

MORSELS FROM THE SAVIOUR

Precious Biblical Food Translated from our Old orthodox Lutheran Fathers.

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[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.]

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“With All Joyful Confidence”¹ (Acts 28:31).²

by Dr. F. Pieper

(Departing Word which was Delivered to this Year's³ Graduating Class who have Been Prepared for the Pastoral Office and Who are Candidates for the Holy Ministry.)



Since I am to deliver to you in the name of the theological faculty a final word⁴ as a reminder before you enter into the practical side of the Office of the Ministry, then it is the message, **“with all joyful confidence.”⁵** In these words the Holy Scriptures of course describe the preaching activity of the Apostle Paul as this occurred at Rome while he was in prison. It is stated in the last chapter of the Book of Acts in the last verse: **“Paul preached the Kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ with all joyful confidence.”⁶** You, my dear candidates, have learnt in a three-year doctrinal theological seminary course the Word of the Lord and have by God's grace become competent to proclaim it. Do that now also by God's grace **“with all joyful confidence.”⁷** Do it at the **place** in which your call states and do it **under all circumstances** in which your call places you.

The Holy Scriptures place great importance on the words **“with joyful confidence.”** They stress that often. When Peter and John took their stand on their sermon on Christ before the High Council at Jerusalem, they did not there conduct themselves in a shy and reserved manner, but testified to that high assembly: **“Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men**

¹ Taken from *Lehre Und Wehre* 1924, pages 161-163.

² Acts 28:31, **“Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.”**

Kretzman states: “For Paul spent his entire time in proclaiming the Kingdom of God, not only by spoken words, but also in letters, for we have from this time of his life the epistles to the Ephesians, to the Colossians, to the Philippians, and to Philemon. In inviting men to become members of the Kingdom of God, of the wonderful communion of saints, *Paul always taught and repeated without rest or weariness the message concerning the Lord Jesus.*”

³ 1924

⁴ Message.

⁵ Pieper also quotes the Greek for these words: **“meta pasees parreesias.”**

⁶ Luther's translation is used.

⁷ Again Pieper adds the Greek: **“meta pasees parreesias.”**

whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). They did that in a **manner** which caused surprise. It is expressly reported in Acts 4:13, “**Now when they saw the boldness (joyful confidence)** ⁸ **of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled.**” Furthermore in the same chapter we read that the congregation of God at Jerusalem there offered up to God this prayer: “**Grant unto Thy servants that with all boldness (joyful confidence)** ⁹ **they may speak Thy Word!**” (Acts 4:30). But still more! When the apostles at Jerusalem not only had been thrown into prison, but also had been flogged ¹⁰, they did not there complain and weep, but they went away from the presence of the Council **rejoicing** ¹¹ that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for the sake of the Name of Jesus and did not stop teaching and preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ every day in the temple and here and there in their homes. That is your example and the example of every preacher of the Gospel (to preach the Word): **With All Joyful Confidence.** ¹²

And you have **every reason** for doing your work “**with all joyful confidence.**” It is indeed sometimes stated in the letter connected with the call which is so assigned to you or in similar words: “The place is out of the way ¹³,” “The one who is called will be quite alone.” And that might discourage the one or the other of you. But you know from Scripture: In whatever place your call states, whether it is at a place in our own country or in Canada, or in South America or in Europe or in India or in China – you are never alone and forsaken. No less than your Saviour Himself goes with you, is with you and remains with you. There indeed His promise quite expressly and especially reads for the preacher of the Gospel: “**Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.**” ¹⁴ And that Word is as true as every other Word of Scripture.

Furthermore, you know from the Scriptures that you have to proclaim a message which deals with **universal grace** ¹⁵. Everyone with whom you come into contact, no matter in what place and in what country it may be, everyone, **without exception**, you are to bring the grace of God which was acquired by Christ in the preaching of the Gospel, namely, the forgiveness of sins and with that heaven and salvation. For you know that “**God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the Word of reconciliation,**” of the **reconciliation** which has occurred. “**With all boldness** ¹⁶” you may therefore step forward and say: “**Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you (beg of you, Ed.) in Christ's stead, be ye**

⁸ The German word for “boldness” is “**Freudigkeit.**” The Greek word here is “**parreesian.**”

⁹ German is “**Freudigkeit.**”

¹⁰ Acts 5:40.

¹¹ In Acts 5: 41 the German word is “Froehlich”. The Greek is “chairontes.”

