervert God's Word;*

*[2] And, therefore, in the second place, because God demands that we adhere to (fellowship with) those who remain with (hold to) the pure doctrine of the divine Word and confess the true faith.*

#### 1.

### God demands that we avoid the church fellowship with those who falsify and pervert God's Word.

The truth that Christ's true Church outside of which there is no salvation, as we have seen, is found everywhere where the Word and the Sacraments are essentially present, so that even in heterodox<sup>36</sup> church bodies the Lord has children of His Kingdom --- this gives us no license according to which we could, without danger to our souls, separate (depart) from the orthodox (Lutheran) Church and could join another visible church which does not teach the pure doctrine. To summarize: according to this<sup>37</sup> it would be **completely indifferent** whether we belonged to this or that church body or sect. **No, not so**<sup>38</sup>, but we are to be and must remain **faithful and steadfast** to the orthodox visible church, to our precious (faithful) Lutheran Church, in fact, in the first place therefore that is why **God demands it in His Word** that we **avoid church fellowship** with those who falsify and pervert God's Word.

---

<sup>35</sup> **Dr. E. Darsow** was born in 1856 and died in 1934. He was a faithful pastor of our old former ELSA. He was **president of our former Queensland District of the ELSA from 1910 to 1923**. While he did his theological studies at Hermannsburg, Germany and at the University of Leipzig in Germany, yet when our old ELSA came into contact with Dr Walther and the old orthodox Missouri Synod in the 1880's he **became and rejoiced to be a true "Missourian."** This occurred through the study of books and essays written by old Missouri men, such as Drs. Walther, Sihler, Bente and Pieper as well as through the careful study of **Der Lutheraner** and **Lehre und Wehre**. He was a co-editor (1894-1903 and later editor (1903-09) of our old church paper, **Der Lutherische Kirchenbote**. From 1905 to 1909 he was the **Victorian District President** of our old faithful church that was in fellowship with the old Missouri Synod. Shortly before he died in 1934 he addressed a gathering of pastors around his bedside and urged them: **"Do not depart from the Word of God. Do not depart even a hair's breadth from the written Word of God."**

<sup>36</sup> Those who teach error but still hold to the primary fundamental doctrines of the Bible.

<sup>37</sup> The **false opinion** that it does not matter what church body you are a member of as long as it still teaches the essentials of the Christian faith, no matter what other errors it may uphold. Such people **neither observe Christ's command** to **"beware of false prophets"** (Mat.7:15) nor do they see the **seriousness of false doctrine** that if it is believed it **eats like a cancer and destroys faith** (2 Tim.2:17).

<sup>38</sup> Let us never take the position that it does not matter whether error is taught or not.

St. Paul testifies in his letter to the Romans with great earnestness: "**Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine<sup>39</sup> which ye have learned; and avoid them<sup>40</sup>**" (Rom.16:17). Clearly the Apostle says in these words that we are not to have church fellowship with those who do not teach the pure doctrine of Scripture; such we are to avoid and flee. And this (divine) requirement we find not only in this text. For the time of which the same Apostle says, "**Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them,**" he gives the warning: "**Therefore watch<sup>41</sup>, and remember<sup>42</sup>, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears**" (Acts 20:30,31). That means he is saying: Continue in the pure doctrine which I have taught you with much hard work and much diligence during the three years I was with you and have nothing<sup>43</sup> to do with those who proclaim perverted doctrine.

Furthermore the same Apostle says: "**<sup>3</sup>If any man teach otherwise<sup>44</sup>, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; <sup>4</sup>he is proud, knowing nothing..... <sup>5</sup>...from such withdraw thyself<sup>45</sup>**" (1 Tim.6:3-5). Titus 3:10,11 states: "**<sup>10</sup>A man that is an heretick<sup>46</sup> (that is, such a person who keeps on causing divisions and offences) after the first and second admonition reject<sup>47</sup>; <sup>11</sup>Knowing that he that is such is subverted<sup>48</sup>, and sinneth, being condemned of himself<sup>49</sup>.**" With all these words the Apostle requires nothing else than what we hear from the mouth of our Lord Christ Himself, when He says: "**Beware<sup>50</sup> of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing<sup>51</sup>, but inwardly they are ravening wolves<sup>52</sup>**" (Mat.7:15). If we are to beware of false prophets, then it is at the same time evident that we must not adhere<sup>53</sup> to them and their followers.

Furthermore the Lord clearly says in regard to the last times of this world: "**<sup>23</sup>Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.<sup>24</sup> For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. <sup>25</sup>Behold, I have told you before. <sup>26</sup>Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not**" (Mat.24:23-26)<sup>54</sup>. From all these words it is nevertheless clear that God has commanded the following:

---

<sup>39</sup> Persistently in spite of thorough instruction continue to err against the Word of God whether fundamental or non-fundamental doctrines.

<sup>40</sup> Have no Church or Prayer or Communion fellowship with them.

<sup>41</sup> Greek: **γρηγορεῖτε** : Exercise constant watchful care, pay strict attention and alertness.

<sup>42</sup> Greek: **μνημονεύοντες**: Constantly be remembering. It is from this Greek word that we obtain the English word "mnemonics," a system for improving and assisting the memory.

<sup>43</sup> Have no Church or Prayer or Communion fellowship.

<sup>44</sup> The Greek word is **ἐτεροδιδασκαλεῖ** and it means a different kind of teaching than that found in God's Word or a teaching that is opposed to the pure Word of God.

<sup>45</sup> Separate from them or have no Church or Prayer or Communion fellowship with them.

<sup>46</sup> Greek: **αἰρετικὸν**: a person who **in spite of instruction from God's Word chooses and is determined** to hold to his error.

<sup>47</sup> Greek: **παραιτοῦ**: **keep on rejecting** or have no Church or Prayer or Communion fellowship.

<sup>48</sup> Greek: **ἑξέστραπται**: changed from the Truth, corrupted and perverted in his error and so is firmly set or fixed in his wrong ways (Perfect tense).

<sup>49</sup> Greek: **ὄν αὐτοκατάκριτος**: keeps on constantly sinning and is a sinner who condemns himself.

<sup>50</sup> Greek: **Προσέχετε**: constantly be guarding yourself against.

<sup>51</sup> Greek: **ἐνδύμασιν προβάτων**: In outward appearance they look like sheep in the sheep's clothing which they wear. They come in a very inconspicuous manner, in the garment of innocence and harmlessness. They profess to have a commission from God Himself and are adept at pretending gentleness.

<sup>52</sup> Greek: **λόκοι ἄρπαγες**: within they are "ravens wolves." Their nature is to devour; they are greedy for money, ambitious for power, but anxious, above all, to destroy the soul. They are murderers of the souls of men.

<sup>53</sup> Support or have any Church or Prayer or Communion fellowship with them.

<sup>54</sup> **Dr. Walther** explains this text superbly as follows: "After the giving of the Ten Commandments God says through Moses, '**In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.**' Ex 20:24. **God's name is recorded where his Word is preached and His sacraments are administered.**



---

Moreover, Christ gives His disciples the promise, **'Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world.'** Mat. 28:20. But who are they whom Christ calls His own? He himself says in Lk. 8:21, **'My mother and my brethren are these which hear the Word of God and do it.'**

Moreover after Christ had given the congregation the promise that their loosing and binding, their prayers and intercession will avail in heaven, says, **'For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.'** Mat. 18:20. **Those are assembled in Christ's name who have gathered at His command and together use His Word, unlock heaven by means of Holy Baptism, and publicly preach His death at the table of His Holy Supper.**

Christ moreover says, **'If any man love Me he will keep My Words; and My Father will love him and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.'** John 14:23. And Peter, **'We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star,'** namely Christ, **"arise in your hearts"** (2 Peter 1:19). And especially of the Sacraments St. Paul says, **'As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ,'** Gal 3:27; and in another passage, **'The cup of .blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ?'** 1 Cor. 10:16. Especially clear is St. Paul's word, **'Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it,'** (namely, the righteousness of faith)? **The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart.'** Rom. 10:6b-8a.

Decide for yourselves. According to the clear utterances of Christ, the prophets, and apostles, **is not Christ really and truly present in grace where His Word is preached in its purity and the Sacraments administered according to His institution?** What do they do who call it the voice of seduction when the preacher of the orthodox church says, **Here where the Word is, there where the Sacraments are is Christ, His Church, His grace, His salvation?** Anyone who calls this the voice of seduction makes Christ Himself and His apostles and prophets seducers and blasphemes the true Word of God as error and lies.

But my friends, Christ means the very opposite when He warns the Christians of the last times against those who say, **'Here is Christ.'** He means those false prophets who falsify God's Word and preach the thoughts of their own heart and reason; who say: Christ is not to be found in God's Word but here in this or in that work; not in Baptism and the Holy Supper is Christ to be found but 'there' in this or that arrangement, and the like, which we have made; it does not depend upon the pure doctrine and the unadulterated sacraments if we want to find grace but upon our strivings, upon our experience, upon our improvement and sanctification, and the like.

That this is the correct exposition follows beyond all doubt because Christ immediately adds, **'For there shall arise FALSE Christs, and FALSE PROPHETS, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall DECEIVE the very elect.'** V.24. That shows us wherever they indeed preach Christ but preach him "falsely," preach error, do not remain with God's Word but falsify it, swerve from God's Word and lead away from God's Word; wherever they do not. preach: 'If you want to find Christ, do not seek him in this or in that thing, nor in your heart, nor over you in heaven, nor outside of you in your works, **but seek him in his Word and holy sacraments;**' wherever, I say, they do not preach that but tell you to seek Christ somewhere else: there, yes indeed, there you hear the voice of seduction in the last times: 'Lo, here is Christ. there is Christ.'

Christ gives us even more, information; He continues, **'Wherefore if they shall say unto you. Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth; behold, He is in the secret chambers, believe it not.'** V.26. First of all, who are they who say Christ is **'in the desert'**? The answer to this question is quite apparent. The history of the papacy from the beginning until this very hour shows us that this voice of seduction has raised itself chiefly in the papacy and the Roman Church. For whither are they in the papacy directed who wish to be absolutely certain of their salvation. In the desert. They say: 'Sell and give away what you have and become poor, renounce your marriage, **forsake the world, and enter a monastery, become a monk, become a nun,** become an anchorite, and then keep your vows; this is the way upon which salvation positively cannot escape you; that is the means through which, you will certainly find Christ.'

Who are those, who say, Christ is **'in the secret chambers'**? That also is not difficult to answer. They are all those enthusiasts who reject public worship, fellowship with an organized congregation, the holy ministry and the public preaching of God's Word, and the public administration of the sacrament in the churches and say, If you want to find Christ, do not seek him in such outward things; stay in the stillness of your 'secret chamber; descend into the depths of your mind and plunge into holy meditations; there, there you will find the true church; there you will hear the true preacher; there will you find the Spirit; there you will find Christ, His grace, and the kingdom of heaven.

Note well, my dear friends, that I once more repeat what I have said: when Christ warns us against the voice which says, **'Lo, here is Christ, there is Christ; he is in the desert; He is in the secret chambers.'** He does not warn against those who say, that Christ is in all places where His Word and Sacraments are, for He certainly is there as certainly as He is the omnipresent Son of God and as certainly as His Word and promise is the truth; but Christ warns

**orthodox Christians are not to engage in any fellowship with those who falsify and pervert God's Word.** Whoever in spite of this, fellowships with the heterodox, acts against God's clear command and whoever does this in spite of better knowledge flagrantly and seriously sins and falls under the (God's) judgment: "<sup>47</sup> **And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.....** <sup>48</sup> **...For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more**" (Luke 12:47,48).

That is why it was not due to carnal (fleshly) obstinacy and deliberate stubbornness with **Luther** --- as even many such reproaches<sup>55</sup> are made about him still today --- when many years ago he refused to enter into brotherly and church fellowship with Zwingli, the founder of the false teaching Reformed Church. Rather it was faithfulness towards the pure, clear Word of God which he did not want to harm and pervert, and from which he did not want to depart. That is why he writes of this Word of the almighty, all-truthful God on this text<sup>56</sup>: "For as I see it, every single passage makes the world too narrow" (SLXX,788; Am Ed.37,40) and of the same Word he sang with steadfast faith: "Thy Word they still shall let remain." (A Mighty Fortress is our God Verse 4<sup>57</sup>).

But now many today ask, "*Since you yourselves must now admit that there are still also in heterodox church bodies dear Children of God, why do you separate yourselves from them by having no fellowship with those church bodies, even from those Children of God, indeed you condemn them: is that also right?*"<sup>58</sup> To this we answer: that we do not engage in church fellowship with all those who belong to a church which teaches different from what God's Word teaches is certainly correct, because **God so demands it in His Word.** Furthermore, however, **we do not separate ourselves from the Children of God** among the heterodox church bodies, but we separate only from these heterodox church bodies and sects. The Children of God among these church bodies **belong in their hearts with us** and they would **immediately join us if they were to receive a better instruction** and so acquire a clearer knowledge of the pure divine Truth. For

---

us above all against those who point us away from His Word and Sacrament and tell us to seek Him, Christ, in something else, who instead of binding Christ to His means of grace to which He has bound Himself, unite Him with something else in heaven or on earth, wherever it may be." (Year of Grace, pages 359 -361).

<sup>55</sup> severe disapproval.

<sup>56</sup> Christ said: "Take, eat; this is My body."

<sup>57</sup> In ALHB it reads: "Thy Word shall stand despite all foes."

<sup>58</sup> **Dr. F Pieper** deals with this in an excellent manner in his essay **The Distinction Between Orthodox & Heterodox Churches** in 1889: "The objection is raised: "*You yourselves admit that also in heterodox bodies there are still dear children of God, and yet by separating from these churches, you separate yourselves from these children of God; yes, you condemn them by avoiding these heterodox churches. In that case, isn't it better to practice fellowship with the heterodox?*" **First of all, we answer: No! It cannot be better, because God expressly forbids us to do this.** Moreover, **we do not even separate ourselves from the children of God among the sects, but from the sects as such.** Rather, **the sects separate these dear children of God from us.** They hold those who belong to us — for children of God are determined to accept the whole Word of God — captive among themselves. So these believers must outwardly support the wicked cause of the sects **while in their hearts they belong to us. These children of God would at once come over to an orthodox congregation if they were better informed.** It is also for the benefit of the children of God among the heterodox that we refuse church fellowship to these churches. Thereby we are **constantly reminding them** that they are in the wrong camp. According to God's Word, Christians do not belong in the company of those who openly contradict some doctrines of Christ. Many a person for this reason also steps out of the wrong camp into the right one.

It must also by all means be held, that **we do not cause any divisions in the Church when we avoid fellowship with the heterodox.** According to Rom. 16:17, **they cause divisions and offenses in the Church who teach doctrines besides the revealed truth.** According to the Word of God, the situation is this: **Whoever adheres to false teachers, and thereby strengthens their cause, cooperates in the division of the Church.** But he that avoids false teachers and their followers, and practices no fellowship with them, **is engaged in the holy work of preventing divisions within Christendom.** But, sad to say, the devil has been successful here in falsifying the concepts and the language. The destroyers of unity are called the promoters thereof, and, on the other hand, the promoters of unity are called the destroyers thereof."

true Children of God do not want to reject even a small portion of the divine Word. Rather they want to accept the entire Word of God. **Nor are we therefore causing the divisions in the church** by avoiding<sup>59</sup> those church bodies which contain false teachers, but as Paul in the previously mentioned passage from his letter to the Romans says **mark** those who cause divisions and offences, who teach another doctrine (false doctrine) alongside revealed Truth. Therefore whoever in spite of correct instruction in God's Word deliberately adheres to a false teaching church body, strengthens the cause of error, knowingly works for and causes the divisions in the Church --- apart from the fact that he himself sins --- also **becomes a partaker of other men's sins**<sup>60</sup> as the Apostle John indeed expressly says, that whoever engages in fellowship with such people who do not bring the right doctrine of the divine Word, becomes a partaker of their evil works (2 John 11).