¹² Pieper quotes the Greek for these words: “**meta pasees parreesias.**”

¹³ In a remote location.

¹⁴ Mat.28:20.

¹⁵ Pieper uses the Latin: “*gratia universalis.*” **Dr. F Pieper** so beautifully and correctly explains this as follows: “It should be borne in mind that **God has already absolved the whole world in laying the sins of the whole world on Christ and in raising up Christ from the dead.** With *our* sins upon Him Christ entered into the prison-house of death; absolved from *our* sins He was set free in His resurrection. **Hence it is seen that the resurrection of Christ actually involves an absolution of the whole world,** and the absolution we pronounce is nothing but a repetition or echo of what God has long since pronounced.... Faith, indeed, is necessary on the part of man; not, however, to render God fully propitious,.... but to *accept* the forgiveness already earned by Christ and now offered in the Gospel.... It is of great importance to maintain this true conception of the Gospel, viz., that forgiveness of sins exists for every sinner before his conversion and faith. For, how could man obtain forgiveness of sin *by faith, i.e., by laying hold on it* by faith, if this forgiveness did not actually exist for him in Christ and were not offered to him in the Gospel?.... Absolution is founded on two facts, first, that **God is perfectly reconciled through Christ to every sinner;** secondly, that God has commanded this Gospel to be preached in the world... **Christ has already perfectly acquired forgiveness of sins for all men,** and ... this forgiveness is offered and exhibited to men through the means of grace, to wit, the Gospel and the Sacraments...” (*Distinctive Doctrines*, pp. 147-148, 150, 151).

¹⁶ See Footnote 12.

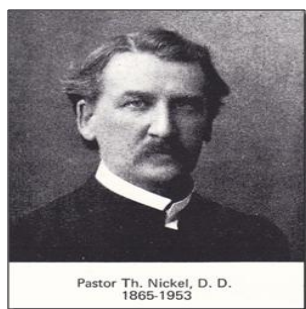
reconciled to God. For He (God, Ed.) hath made Him (Christ, Ed.) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him¹⁷.”

Furthermore, you know from the Scriptures that you have to proclaim a message which deals with **salvation by grace alone¹⁸**, that is, **entirely** by grace, **completely** by grace, **freely** by grace, by a grace which is in no way based on man’s worthiness or human conduct. As a result you completely have the ability to deal with the worst cases of sinfulness that may confront you. You have to proclaim a grace **which is greater than all sin**. This is what the Scriptures testify: **“Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound¹⁹.”**

Finally, also **the** fact that the preaching of Christ crucified is to the Jews a stumbling block and foolishness to the Greeks is not to take this **“joyful confidence²⁰”** from you. It would certainly make you discouraged if it would be your task to prove the Gospel of Christ as true on the grounds of human reason. But you know from the Scriptures that a greater Demonstrator goes with you and is beside you. He has undertaken to prove as the truth and to make strong in the heart the Word of God which is preached from you. He is God the Holy Spirit. It is true, we can say the "business" of the Holy Spirit in the world until the Day of Judgment is to be everywhere present there in the world with His divine power which convicts and converts in the Word, wherever the message about the cross is proclaimed; as the Saviour then expressly says of the Holy Spirit in John 16:14, **“He shall glorify Me.”** Only by God’s grace be faithful, faithful in the public and special proclamation of the Word which has proceeded out of the mouth of God, namely, the Word of the Holy Scriptures, and the Word of Promise will be fulfilled: **“So shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My Mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it”** (Is.55:11).

So, my dear young brothers, enter your life’s calling **“with all joyful confidence²¹.”** Through diligent, constant study, through the daily exercise in using God’s Word you become **joyfully confident** and when it is about to disappear, again and again awaken and restore it anew, promote and maintain it. ----

And to you, the members of the current second and third classes, I impress upon you: Return in September back to this Institution of learning with the firm resolve brought about in you by the Holy Spirit to continue your studies **“with all joyful confidence²²”** as it is God’s holy will in you to do it, and as it is necessary for everyone who prepares himself for the highest and most important Office which Christ has established here on earth. May God grant it! Amen. (*Apart from the bolded texts all other emphasis is Dr. Pieper’s.*)



THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD - Part 1.

[From **“Der Lutherische Kirchenbote”** (The Lutheran Church Messenger) official church paper of our former ELSA in Australia, August 17, 1916, Vol. 43, Number 17, Pages 129-131; Three Part Series. By the late Dr. Th. Nickel²³]

God has not only created us but He also preserves us. He gives us everything we need for the nourishment and necessities of our body, food and drink, clothing

¹⁷ 2 Cor. 5:20,21.