And that was also then the basis why many years ago **Luther**, standing on God's Word, did not want to engage in church fellowship with Zwingli and his followers who taught contrary to God's Word. For he testified publicly before the Wittenberg congregation and before his students as follows: "They desired fellowship with us; but this, for the time being, we declined and could not grant. ***For if we recognized them as brethren and sisters, we would be obliged to consent to their doctrine.***" (SL3,1770) [Quoted from What Luther Says, III, p. 1410, No.4544]. On the other hand, he also therefore says of Zwingli and his followers: "I was exceedingly surprised that *they could regard him as a brother if they seriously believed their own doctrine* (on the Lord's Supper) ***was true and that he was in error. For how could they permit it that my understanding (of the Lord's Supper) be taught, held, and preached alongside of their doctrine?*** It was a sign (indication) that **they did not regard the matter** (of the Lord's Supper) **of great importance**<sup>61</sup>" (Weimar Edition XVII, 2364).

(To be Continued. Italicised emphasis in the Original. Larger paragraphs have been broken down into smaller ones for ease of reading. Headings and illustrative pictures have been added.)



<sup>59</sup> Having no Church or Prayer or Communion fellowship.

<sup>60</sup> **Dr. F. Pieper** correctly states in his Essay on **Unionism**: "God commands through the apostle John: **'If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine** (namely, the doctrine of Christ, vs. 9) **don't take him into your home or greet him. If you greet him you share in the wicked things he does.'** (2 John 1, 11). The greeting forbidden here is obviously **not the worldly greeting** which in some circumstances is appropriate in terms of friendliness to all men (2 Tim. 2:24). Also, the forbidden **'taking into the home'** is **not the worldly, common, human, "taking into the home."** That is not only permitted but commanded by God in words of Scripture like these: **'Let us do good to all men'** (Gal. 6:10), also to unbelievers and errorists through which we become like God who gave his Son for the evil and the good and allows the rain to fall on the just and the unjust (Mat. 5:45). **What is forbidden here in the words of John is that we greet anyone who does not bring and confess the doctrine of Christ as a brother in the faith or take him into our home as a brother in the faith.** In short, unionism – churchly fellowship with those who are recognized as false teachers – is forbidden here. For example, with such we should not practice prayer fellowship or communion fellowship, for, as the apostle says, **if we did we would become participants in their evil works.** It is an evil work, a very evil work, when anyone who presents himself as a Christian teacher, brings not Christ, but another doctrine. The Lord Jesus describes his true children in this way: **'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.'** **'But they will not follow a stranger, but flee from him, for they do not recognize the stranger's voice.'** (John 10:27,5) In summary we say, if we were to read through all of Scripture we would find no passage where either a teacher is permitted to deviate from God's Word, or a Christian is permitted to have churchly fellowship with a teacher who does not remain with God's Word. Instead, both preachers and hearers are commanded to separate themselves from error." (p.5.)

<sup>61</sup> "But that [they considered him a brother] was an indication that they themselves did not think that there was much involved in the matter."

# LECTURES ON THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH THE TRUE VISIBLE CHURCH OF GOD ON EARTH by Dr. F. Pieper.<sup>62</sup>



## FOURTEENTH LECTURE: Sharply Distinguishes Between What God's Word Commands and What It Leaves To Christian Liberty (Adiaphora).

(Continued from *Morsels* January - March, 2017)

### Part 1.

#### THESES 13-18 SUMMARIZED

For all of you who some day want to administer the Office of the Public Ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church it is of the **greatest importance** to profess that the **Evangelical Lutheran Church is the true visible Church of God on earth**, that means, that it is the church which adheres in all parts of doctrine which are revealed in Holy Scripture. At the same time this knowledge is **necessary** so that you can administer the Office of the Public Ministry in the Lutheran Church with a good conscience and with true joy. For God's Word places upon every Christian an **obligation of conscience** to **join** only such a church body **which in all parts adheres firmly to God's Word**, and on the other hand, to **avoid**<sup>63</sup> those church bodies who teach otherwise than the Word of God teaches.

In order to strengthen you in the knowledge that the true visible church on earth is at present called the Evangelical Lutheran Church, we have begun the discussion of Walther's theses in which the **chief distinguishing marks** of the orthodox church have been stated. We have already learnt to know a number of these characteristics and confirmed their existence in the Evangelical Lutheran Church. These were the following theses:

**Thesis 13:** "The Evangelical Lutheran Church recognizes the written Word of the Apostles and Prophets as the sole and perfect source, rule, and norm, and the judge of all doctrine; (a) not reason; (b) not tradition; (c) not new revelations."

**Thesis 14:** "The Evangelical Lutheran Church professes the perspicuity of Holy Scripture."

**Thesis 15:** "The Evangelical Lutheran Church recognizes no human interpreter of Holy Scripture whose ex officio interpretation must be regarded as infallible and binding; (a.) not any individual person; (b.) not any special estate; (c.) not any special or universal church council; (d.) not the whole church."

**Thesis 16:** "The Evangelical Lutheran Church accepts God's Word as interprets itself."

In studying this thesis we have briefly discussed the principles of exposition of the Lutheran Church.

**Thesis 17:** "The Evangelical Lutheran Church receives the *entire* Holy Scripture (as God's Word), regarding nothing set forth in it as superfluous or unimportant, but everything as

---

<sup>62</sup> Dr. F. Pieper (1852-1931) delivered these lectures to the entire student body of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in the so-called "Lutherstunden" or **Luther Hours**. He followed a tradition started by Dr. Walther. On September 4, 1885, Dr. Walther stated: "We call these Friday evening lectures, which form, as it were, the conclusion of the week's instruction, 'Luther Hours,' chiefly because in these lectures I let our beloved father Luther, the God-appointed Reformer and the common teacher of our church, speak to you." (Walther, "**Law and Gospel**," p. 344). In these lectures Dr. Pieper deals with significant points found in Walther's outstanding book, "The Evangelical Lutheran Church the True Visible Church of God on Earth," and further explains them to his audience. This particular series began on Nov. 31, 1889 and was completed on June 12, 1891.

<sup>63</sup> Have no Church or Prayer or Communion fellowship with them. Rom.16:17.

necessary and weighty; it accepts also all doctrines which necessarily follow from the Scripture words.”

**Thesis 18:** “The Evangelical Lutheran Church assigns to every doctrine of Scripture the rank and significance which it is given in God’s Word itself.”

Now last time we finished our lecture with the following subdivision of this thesis.

It reads: **The Evangelical Lutheran Church distinguishes sharply between what God’s Word commands and what it leaves to Christian liberty (adiaphora, ecclesiastical organization). (D )**

### **WHAT GOD'S WORD DOES NOT COMMAND OR FORBID THE CHURCH MUST LEAVE FREE**

This *is* truly a distinguishing mark of the orthodox church. During the last year we have discussed in detail that the church body which makes the claim to be **an orthodox church must adhere firmly to the *entire* Word of God and to every doctrine which is revealed in God’s Word.** However a church body which holds as binding only a number of doctrines, several so-called fundamental doctrines, and on the other hand wants to leave other doctrines for people to please themselves according to their human reason, has thereby **sunk to the level of a sect.** We have (already) recognized that it is an **offense against the divine majesty** if anyone wants to dispense at all with the acceptance of any of the doctrines which are revealed in Holy Scripture.

But, on the other hand, a church body must now also thereby prove its legitimacy as orthodox by leaving all those things *to be free* which are not forbidden in God’s Word. It must not command any of its members to believe or to do something that has not been prescribed by God in His Word for men to believe and do. When a church body does not adhere to this, when it does not strictly draw the line of distinction between things commanded and things left to our freedom, then that church body likewise **commits a sin against the majesty of God**, then it places *itself* in the stead *of God*. For God alone has reserved to Himself the right to command to Christians anything that is to be binding on conscience: **“One is your Master, even Christ”** (Mat.23:8). Such a church body [which restricts evangelical liberty by laws of its own] misleads its people into *idolatry*; for inasmuch as a Christian in ecclesiastical, spiritual matters accepts any command from men, he apostatizes (falls away) from God. Such a church body commits *grand larceny* [theft or swindle on a large scale and in an easily recognizable way] on her members, **for all Christians have acquired and received Christian liberty from Christ**, and therefore also particularly have been given freedom from human commandments. When it wants to command something beyond the limit of God’s Word, that church body seeks to take this Christian freedom from its members. Indeed, a church body of that kind **subverts the entire order which was to be characteristic of the Christian Church and makes a kingdom of this world out of the Christian Church.** For only the kingdoms of this world have the right to issue laws which are outside of God’s Word, if these laws are not in contradiction with God’s Word. But the **Church** has not been given this right; the Church has no power to legislate beyond the limit of the Word of God. **The Church can command only where God has commanded in His Word.** In the Church only *One*, Christ, commands. The members of the Church **are all of equal rank with each other**; they are not subordinate to each other.

--- That our Evangelical Lutheran Church now adheres to these correct boundaries, **that it commands nothing which God’s Word has not commanded, that it permits all those things to be free which God’s Word permits to be free**, that we will learn (observe) from the testimonies that are quoted.

You want to become preachers within the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Then I myself charge you that you also will faithfully adhere to these principles of our dear Church which have been mentioned in this matter, that in days to come you will under no conditions allow liberty in matters which God’s Word has commanded, and, on the other hand, also never to command anything which is not commanded in God’s

Word. **Only then will you become faithful servants of God and true servants of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.**

## BIBLE PROOF

Now let us have a few comments concerning the Scripture passages that are quoted (by Dr. Walther).

Matt. 23:8: **“One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.”**

These words do not merely state that Christians are to associate with each other in a brotherly and friendly manner, but in these words the *order* has been laid down which must apply in the Christian Church, namely, that in the Christian Church there is only *one* Commander, and that is **Christ in His Word**. Therefore the citizens of this Kingdom must not desire to command anything of each other. Among them the relationship of those who command and those who are under the command of others does not exist.

When it is stated in Gal. 5:1: **“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage,”** then by these words the Christian is also forbidden to *allow* himself to be ruled by men in spiritual matters.

In 2 Cor.8:8 the Apostle Paul places before our eyes his own example: **“I speak not by commandment.”** [Luther’s translation: “I do not say that I command anything.”] The matter dealt with the provision of earthly support in a particular case, and here the Apostle wrote to the Corinthians: **“I do not say that I command anything.”** But are not Christians commanded that they are to help in giving aid from their earthly goods to their brethren, indeed their neighbors in general, in their need? Most certainly. All Christians must accept this *basic principle*, and they are “commanded” to do so, that they are bound by love to help relieve their neighbor in his distressing need. If they desire not to be “obligated” by this principle, then they reject the Law of God as the norm (standard) for a God-pleasing life.

The Savior says in John 15:17, **“These things I command you, that ye love one another,”** and St. John says in 1 John 3:23, **“And this is His commandment, that we ... love one another.”** But not in every *particular* case can a person command the Christian that he must exercise love, much less can the amount of assistance be prescribed. This one must leave to Christian judgment.

The words of Paul in 1 Cor. 9:19, **“For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more,”** demonstrate the proper use of Christian liberty. The Apostle says first of all: **There is such a thing as Christian liberty.** This truth consists in this: that a Christian (in spiritual matters, Ed.) is free from bondage to any person (No-one can issue man-made orders to him and place them on the same level as God's Word, Ed.). No man can command him anything in spiritual matters, regardless of how high may be his worldly station. However, because of *love* a Christian will be everyone's servant with everything that he has. This love should also move him in particular cases to **refrain from the use of Christian liberty**. He can, like the Apostle, become a Jew to the Jews and a heathen to the heathen (1 Cor.9:20)<sup>64</sup>.

---

<sup>64</sup> **Kretzmann:** "A true servant of Christ uses his liberty in the Gospel in no other way **but for the edification of his neighbor and for the praise of God.** Paul was free, he was not bound to any man's arbitrary rule, but went his way independent of the judgment of men, actuated and controlled entirely by the Spirit of Christ that lived in him. But this liberty he asserted in a very peculiar (unique, BLW) way, from the standpoint of man, namely, in complete self-denial. Through **love every Christian** is the debtor of his neighbour, places himself at the service of his neighbour, **has his true spiritual welfare in mind at all times**, Rom. 13:8. And Paul's sole aim was to **gain all the more souls for Christ** by this service.... To the Jews he became as a Jew in order to win the Jews; **without denying or setting aside one word of the eternal truth, he accommodated his methods to the circumstances,** always with the intention of **winning souls for Christ,** Acts 16:3; 18:18; 21:23 ff. To those under the Law, whether they belonged to the Jewish nation or to the Gentiles (mainly circumcised Gentiles), he became as one under the Law, in order to gain those under the Law; **he was willing to conform to the customs, modes of life, and methods of instruction in vogue among**

## OUR LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS TEACH THE SAME

Now let us hear what the Confessions of our Church say on this point in question in this lecture. As a preface to what we are discussing this testimony is from the Seventh Article of the **Augsburg Confession**: "It is sufficient for the true unity of the Christian Church that the Gospel (Here meant in wider sense, entire Word, BLW) be preached in conformity with a pure understanding of it and that the sacraments be administered in accordance with the divine Word. *It is not necessary for the true unity* of the Christian Church that *ceremonies* instituted by men should be *observed uniformly* in all places Eph.4." [(Art. VII, 2, 3, p. 32) Translation from the German]<sup>65</sup>.

In regard to *doctrine* our Confession requires **full agreement**. On the other hand, in regard to church *ceremonies* it declares them to be completely free (Christian liberty, Ed.). Why? Because doctrine has been commanded by God, while church ceremonies do not have God's command. Thus we see how sharply our Church in its chief confession, the Augsburg Confession, distinguished between what is commanded in God's Word and what is left free (in the realm of Christian Liberty, Ed.). Most certainly we also say that uniformity in ceremonies (religious customs) is not *in every respect* something that is a matter of absolute indifference, but we strive also in our Synod to observe the highest possible uniformity in church usages. We have different reasons for this.

-- For example, if our Christians move from one congregation to another, then it is **reassuring** for them when they now find the same church ceremonies in the new congregation which they were accustomed to in their old congregation. The **weak** may thereby become **confused** if they find everything significantly different in the external order of church services (ceremonies) between one Lutheran congregation and another at a different place. Furthermore, as our Confessions also point out this can readily give **our enemies occasion to slander us** that in our doctrine we also are not united because there exists among us so great a difference in the ceremonies. For these and other reasons we also urge within the circles of our Synod the greatest possible uniformity in ceremonies. Also you must do the same. But you must not do this *in the sense* as if some how uniformity in ceremonies belongs to the essence of Christian or churchly unity. The essence of Christian or churchly unity **consists only in unity of doctrine**, not in unity of ceremonies

It states further in the Twenty-eighth Article of the **Augsburg Confession**: "What, then, are we to think of the Sunday and like rites in the house of God? To this we answer *that it is lawful for bishops or pastors*<sup>66</sup> *to make ordinances that things be done orderly in the Church*, not that thereby we should

---

**them, so long as these matters were really things indifferent.** To those without the Law, to the heathen in the strict sense of the word, he became as without the Law, although for his own person he was bound under the Law of Christ, in order to gain those without the Law; **when in a heathen community, Paul did not practice the Jewish customs**, a fact which would merely have antagonized the Gentiles; he omitted all reference to regulations of the Old Testament which were strictly Jewish in character. .... The love of Christ was the motive for all his actions, a life implanted in Him and anxious to demonstrate itself in the service of the Gentiles; in the midst of the idolatry of heathenism, **Paul found points of contact for the application of the Word of Grace.** To the weak the apostle became weak in order to gain the weak; **his loving insight enabled him to understand the scruples and weaknesses of those that had not made much headway in Christian knowledge.** Cp. 2 Cor. 11: 29. Every true servant of Christ must learn from the apostle not to despise any one, nor to permit disgust over foolish weaknesses to enter his heart. .... And therefore Paul summarizes: **To all men I have become all things in order by all means to save some.**"

<sup>65</sup> "To the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel ((Here meant in wider sense, entire Word, BLW) and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is rites or ceremonies, instituted by, men, should be everywhere alike. As Paul says: 'One faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all,' etc. Eph.4:5-6." (Triglotta, p.47; **Translation from the Latin**).