¹⁸ Pieper uses the expression: **“sola gratia.”**

¹⁹ Rom. 5:20. **Kretzmann’s** translation is excellent: **“Where sin abounded, grace superabounded.”**

²⁰ Pieper has the Greek word **“parreesia.”**

²¹ See Footnote 12.

²² See Footnote 12.

²³ **Dr Nickel** (1865- 1953) graduated from Concordia Seminary, St Louis in 1888. From 1901 to 1923 he served in our former ELSA, being its president from 1903-1922. From 1924-1930 he was President of the Free Church of Saxony. He returned to Australia in 1935. He was an outstanding orthodox theologian of the Old Missouri type.

and shoes, house and home, wife and children, fields, cattle and all our goods. Yet the Lord still does more. We confess in our Catechism: “He defends me against all danger, and guards me protects me from all evil.” By these words we say that God also *governs* everything. This means: Everything must be determined according to His will and without His permission nothing can happen, but only that occurs which the Lord directs according to his wise and holy purposes.

GOD RULES OVER ALL THINGS ACCORDING TO HIS WILL

“Behold also the ships,” writes James, “**which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm²⁴, whithersoever the governor listeth²⁵” (James 3:4). A helmsman does not allow his ship to be driven back and forth by the wind, but he governs and directs the ship so that it goes where he wants it to go. Thus we keep horses in bridles so that they may obey us and control their whole body. It is said of a man that he can govern a horse, that is, the horse obeys his will when it goes where the man directs it. So God directs everything that happens in the world. He rules everything, everything must be guided by His will. God rules heaven and earth.**

The Psalmist says: “**For I know that the LORD is great, and that our LORD is above all gods. Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did He in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places. He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; He maketh lightnings for the rain; He bringeth the wind out of His treasuries**” (Ps.135:5-7). Thus, when the sky is covered with clouds, when the rain pours down in torrents, when the lightning flashes and the thunder rolls when the storm roars and the waves of the sea rage, then we know that it is the LORD who does all these things. And when the earth quakes or a hot wind destroys the seeds in the fields, when a hurricane devastates whole cities and kills many people, then we recognize in all these natural events the hand of the Lord who rules everything.

God “**doeth according to His will in the army of heaven**²⁶, **and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, ‘What doest thou?’**” (Dan. 4:35). Certainly, the LORD has established certain arrangements and laws according to which He gives the direction to the clouds, the circulation to the air and the course of the winds. When, for example, the temperature suddenly falls deeply and a rapid cooling off occurs, then storms are produced; when a man works during an electrical storm in the open field, he runs the risk of being struck by lightning. But God has not bound Himself by these so-called laws of nature, still much less may we, as those who only understand the least of the government of God in nature which we ourselves have established as laws after observations of the course of Nature, dare to want to bind the hands of Him by the laws of nature. No, God rules everything according to His will. He speaks and it is done; He commands and it is there. He touches the mountains and they tremble; He commands the raging sea and it becomes completely calm.

The LORD governs heaven and earth; He rules over everything. He controls everything with his hand, the great as well as the small, yes, even the smallest. “**Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?**” the LORD says. “**And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered**”²⁷ (Mat.10:29,30). A prince, and even if he is the best ruler and takes the welfare of his citizens to his heart, still cannot care for every individual one of his subjects. But it is completely different with God. “**Who is like unto the LORD our God who dwelleth on high, who humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth?**” (Ps.113:5,6) says the

²⁴ a very small rudder.

²⁵ wherever the impulse of the steersman leads him.

²⁶ **Kretzmann** states on this expression: “The companies of even the highest angels bow to His will.”

²⁷ **Dr. Kretzmann** explains this in an excellent manner: “So little is the sparrow valued that **one will be sold for one half an assarion, less than one cent**; so small is the loss of a single hair that it is not even noticed. And yet: Not a single one of the lowest of birds falls to the ground without God's consent; the very individual hairs of our head are numbered. Will He whose care embraces the smallest details of every-day life permit harm to befall those that put their unwavering trust in Him? Will He who gives the assurance that we are preferred above many sparrows permit the enemies to harm our bodies?”

Psalmist. God even cares for the smallest creature. His government extends over the smallest particular. Without His will no sparrow falls from its nest and no hair falls from our head.