<sup>66</sup> Walther in his **Church and Ministry** (translated by J.T. Mueller, p.319, 1987 Edition) correctly quotes **Carpzov** on this: "It must be carefully noted that when the Augsburg Confession here grants the bishops the right to ordain ceremonies, this is done (1) according to the **condition of the time**, where also they possessed this authority by **human right**.... (2) that **the church must not be deprived of any part of its rights.**" This occurred because of the terrible ignorance not only in doctrine but in running the affairs of the congregation by the **lay men**. But the pastors

merit grace or make satisfaction for sins, or that consciences be bound to judge them necessary services and to think *that it is a sin to break* them without offense to others. So Paul ordains 1 Cor.11:5, that **women should cover their heads** in the congregation, 1 Cor.14:30, that **interpreters be heard in order in the church**, etc.

“It is proper that the churches should keep such ordinances for the sake of love and tranquility, so far that one do not offend another, that all things be done in the churches in order, and without confusion, 1 Cor. 14:40; comp. Phil. 2:14; but so that consciences be not burdened to think that they are necessary to salvation, or to judge that they sin when they break them without offense to others; as no one will say that a woman sins who **goes out in public** with her head uncovered, provided only that no offense be given.” [Triglotta, p.91].<sup>67</sup>

### **TRUE CHARACTER OF THE OTHODOX LUTHERAN CHURCH DOES NOT CONSIST IN BEAUTIFUL CEREMONIES, BUT IN THE PURE DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE**

Take note that the observance of Sunday is placed by our Confessions upon the same level with other churchly arrangements and ceremonies. Our Confessions state it **quite specifically** that the observance of Sunday belongs to *churchly* arrangements and **not to things which have been commanded by God's Word**. Because our fathers did not want needlessly to change the church ceremonies (arrangements), they said at Augsburg that it should be left to the bishops and pastors to make arrangements in external matters. But in this matter the bishops and pastors are nevertheless not to require obedience for these arrangements (involving church ceremonies) *for the sake of conscience*, as if God had commanded these arrangements (ceremonies), but it should be free also for Christians to adopt other arrangements. In regard to what decision is fitting in an external arrangement we always only appeal to love while preserving Christian Liberty.

The **Apology of the Augsburg Confession** emphasizes that the *specific character* doctrine of the orthodox Church does not consist in a beautiful ceremonies but in the purity of its doctrine: “Our opponents quote Daniel, who says that there will be abomination and desolation in the churches; and they refer this to our churches because *the altars are not covered, that in them no candles are burning*, and the like. Although it is not true that we abrogate such external ornaments altogether, nevertheless, even if we were to do so, Daniel does not speak of such things, which are altogether external and do not belong to the Christian church. But he means another and much more abominable desolation, which is found in the papacy in a high degree, namely, the desolation of the most necessary and most important service, the ministry, and the suppression of the Gospel. . . . Wherever our opponents inaugurate their *candles, altar covers, pictures, and ornaments as something necessary and as a divine service*, **they**

---

were not to do anything in earthly matters that was contrary to the will of the congregation. As soon as the lay people could run their own affairs in Christian love and in obedience to God's Word, they were to be allowed their full rights as Walther did when the Missouri Synod was established and as is explained in Walther's excellent book **The Correct Form of a Christian Congregation**.

<sup>67</sup> Translation from the **German Text of the Augsburg Confession**: “What, then, are we to think about Sunday and other similar church ordinances and ceremonies? To this our teachers reply that bishops or pastors may make regulations so that everything in the churches is done in good order, but not as a means of obtaining God's grace or making satisfaction for sins, nor in order to bind men's consciences by considering these things necessary services of God and counting it a sin to omit their observance even when this is done without offense. So St. Paul in 1 Cor. 11:5 directed that women should cover their heads in the assembly. He also directed that in the assembly preachers should not all speak at once, but one after another, in order. It is proper for the Christian assembly to keep such ordinances for the sake of love and peace, to be obedient to the bishops and parish ministers in such matters, and to observe the regulations in such a way that one does not give offense to another, and so that there may be no disorder or unbecoming conduct in the church. However, consciences should not be burdened by contending that such things are necessary for salvation or that it is a sin to omit them, even when no offense is given to others, just as no one would say that a woman commits a sin if without offense to others she goes out with uncovered head.” (Art. XXVIII, 53—56, pp. 89 f.).



are the followers of Antichrist, of whom Daniel says that they honor their deity with silver, gold, and similar ornaments.” (Translation by Dr. J.T. Mueller; Cf. Art. XXIV, Numbers 44, 45, 51].<sup>68</sup>

(Delivered by Dr. Pieper on 5 August, 1890)

[Only the italics are Pieper’s. Other emphasis has been added. All Bible texts have been bolded for emphasis. Larger paragraphs have been broken down into shorter ones. ]

\*\*\*\*\*

## **PRACTICAL -- FALLING AWAY FROM THE FAITH** (Abfall vom Glauben).

(The following is translated from the **Real Lexikon**, a series of 8 volumes summarising the sermons, essays, etc., of the old former Missouri Synod and the Synodical Conference drawn up by Pastor Eckhardt, pages 76- 78).

### **FALLING AWAY FROM THE FAITH**

(Continued from Morsels, January- March, 2017)

#### **12. How we are preserved from a Fall from Faith.**

(a) By Faith. As long as we remain in the true faith we cannot indeed prevent trials and dangers (from coming our way), but they can be overcome with God's help.

(b) By the Gospel, the Sword of the Spirit.

Therefore we should

(1) not rely on our own strength, but on God's power in the Lord.

"Grant that Thy Spirit's help  
To me be always given  
Lest I should fall again  
And lose the way to heaven ;  
That He may give me strength  
In mine infirmity  
And e'er renew my heart  
To serve Thee willingly." (Walther Hymnal 287v6)<sup>69</sup>.

(2) not be secure<sup>70</sup>.

(3) watch and pray.

---

<sup>68</sup> “The adversaries in the Confutation make a great ado concerning the desolation of churches, namely, that *the altars stand unadorned, without candles* and without images. These trifles they regard as ornaments to churches. (Although it is not true that we abolish all such outward ornaments; yet even if it were so, Daniel is not speaking of such things as are altogether external and do not belong to the Christian Church.) ..... And the true adornment of the churches is godly, useful, and clear doctrine, the devout use of the Sacraments, ardent prayer, and the like. *Candles, golden vessels, tapers, altar cloth, images, and similar adornments are becoming, but they are not the adornment that properly belongs to the church.* But **if the adversaries make worship consist in such matters and not in the preaching of the Gospel, in faith**, and the conflicts of faith, they are to be numbered among those whom Daniel describes as worshiping their god with gold and silver. Dan.11:38.” ([Triglotta, pp. 399-403, Numbers 44, 45, 51. German].

<sup>69</sup> "That I may not backslide,  
But life in heaven inherit,  
Grant me, while here I live,  
O Lord, Thy Holy Spirit,  
That He may give me strength  
In mine infirmity,  
And e'er renew my heart  
To serve Thee willingly." (ALHB 391v6).

<sup>70</sup> Think that without repentance and faith in Christ we are safe and that we cannot fall.

- (4) fight against everything which threatens our spiritual life (in Christ).
- (5) not deliberately place ourselves in (spiritual) danger. Peter.<sup>71</sup>
- (6) always keep the goal before our eyes: It is our salvation and eternal blessedness.
- (7) diligently use the means of Grace.

### 13. Application.

(a) For examination. How does it stand with you? Are you going to fall? Is it happening in our congregation?<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> **Stoekhardt** warns (**Passion Sermons** German, pages 96, 97; English, pages 50,51): "Peter followed the Lord into the palace of the high priest. He wanted to see what would happen. He still loved the Lord. He was concerned over the outcome of this business. ...

"As he knocked on the door of the high priest, Peter did not dare to identify himself as the disciple of the Lord. Another disciple, who was known to the high priest and as an acquaintance of the high priest was able to get in, arranged for Peter to be admitted. Perhaps it was John, who often only quietly hints at his name in his Gospel. Now that John wants to describe the fall of his fellow apostle Peter he remembers also his weakness, that he did not follow Jesus to his death as a disciple of Jesus but as an acquaintance of the high priest. That is also our weakness and custom. In our relation with men we act as if we were their acquaintances and friends, neighbours and fellow workers and gladly cover and conceal our Christian name and title. This unstable, divided, fearful heart is the source of the 'Peter-sin,' the denial of the Lord.