IN GOD'S RULERSHIP INSIGNIFICANT THINGS TO US ARE OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE TO GOD.

We regard many things as **completely insignificant**, yet for us, indeed often for an entire nation they are of the **greatest importance**. Why is it so important which way the **Midianite slave traders** followed which involved going to Egypt? If they had gone another way, then **Joseph** would never have come under the control of the slave traders and would never have been sold in Egypt. Would there have possibly been a **Reformation** if the thunderbolt which killed Luther's friend Alexis²⁸ would have struck Luther. And how important it was for the history of the people of Israel that **a small basket in which Moses lay hidden** was not driven out by a surge of a wave into the sea. Everything occurs according to God's will and not by chance, but according to the counsel of God who rules all things, according to whose will all things must be governed.

God rules heaven and earth. Especially does He have the destiny of mankind, the individual person as well as entire nations in His hand²⁹ and He governs them according to His counsel and will.

Of all His creatures which live here on earth man is the noblest for he³⁰ was created according to the image of God, but man has also through sin lost the image of God. For that reason and in spite of this God has done everything through Christ to restore again this lost image of God. Therefore **man is the special object of the government of God**, indeed, everything which the Lord does and permits to occur here on earth, He allows it to happen for the sake of mankind. Just as in nature God has established certain laws and arrangements, so God has also established definite laws and arrangements for the life of nations and individual people. God has not only made of one blood all nations³¹ of men to dwell on the entire earth, but also He has fixed the boundary and determined beforehand how long and how far they are to dwell there³².

GOD RULES THE DESTINY OF NATIONS

God guides, directs and rules the destiny of nations. Who does not know the amazing history of the people of Israel? God commanded Abraham to leave his friends, his homeland and everything that was there and to move to a foreign country, and He, the LORD, wanted to make from him a great nation. God led Jacob and his sons to Egypt and after centuries of slavery, after Israel had become a large nation, He brought them to Canaan and gave them the victory over all their enemies. As often as the people sinned and served other gods, God gave them over into the hands³³ of their enemies. But when they became truly converted and cried to the Lord for help, He rescued them again by His mighty hand³⁴. The history of Israel under

²⁸ Nickel is referring to the sudden death of Luther's friend, Alexis, in the autumn of 1504. Some historians claim Alexis was assassinated. But the scholars below explain that the young Luther was walking one evening with Alexis near Erfurt when dark masses of black cloud rolled up and a storm burst over their heads. The two young men turned back and hastened toward the town, but when they were close to Erfurt a vivid flash of lightning occurred, casting both prone upon the ground. As soon as Luther could recover himself he sprang up, only to find that his friend, Alexis, had been killed beside him. Luther asked himself, "What would become of me if I were thus suddenly called away?" (Heritage History.com. Also see "On Heroes" by Thomas Carlyle; "The life of Luther" by Gustav Koenig; Seckendorf, who made careful research, following Bavarus (Beyer), a pupil of Luther, goes a step farther, calling this unknown friend Alexius, and ascribes his death to a thunderbolt.)

²⁹ The hand of God refers to His almighty power.

³⁰ Adam and Eve.

³¹ The German has more the idea of racial and family groups in the wider sense.

³² See Acts 16:26.

³³ "Hands" is a figurative expression referring to the "power and control" of their enemies

³⁴ See Footnote 53.

David, Solomon and Hezekiah, as well as during and after the Babylonian captivity is a clear testimony of the wonderful government of God.

And in the same way the destiny of *all* nations is in the hand of the Lord. In Ps.66:7 we read, **“He ruleth by His power forever³⁵; His eyes behold the nations³⁶.”** Prov.21:1 states, **“The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water³⁷: He turneth it whithersoever He will³⁸.”** The LORD revealed to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in an amazing dream what would become of his kingdom after his death. Daniel, who explained the dream to the king in the Name of the LORD, said: **“Blessed be the name of God forever and ever: for wisdom and might are His: and He changeth the times and the seasons: He removeth kings, and setteth up kings³⁹: He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding”** (Dan.2:20,21), that means, He fixes the time how long a kingdom stands, indeed even how long each person lives and how long everything is to last. Daniel made known to the king of Babylon that after his death his kingdom will fall to the Medes and Persians, afterwards to the Greeks and then to the Romans. But then the God of heaven will set up a Kingdom which will never be destroyed and no other people will rule His Kingdom. It will destroy and crush all kingdoms and it will remain forever. With these words the prophet Daniel refers to the Kingdom of our beloved Saviour under whose sceptre⁴⁰ all nations on earth must submit. Yes, the LORD rules the nations of the earth. He has fixed the boundary and determined beforehand how long and how far they are to dwell there. He destroys the counsel of the heathen and changes the plans of the nations.

In the year 1588 the Spanish King Philipp II sent out a powerful fleet consisting of 130 ships in order to attack England. The Papacy had commanded him to do this to conquer England. At the time the fleet was called the “Invincible Armada.” In comparison with the huge number of Spanish ships the English ships were only few in number. But due to the rousing encouragement of Queen Elizabeth I their ships were prepared and equipped zealously and carefully and moved bravely to oppose the enemy. And the Lord who rules all things was on England’s side. The Lord caused a storm to occur which brought confusion to the Spanish fleet so that the English with their smaller, more mobile ships could inflict great damage on them so that the Spanish had to retreat. But a still greater storm raged over the “invincible” fleet at that time and destroyed the greater number of the ships. In memory of this amazing act of God Queen Elizabeth I caused a commemorative medal struck with the inscription: “Deus flavit, dissipavit,” that means, God blew on them and destroyed them, and: “Venit, vidit, fugit,” that means, they came, they saw, they fled. Yes, the LORD destroys the counsel of the heathen and changes the plans of the nations. He remains in power.

When Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, set out to conquer Jerusalem, Hezekiah, the king of Judah, implored the LORD for help and the LORD said to him: **“I will defend this city, to save it, for Mine own sake⁴¹, and for My servant David’s sake⁴²”** (2 Kings 19:34). And behold, in that night the Angel of the Lord went out into the camp of the Assyrians and killed 185,000 men and consequently saved His people. **The LORD rules by His power forever, His eyes behold the nations. He removes kings and appoints kings.** Everything depends on Him alone as to what kind of king rules and how long he is to rule.

When Napoleon stood at the highest point of his power and almost all of Europe lay at his feet, then the LORD said: “So far and no further.” With more than 600,000 men Napoleon had marched into Russia in order to subjugate it. Moscow had already been taken and Napoleon now hoped to be able to dictate terms of

³⁵ **Kretzmann:** “His government being of everlasting duration.”

³⁶ **Kretzmann:** “Keeping watch over the affairs of all people in the world.”

³⁷ **Kretzmann:** “The thoughts and plans of the mightiest rulers, sovereign as they may seem, are like ditches and canals in which men lead water where they desire.”

³⁸ God directs the actions of even those who oppose Him, no matter how powerful they may seem, so that they are always in agreement with His will.

³⁹ **Kretzmann:** “All the events in the history of nations being determined by Him.”

⁴⁰ Rulership.

⁴¹ **Kretzmann:** “To uphold His honor against the blasphemy of the Assyrian.”

⁴² **Kretzmann:** “On account of the promise made to him, 1 Kings 11:13.”

peace. But then Winter broke over Russia as penetratingly harsh and terrible as the country had never seen before. Napoleon could not hold Moscow which was set on fire by the Russians. He had to retreat, pursued by the Russians. And of the 600,000 men which he had taken to Russia only a thousand armed and twenty thousand unarmed French came back from Russia. That was God's Hand. Napoleon was a scourge in the Hand of God to punish the apostate nations of Europe.

GOD USES ONE NATION AS A ROD TO PUNISH OTHER NATIONS.

God often uses such scourges. He allows a nation to become powerful in order to punish another nation. But when He has used that nation as a rod to punish, He throws away that rod and destroys the might of that nation which He had permitted to come to power. In this way Assyria was a rod in the Hand of God to punish Israel because of its sins, just as God used the Babylonians. But what did the LORD say? In Is.10:5 we read: "**O Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger, and the staff in their hand is Mine indignation**"⁴³. Princes and nations should well take note of this that God uses other nations as a scourge to punish them in this way. When a rod has achieved its purpose then it is cast aside. And so God also will reject a nation that He has allowed to come to power and glory when it boasts of its might and departs from God in their hearts. The LORD had done that to Egypt, to Assyria and to Babylon; the LORD still does that today. He has determined before-hand how long the nations are to dwell on the earth and what areas they are to control. He establishes a limit to their power which they are not allowed to exceed. Yes, the LORD rules over the entire world. He rules the nations of the earth.