"A second cause for such a fall certainly lies in the place and circumstances. The fire of coals became dangerous to Peter. He wanted to warm himself at the fire which the servants of the high priest had kindled in the courtyard against the coolness of the night. There in the company of rough menials and servant girls it was very hard to take a stand. There one could easily fall into temptation and howl with the wolves. Those servants of the high priest had already clearly betrayed at the capture of Jesus their hatred of Christ. Peter also knew and greeted them as murderers when he attacked them with the sword.

"The same fire of coals we see burning far and wide also today. Where the children of the world, who turn their backs to God to the Church, where unbelievers, the enemies of Christ assemble, be it in the theatres, dances halls, in the palaces of the rich, be it outside in the courtyards and low dens, there a dangerous fire glows and burns, the fire of hatred of Christ. Hearts which are kindled by evil desires, by worldly pleasures burn also in growing rage and animosity against the Lord and His Holy Word, which sharply condemns the conduct of this world. In such company a Christian can hardly stand and keep his faith. A wind blows there which can not tolerate faith. Certainly such places and circumstances, evil company and society hastens and promote the sin which grows up by itself out of the rash, cowardly heart.

"Yet a denier dare not push the guilt on the circumstances. No, that is his guilt, that he enters into such dangerous places, that he betakes himself into such hard situations. That was thoughtlessness on the part of Peter, yes, fleshly, sinful self-confidence that he warmed himself at the fire which wanton servants had kindled. He acted here without the call, without the command of his Lord. He led himself into temptation. It does not serve to excuse our sins but it increases and advances the guilt, when we without a call, against God's Word and will, without fear and prayer in fleshly self-confidence or frivolous godlessness mingle in the company of the children of the world and godless about whom we know and must know how they stand over against the Church and Christianity, when we seek to warm ourselves at the unclean, stinking fires of the coal and straw of worldly amusements, which the people of the world who just do not know any better and not the Christians have lit. Social connections with the world is the wide open gate to denying Christ.

"The evil heart is the source of this sin. Time, place, and circumstances hasten the same, namely when the Christian allows himself to be governed by place, time and circumstances. However, the mockers of this world are the carnal tempters to evil, behind which in the case the evil enemy hides himself. An unstable Christian who does not guard his frivolous heart, who is overcome by place, time, and circumstances, who allows himself to be drawn into all possible kinds of company finds in the evil hour hardly power and courage to withstand the gross mockery of the world. The story of Peter's temptation sketches a similar picture of the mocking world."

<sup>72</sup> **Walther** states: "Well, now, my friends, today I have held up before you a clear mirror in which those, if they do not wilfully close their own eyes, certainly will find their picture who either have fallen or have never arisen.

"Oh, you that are convinced of your secret sin or known fall, I ask you: **Do you not want to arise again? Do you not want to return? Once again Jesus Christ calls out to you through the preaching of His Gospel to return to Him; do not delay one second; the danger to your soul grows mightily from hour to hour like the waters of a flood. Do not go farther and farther away until you perhaps no longer hear Christ's call of grace. But do not suppose it is too late; no, only Satan whispers that to you, after he has hurled you into error or sin; do not let**

"Say not: 'My sins are far too great,  
His mercy I have scorned and slighted,  
Now my repentance is too late;  
I came not when His love invited.'  
O trembling sinner, have no fear;  
In penitence to Christ draw near.  
Come now, tho' conscience still is chiding;  
Accept His mercy, e'er abiding.  
Come; blest are they who this believe:  
My Savior sinners doth receive.  
My Savior sinners doth receive." (Walther Hymnal 242v9).

"Thus my longings, heav'nward tending,  
Jesus, rest alone on Thee.  
Help me, thus on Thee depending;  
Savior, come and dwell in me.  
Although all the world should forsake and forget Thee,  
In love I will follow Thee, ne'er will I quit Thee.  
Lord Jesus, both spirit and life is Thy Word;  
And is there a joy which Thou dost not afford?" (Walther Hymnal 249v4).

**(b) For a Warning.**

1. Many have fallen. Many of our confirmands, our young ladies, congregational members cannot be called to: Don't fall away; but: Rise again from your fall.

2. Many are about to sink back into spiritual death. When the (power of the, BLW) Spirit decreases (in our heart, BLW), the flesh (sinful nature, BLW) increases; soon the last little spark of faith can be extinguished.

**(c) For an Admonition** to those who have Fallen. They are

1. Think about this carefully: There is still help; one can still again rise from a Fall [David, Peter, the lost (prodigal, BLW) son, who again was received back into grace], one can still seek (receive in faith, BLW). Jesus: But where are the nine?

2. Repent and be converted. Rev.2:5, **"Remember therefore from where you are fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come to you quickly, and will remove your candlestick out of his place, except you repent."**

Note: On God's part their Baptismal Covenant stands firm. Repetition of Baptism is not necessary.

**(d) For Comfort:** 1 Cor.10:13, **God will not let you "be tempted above that you are able."**<sup>73</sup>

2 Cor.12:9: **God is faithful. My (God's, BLW) strength is made powerful when I am weak.**<sup>74</sup> God will preserve us in the faith (through His Word, BLW) until our end.

---

**yourself be bound by the cords of despair; tear them by the grace which is even now being told to you. Christ has received gifts (forgiveness of sins, life and salvation, BLW) also for those who are rebellious, also for you. Groan with David (and receive Christ's pardon, BLW) and weep with Peter (tears of true repentance, BLW) and you also will join them in finding grace again.** If it is difficult for one who has fallen to rise again, it is nevertheless easy if he merely (in faith, BLW) accepts grace anew and quickly turns around, as the prodigal son, the moment he perceived his misery (and thought of his father's love, BLW)." **Gnadenjahr** p.182, 183; **Year of Grace** p.110,111. Emphasis added.]

<sup>73</sup> 1 Cor.10:13, **"There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it."**

<sup>74</sup> 2 Cor.12:9, **"And He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest on me."**

Note: That many have fallen does not make **our salvation** uncertain. If other sick people in the hospital get a relapse due to their carelessness, it does not follow that we also have to get a relapse. See the section on **Certainty**.

## Homiletics

### Third Sunday in Lent (Gospel)

1. **Text: Luke 11:14-28: The Tragic Fall from Grace: (a) How that Occurs. (b) How Tragic is its Results.** (Gnadenjahr 176; English (Heck) 107).

2. **A Serious Warning Against Backsliding** (from the Faith, BLW): **(a) How Backsliding from the Faith occurs; (b) What a Grievous thing Backsliding from the Faith is.** (Hom. Mag. Vol. 18, 57 -- George Stoeckhardt).

### 9 Sunday After Trinity (Epistle)

3. **Text: 1 Cor. 10:6-13: Whoever allows himself to think that he stands** (overconfidently, trusting in himself, BLW) **take heed** (care, BLW) **lest he fall** (from the faith, BLW):

**(a) To whom these words apply; (b) Against what does the Apostle warn in these words; (c) How we continue to be preserved from a Fall** (from the faith); **(d) What should move and encourage us to true watchfulness.** (Hom. Mag. Vol. 17, 212.).

4. **Text: 1 Cor. 10:6-13: The Warning Call of the Apostle: You who are standing** (in the faith), **do not be secure, that you may not fall from the Faith through the close association with the noisy and busy activity of the world! The Apostle shows: (a) how such who stand** (in the faith) **can easily fall away through the close association with the noisy and busy activity of the world; (b) how such therefore are earnestly to preserve themselves from security** (a person who thinks that they cannot fall by trusting in themselves). (Hom. Mag. Vol. 14, 207).

5. **Text: 1 Cor. 10:6-13: The Apostle's Warning: "Whoever allows himself to think that he stands take heed lest he fall": (a) How highly necessary this warning is for us; (b) How we can and should fruitfully** (with great benefits, BLW) **take to heart these words.** (Hom. Mag. Vol. 8, 232).

6. **Text: 1 Cor. 10:6-13: How Dangerous it is to think that a person stands secure** (in his own powers. BLW) **from a Fall from Faith! (a) Because such a person who thinks himself secure despises God's warning; (b) Because such a person who thinks himself secure relies not on God's faithfulness, but on his own power.** (Hom. Mag. Vol. 14, 250).