He gives wisdom and understanding to rulers as He did to Joseph when He made him Prime Minister in Egypt and as He did to Solomon when He made him king over Israel. Others again He struck with blindness so that they slipped back into doing foolish things as occurred with Rehoboam, the son of Solomon who answered the request of the elders of Israel that the king would lighten the burden of their work⁴⁴ by following the bad advice of his foolish friends as follows, "**My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke; my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions**" (1 Kings 12:14)⁴⁵. Then it expressly states: "**Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the Lord**"⁴⁶ (1 Kings 12:15), that is, this answer was a judgement of the Lord. Because Rehoboam was an arrogant man, the Lord so directed events that Rehoboam did not do as the people requested and God turned the northern ten tribes away from the king and chose another king for them.

God gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding, and so He rules the nations of the earth. [To be continued, Headings, bolded emphasis and extra paragraphs have been added. BLW]

LECTURES ON THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH THE TRUE VISIBLE CHURCH OF GOD ON EARTH by Dr. F. Pieper.⁴⁷

SEVENTH LECTURE: SCRIPTURE EXPLAINS SCRIPTURE⁴⁸

⁴³ Please note **Kretzmann's** comments on this verse: "Literally, 'Woe to Asshur (which is) the rod of My wrath, and the staff, that in their hand, Mine indignation.' The Lord here pronounces a woe upon Assyria; for whereas He wanted to use this nation merely as His instrument in punishing Israel, the Assyrians took the opportunity to gratify their own lust for conquest and bloodshed."

⁴⁴ **Kretzmann:** "The yoke of labor, the burden of servile work, the heavy taxation for the many public buildings and improvements."

⁴⁵ **Kretzmann:** "The answer was foolish from every point of view and was bound to stimulate rebellious inclinations."

⁴⁶ **Kretzmann:** "He (the Lord, Ed.) so shaped events that the foolishness of Rehoboam resulted in his ruin."

⁴⁷ **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.

REASONS WHY CHRISTIANS ARE UNCERTAIN ABOUT SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE

There are many reasons why also some people who have Holy Scripture, use and study it diligently, yet for all that, they never become certain of their faith, that is, of the Christian doctrine, but always remain in uncertainty. One reason can be this that either publicly or privately they *serve sin* or *do not want to be serious in putting their Christian life into practice*, but rather in their *hearts* they are still on the *side of the world* hankering after it.

Christian certainty has quite a unique characteristic. It *never* dwells in a heart in which the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life rules (1 John 2:16), in short, where *sin rules*. Why not? Christian certainty is never the product of the natural heart, also it is never a product of mere human effort and of mere human study, but *it is act brought about by the operation of God the Holy Ghost*. Wherever, therefore, the indwelling and the efficacy⁴⁹ of the Holy Spirit is prevented by the service of sin, *there Christian certainty can never be produced concerning doctrine*. How amazing it is then that no certainty of Christian doctrine dwells in those who serve sin, even though they have Holy Scripture in their hands and have studied it diligently! Oh, how many there are and how many there have been who have doubted the true doctrine and finally have completely fallen away from it, because *they were the servants of sin and did not want to stop being servants of sin*.

In this truth there lies for you, as students of theology and those who desire to be theologians, an extremely serious admonition, namely, the admonition *to devote yourselves to be sincere in your Christian conduct before God and all people, to avoid scrupulously every grieving of the Holy Spirit by sinning*, otherwise in spite of all your meditation on the Holy Scriptures, in spite of diligent study, you would nevertheless never obtain this precious thing: *“a steadfast heart”* in regard to doctrine, but always remain in uncertainty.

However, there are also yet other reasons for uncertainty. Many also never therefore come to a joyful certainty on the basis of Holy Scripture **because they have entirely false ideas about the exposition of Holy Scripture**. They think a person can find out the sense of Holy Scripture only by the *art of human interpretation*. Such people use all kinds of light from the outside in order to see the light shining in the Scriptures. Hence, in reality they are always in a **foreign** country; they are always, of course, searching for the means of exposition **outside** of Holy Scripture. Hence, they themselves never venture into Holy Scripture itself and never properly let **the Word of Holy Scripture itself** operate on themselves. How amazing it is that they never there come to certainty in doctrine on the basis of Holy Scripture! The method which they follow, however, is *entirely perverted*. Rather it stands thus: *all means for the exposition of Scripture are found in Scripture itself*. Yes, this rule⁵⁰ must be *absolutely* adhered to: *Holy Scripture expounds itself*, and only **that** church is a true Church, that is, *an orthodox Church*, which so accepts God's Word as it expounds itself. That is the position of the Lutheran Church over against the Papacy, the Reformed and all fanatics⁵¹ and because of this the Lutheran Church is the orthodox Church.