7. **Text: 1 Cor. 10:6-13: Concerning the Greatest of all Dangers for every Christian is the Fall from Grace: (a) How great this danger is for every Christian; (b) Which Christian certainly will succumb to this danger; (c) Which Christian is certainly preserved** (in the faith) **in spite of all danger.** (Hom. Mag. Vol. 30, 240).

### 13 Sunday after Trinity (Epistle)

8. **Text: 1 Cor. 10:6-13: The Warning Call of the Apostle: You who are standing** (in the faith), **do not be secure, that you may not fall from the Faith through the close association with the noisy and busy activity of the world! The Apostle shows: (a) how such who stand** (in the faith) **can easily fall away through the close association with the noisy and busy activity of the world; (b) how such therefore are earnestly to preserve themselves from security** (a person who thinks that they cannot fall by trusting in themselves). (Hom. Mag. Vol. 14, 207).

### 14 Sunday after Trinity (Gospel)

9. **Text: Luke 17: 11-19: The Fall from Faith: (a) how it can so easily occur; (b) How terrible it is; (c) How we can continue to be preserved from it.** (Hom. Mag. Vol. 6, 257).

10. **Text:** Luke 17: 11-19: The Earnest Resolve: If everyone else us unfaithful, let us remain faithful: (a) What a great battle this resolve involves; (b) But why it would be worth fighting this most difficult fight; (c) What we must do in order that our resolution is victoriously implemented. (Hom. Mag. Vol. 6, 278).

11. Even though many people may turn back to the great heap (of unbelievers, BLW), yet I will still remain faithful to You in love. So let us speak (a) not trusting in our power (then a Fall has occurred), but (b) in confidence in the grace of our God.

22 Sunday after Trinity (Gospel)

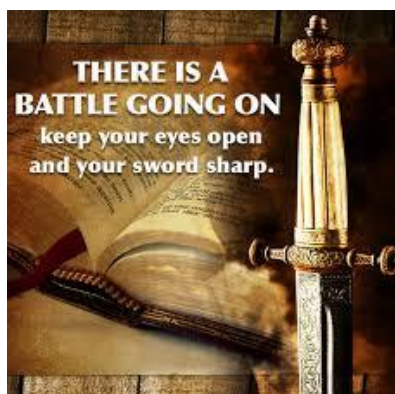
12. **Text:** Mat.18:23-35: The Unfaithful (unmerciful) Servant --- a Warning Picture of a Christian who has Fallen from Grace: (a) His Pardon; (b) His Fall; (c) The Consequences of his Fall. (Hom. Mag. Vol. 29, 342).

Free Text

13. **Text:** 2 Pet.20:21: Concerning the Fall from Grace: (a) To what this Fall can again lead; (b) How it occurs; (c) How terrifying a matter it is. (Hom. Mag. Vol. 5, 34).

Next Time we Start the section: **Abgötterei** or **Idolatry**.

\*\*\*\*\*



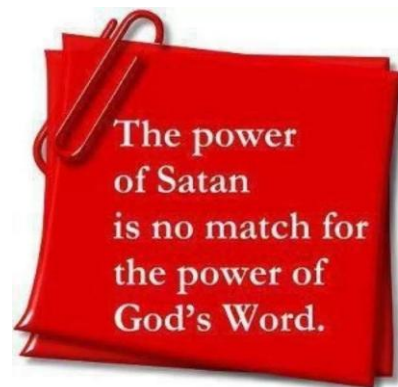
**SERMON STUDY ON THE EPISTLE FOR THE 21 SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY**

(Prof. George Metzger)

**Part 5.**

**Eph.6:10-17.**

But the apostle portrays our enemy even further. He adds: **"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."** (Eph.6:12)<sup>75</sup>.



We do not have to fight against flesh and blood, but **"against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."** It is a very powerful, mighty enemy against whom we must contend, yes, it is not only an enemy, it is a whole multitude, it is a whole army, it is an entire, great, well-organized empire that fights against us. **"Principalities and powers,"** so Paul first of all calls our enemies. With these words without a doubt, just as in Eph.1:21<sup>76</sup> and Eph.3:10<sup>77</sup> where he speaks of good angels, he designates different classes of angels.

<sup>75</sup> Continued from **Morsels** January-March, 2017 page 28.

<sup>76</sup> Eph.1:21, **"Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."** **Kretzmann:** "By setting Christ at His right hand in the heavens, God has put all things under His feet, has given Him, also according to His human nature, the free and unbounded dominion, not only over all power and authority in the physical world, **but also over all the spirits of heaven, over the angels with their superhuman strength and power.**"

<sup>77</sup> Eph.3:10, **"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."** **Kretzmann:** "The purpose of Paul's preaching was the gathering of the Church, which is synonymous with the revelation or administration of the mystery which had been hidden in God. Through the Church, therefore, according to God's intention, even the principalities and powers of heaven should be acquainted with the many-sided wisdom of God, with the wisdom which has so many different forms, which manifests itself in so many different ways. The angels of God, who have a decided interest in the redemption of mankind, 1 Pet. 1:22, are eager to learn ever more of the wisdom of the almighty Lord, who makes use of so many different ways and means to build His Church and thus to realize the purpose of creation. Through the Church, in the

Also among the evil angels, the devils, there are ranks. There you find (the Greek word, BLW) ἀρχαί<sup>78</sup> (Translated: **principalities**, BLW), the first ones, powerful lords, princes, who rule over others and preside over large parts of the Kingdom of Darkness, who lead and guide others. There you find (the Greek word, BLW) ἐξουσία<sup>79</sup> (Translated: **powers**, BLW), powerful, mighty ones, who are no doubt subordinate to the first ones (**principalities**, BLW), but who still yet occupy special positions of power. It is, therefore, a well-organized army and empire which opposes us Christians, which fight against the small group of believers. And even more. This well-armed, powerful, mighty, empire of Satan and his princes is **not** in some way far distance from us that we therefore should not have to be very concerned about.

There are "**the rulers of the darkness of this world**," against whom we must wrestle. More accurately the Apostle calls them οἱ κοσμοκράτορες<sup>80</sup> τοῦ σκότους τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου<sup>81</sup>, **world rulers of the darkness of this age of the world**<sup>82</sup>. Satan and his evil angels have their kingdom here on earth in the midst of, among and around us. They are the rulers of the (godless, BLW) world, rulers and princes of godless men, of all those who have fallen away from God. The devil is, as Christ has called him at different times, the prince of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11<sup>83</sup>), yes, the god of this world, as Paul says (2 Cor.4:4<sup>84</sup>).

**Luther** correctly writes: "However, he makes it still more horrible in the following words, first, by calling them '**the lords of the world**' [Eph.6:2]. In Greek this is κοσμοκράτορες,<sup>85</sup> not the way we

---

Church, the interest of the angels is satisfied; they receive an insight into its workings, into the gracious purposes of God, into the splendid results which are bound to attend His efforts; and they raise their voices in songs of praise and adoration to Him whose wisdom and mercy are from everlasting."

<sup>78</sup> ἀρχαί - **Thayer**: "5. The first place,... office given in charge.... Hence the term is transferred by Paul to angels and demons holding dominions entrusted to them in the order of things." Here **arche** is a **metonym** (a figure of speech consisting of the use of the name of one thing for that of another, of which it is an attribute or with which it is associated) that stands for those having the position of priority and pre-eminence. In context Paul is saying there is an invisible audience of evil princes or chiefs among angels (rulers is plural in the Greek so he is not referring only to Satan). Paul is also teaching that even in the invisible angelic world there is a stratification of authority. (See Precept Austin)

<sup>79</sup> ἐξουσία - **Thayer**: "4. *the power or rule of government* (the power of him whose will and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed, (generally translated *authority*)....ββ. *the leading and more powerful among created beings superior to man, spiritual potentates; used in the plural for a certain class of angels...*"

<sup>80</sup> It describes one holding power over the world and thus means ruler of the world system, that system that is actively opposed to everything that God stands for. In the plural as used in this verse it speaks of Satan and his demonic forces composed of evil angels who control the present evil world system.