⁴⁸ This is Lecture 7 by Dr. F Pieper on Thesis 16 of Walther's book entitled "The Evangelical Lutheran Church The True Visible Church of God on Earth." **Walther's Thesis 16 reads: "The Evangelical Lutheran Church accepts God's Word as it interprets itself."**

⁴⁹ Efficacy: power to convert.

⁵⁰ Or principle, axiom.

⁵¹ The German word is "**Schwaermer**." Literally translated it means "enthusiasts". This word comes from two Greek words: *en+ theos* which means "a person filled with a god." It originally meant someone who was so filled with an idea that it was like a "god in his head" driving him mad. He became so zealous for an idea that he was fanatically absorbed in it so that it was impossible or almost so to dissuade him. In Luther's day this word was used over against the Anabaptists and all those who falsely and fanatically claimed that the Holy Spirit worked directly, outside the Word of God and did not need any means to convert people.

Let us meditate further on this matter on the basis of *Thesis 16*: “**The Evangelical Lutheran Church accepts God’s Word as it interprets itself.**”

BIBLICAL PROOF THAT SCRIPTURE EXPLAINS SCRIPTURE

That this is the position which is commanded by Holy Scripture we have already seen⁵² in the discussion on 2 Peter 1:20, “**Knowing this first that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation**”.

Also we have already brought to mind Luther’s explanation of this point. In the same sense also the Lutheran Dogmaticians speak.

Kromayer⁵³ writes: “*Scripture interprets itself*, either immediately⁵⁴ or mediately⁵⁵.... *Immediately*, when the explanation is added at once as in John 2:19, where Christ says: ‘**Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**’ In v. 21 there is added the *explanation* ‘**But He spake of the temple of His body.**’ Again, when in John 12:32 the Saviour says: ‘**And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me,**’ the *explanation* of these words is appended immediately in v. 33: ‘**This He said, signifying what death He should die.**’ Similarly in Rev. 5:8 the odours in the golden vials are explained to mean *the prayers of the saints*. *Mediately*, when *Scripture presents to us the means of interpretation*, namely, the *original languages*, the preceding and the subsequent *context*, the *purpose*, the *parallel passages*, the *analogy of faith*, and the *general purpose of the whole Bible* — all of which are found in Scripture, though their use comes from without... The Holy Spirit is the best Interpreter of His words.” (Theol. positivo-polem., II, 15).

In John 2:18 ff the Jews demanded *an authoritative sign* from Christ which showed that He had the right to drive them out of the temple and the Lord made reference to such a sign. He said: “**Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**” (John 2:19). These words of destroying and building up again, the Jews did not understand, for they spoke in astonishment: “**Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?**” (v.20). The disciples also certainly had not understood these words. But now *Holy Scripture itself explains these words of the Lord*, since it adds: “**But He spake of the temple of His body**” (v.21). Christ spoke also of His death and resurrection. And this exposition everyone must now accept as the correct exposition, if he does not want to reject the authority of Scripture.

THE EXPOSITION OF SCRIPTURE MUST CONFORM TO THE RULES OF GRAMMAR.

⁵² In Lecture 6 **Pieper** had stated: “Scripture itself says in 2 Pet.1:20 that *no one may explain Scripture with his own interpretations*. In his Commentary on this passage *Luther* writes: ‘Here (2 Peter 1:20, 21) Peter attacks the false teachers. He says: Because you know that we have God’s Word, continue in it, and do not let yourselves be deceived by other false teachers, though they may come and pretend to have the Holy Spirit. ‘Know this first...’, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.’ Be guided by that and do not think that you will interpret Scripture by your own reason and sagacity (wisdom, Ed.). ...Peter has forbidden you to interpret (Scripture) of yourself; the Holy Spirit must interpret, or it shall remain uninterpreted. If, then, any of the holy fathers can prove that his interpretation is noted in Scripture, which verifies that it should so be interpreted, it is all right; if not, *I should not believe him*.... Here, then, all teachers and fathers, no matter how many there are have failed in interpreting Scripture. When, for example, they refer the words of Christ, Matt. 16:18: ‘**Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church,**’ to the pope, that is a *man-made interpretation*, spun out of their own mind, and hence we must not believe them; for they cannot prove from Scripture that it ever calls Peter the pope. **But we can prove that according to Paul Christ is the Rock of faith.** This interpretation is correct, for we know for sure that it has not been invented by men, but has been taken from God’s Word.’ (Sermon on 2 Peter 1:19-21 [1523], IX, 857-859; SL IX, 1361 ff.)”