<sup>81</sup> The **Textus Receptus** has this in its grammatical form in the sentence as follows: "τοῦς κοσμοκράτορας τοῦ σκότους τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου." In this verse **exousia** is a **metonym** that stands for those invested with the "right and the might". Here those invested with the right and the might are the hosts of evil angels ruled by Satan and inextricably arrayed against God and His eternal purpose. **Arche** is the authority granting the power, and **exousia** is the one who executes the power which pictures a divine order or an invisible rank. (See Precept Austin).

<sup>82</sup> **Luther**: "Thus you hear where and how they rule and why he calls them 'lords' or emperors 'of the world,' namely, because they rule forcibly over the whole world. Therefore, you have no right to be secure and think that the devil with his angels is far away in India or Ethiopia, but you should know that he is not far from you and is even daily and at every moment with you and around you, in your room, by your bed, at table, on the street, wherever you are, walking, standing, and whatever you are doing, etc. However, '**they rule**,' he says, '**in the darkness**,' not only because the devil rules in human hearts where we cannot see him but also because where he rules there is nothing but darkness, that is, no knowledge of God or of His Word. Where God's Word is not kept pure, there is nothing but stubborn, blinded hearts which know nothing about God and Christ." (Am. Ed. Vol.79, page374).

<sup>83</sup> John 12:31, "**Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.**"

John 14:30, "**Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me.**"

John 16:11, "**Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.**"

<sup>84</sup> 2 Cor.4:4, "**In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.**"

<sup>85</sup> kosmokratores.

call our princes 'secular princes' or 'worldly lords,' but lords who are **master of the world and have the whole world under them.** He does not mention one, but many of them, each of them mightier and stronger than any emperor or king on earth; and not only this, but they have forcefully put just these emperors and kings under themselves.

"This expresses a very mighty title in one word. You cannot say this about any prince or lord on earth, even if the Roman or Turkish emperor had ten times as many titles. He is not speaking about a king in France or Spain or over three or four kingdoms, none of which do or can master the world -- not even his own land, if God does not permit it! Rather, **his kingdom or empire extends as wide as the world is; there he is lord, has everything forcefully under him, and everything which does not believe in Christ is his** -- and also earth, water and air, as will be said. Thus, compared to him, the Turkish emperor together with all the lords in the world are to be classed as beggars. Elsewhere St. Paul even calls him a '**god of this world,**' who has their hearts in his power and drives them to do whatever he wants [2 Cor.4:4]." (Am. Ed. Vol.79, pages 371-372).

(*Bolded emphasis is the translator's. To be Continued. Homiletic Magazine* Nov.1905, Vol.29, No.11, Pages 326-327)

+++++

## ONLY GOD'S WORD IS TO BE TAUGHT AND HEARD IN THE CHURCH

Part 1 -- Ezek. 3v1-4 (Address at the Commencement of the New Student Year 1926-1927<sup>86</sup> -- by Dr. F. Pieper.)



**Ezek.3:1, 'Son of man, eat what is in front of you; ... and go preach to the house of Israel.'** (Luther's Translation.)

Students of Concordia! This is the first time that both teachers and students of our theological Concordia have assembled in this new seminary building. Therefore it is an opportune time to remind ourselves what is to be taught and learnt here. If we wanted to place inscriptions over the four entrances to our grand seminary building, inscriptions which would give expression to the character of our theological college, then they could perhaps read as follows: **'Here a person is not to speculate, but to teach, learn and believe God's Word.'** We, your teachers, have been bound by our orthodox Lutheran Church to abide by this manner of theological instruction when we entered upon our teaching Office. Up until now we have by God's grace observed this obligation. By God's grace we will also continue to be faithful to our duty in the future. But also you, the students, by your entry into our theological institution assume a responsibility for a duty, namely, the duty **to learn** God's Word, that is, to learn it with great willingness and with great diligence. Indeed, you are to seek to acquire the *hikanotees ek tou theou*<sup>87</sup>, the competency which has been ordained by Christ to carry out the Public Office of the Ministry for Him, in the service of Christ and for the souls of mankind purchased at so great a price for their eternal salvation.

Students of Concordia, my dear young brethren! I want to **place upon your hearts** your duty in regard to seriously, diligently and thoroughly studying sacred theology even with some additional words. I do it in conjunction with the **striking words of admonition** which the Lord directed to the prophet Ezekiel who was being prepared as the preacher for those captured Israelites in Babylonia.

The words of admonition read according to Ezek.3:1-4: <sup>1</sup> **Moreover He said unto me, 'Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel.'** <sup>2</sup> **So I opened my**

<sup>86</sup> To the entire student body of Concordia Seminary St Louis. **Lehre und Wehre** Vol. 72, 1926, pages 321-326).

<sup>87</sup> [Note: The Greek expression. '*hikanotees ek tou theou,*' that Pieper uses comes from 2 Cor.3:5 and is translated by the KJV as, our '*sufficiency is of God.*' The word sufficiency in this context refers to the **God-given competency or ability** which the Holy Spirit alone brings about through God's Word for the pastor to carry out the work of the Office of Ministry. BLW]

mouth, and He caused me to eat that roll. <sup>3</sup> And He said unto me, ‘Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee.’ Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness. <sup>4</sup> And He said unto me, ‘Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with My words unto them.’

The Lord God dealt with the prophet in a **vision**. The prophet saw a hand stretched out in front of him and this hand held a rolled up letter<sup>88</sup>, a book in the form of a scroll (rolled up parchment). What was written on the scroll was a message which the prophet was to deliver to the house of Israel. Therefore -- so reads God’s demand – the prophet is to **eat** the scroll, that is, take it inside his inner self. The meaning is clear Ezekiel is not to proclaim to the house of Israel **his** own word -- the word of the man, Ezekiel, --- but **God’s** Word, as it is stated in verse 4, ‘**Go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with My words unto them.**’

Students of Concordia! Do not preach man’s word, but only God’s Word – that is the **divine** order in the Christian Church until the last day. The Christian Church is indeed not a human institution, but **God’s** house (*oikia theou*). 1 Tim.3:15, ‘**But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth**’. Therefore also only God’s Word is to be taught and heard in the Church. The Apostle Peter admonishes all who step forward to teach in the Christian Church, ‘**If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God** [in accordance with the Word of God, BLW].’ (1 Pet 4:11). The word of man is totally out of place, a defiling of the Christian Church and God has imposed His divine prohibition on it. God calls out a warning cry to all preachers, ‘**Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues and say, He saith.**’ (Jer. 23:31)<sup>89</sup>. And Christian hearers are admonished, ‘**Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and avoid them.**’ (Rom.16:17).

There is also a place in the world for man’s word and man’s teaching, namely, in the worldly government and in worldly things in general, because men still understand something about worldly things when they use human reason which still remains in men even after the Fall in to sin.

But in the Christian Church which has to do with spiritual things, that is, with the things which after the Fall into sin belong to the obtaining of salvation, here man’s word is completely out of place, because these spiritual things lie completely outside men’s horizon. They have never come, as the apostle teaches, into the heart of man, *epi kardian anthroopou ouk anebee* (1 Cor. 2:9). 1 Cor.2:9, ‘**Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.**’

(To Be Continued)

- (1) The Translator takes responsibility also for all the **footnotes**. Since **Morsels** is going to a large number of lay people it is important that they understand theological terms and certain doctrinal statements.
- (2) Since the Translator desires as many of the Bible texts as possible to be read, and for the lay people to understand difficult texts Kretzmann’s Commentary has been used for this purpose.
- (3) For the use by pastors a number of cross references to other articles, sermons etc as well as to the original Hebrew and Greek have been made for further edification.
- (4) Since all of this work is done privately without extra assistance the Translator appreciates help with any corrections, etc., especially of a Biblical nature.

**“God’s Word and Luther’s doctrine pure  
Shall to eternity endure.”**

<sup>88</sup> Pieper has ‘Der Brief.’ The Hebrew refers to a scroll. BLW.

<sup>89</sup> **Kretzmann** explains this accurately: “‘literally, ‘that take their own tongues and utter a divine oracle,’ asserting that they were proclaiming messages from the true God, when they were setting forth nothing but their own inventions.’”