⁵³ A faithful Lutheran teacher: 1610-1670.

⁵⁴ Direct explanation in plain words.

⁵⁵ Where the use of means like Hebrew and Greek grammar, etc. are necessary.

Among the **means of exposition** the first is a knowledge of the *original languages*⁵⁶. This is necessary if Holy Scripture is to be expounded according to the original text. However, we must also obtain the knowledge of the original languages from Scripture itself. Yes, we must say: *No grammatical rule may be used in the exposition of Holy Scripture according to the original text which is not deduced from Scripture itself.* A rule which has been taken from only Homer⁵⁷ or Herodotus⁵⁸ must not have any decisive character in the exposition of Scripture. Now it indeed occurs that the same rules in general are employed in the exposition of the New Testament which also apply to the exposition of the so-called Classical Greek. But that we employ these rules in the exposition of Holy Scripture with certainty occurs in this way, that *we find these rules also employed in the Scriptures of the New Testament.* If anyone would use a grammatical rule in the exposition of Holy Scripture which has not been adopted by Scripture itself, *then a false, rationalistic principle has entered into the exposition of Scripture*⁵⁹. This is quite obvious. I cannot explain Homer according to the rules which have only been found in Herodotus, and vice versa. *Every passage of Scripture must be understood from the text itself.*

THE CONTEXT DETERMINES THE MEANING.

As a second means of expounding Scripture we have the preceding and following words, that is, the context. The context of course **determines** the meaning of the individual words and the ways of speaking⁶⁰ in Scripture. Outside of the context most words and ways of speaking have **multiple meanings**, but as soon as a word or a way of speaking occurs in a defined context, the multiplicity of meaning, ambiguity disappears. For example, it is stated in John 3:16: **“For God so loved the world⁶¹, that He gave His only begotten Son.”** **Kosmos** has further meanings depending on the context. **Kosmos** can mean the *universe*, the *entire world* and the *world of men (human beings)*. Here the context decides at once that the last meaning of the word is the one for this text, for it states: **“that everyone who does not believe in Him shall be lost.”** “Faith” can only be ascribed to the world of men (human beings), not to the universe.

AN EXPOSITION MUST AGREE WITH THE PURPOSE OF THE CONTEXT.

Further consideration of the **purpose** or the scope, as we usually say in Hermeneutics⁶², serves the exposition. When, for example, it is stated in the words of the Apostle to Timothy (1Tim.4:16): **“For in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee,”** then, outside of the context, that sounds papistical as if a man is righteous and is saved by works. But when we look at the *scope*, then any misunderstanding disappears at once. The Apostle here does *not* intend to teach how it is that *a person is justified*, but he gives instruction in regard to the **life** of a servant of the Gospel; such a person shows that he walks on the way of salvation only then when he attends to his Office, when he perseveres in teaching, admonition and so forth.

Parallel passages are those passages of Holy Scripture which deal with one and the same matter. Therefore a person can explain what is said to be a dark or short passage by other passages of Scripture where the same doctrine has been stated more clearly and in greater detail.

AN INTERPRETATION WHICH DISAGREES WITH THE ANALOGY OF FAITH IS WRONG.

The **Analogy of Faith** is also not something **outside** of Scripture, but *Scripture itself*. By this expression we understand *the sum total of all the doctrines which are revealed in Scripture, as they have*

⁵⁶ The original Hebrew and Koinee Greek (Greek of the common people).

⁵⁷ An ancient Greek poet who possibly lived somewhere between the 7 th and 9 th Centuries BC.

⁵⁸ A Greek historian who lived in the 5th century BC (about 484 BC– about 425 BC).

⁵⁹ What Pieper means is then human reason is ruling instead of Scripture itself.

⁶⁰ For example phrases, idioms, etc.

⁶¹ Κόσμος: this is the Greek word Kosmos.

⁶² The principles of expounding Scripture.

been completely laid out in all the clear passages of Scripture. Thus the Chiliasts⁶³ have been refuted by the Analogy of Faith. Right throughout Holy Scripture, where it describes the state of Christians here on earth until the last day, it says that Christians *must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God*, that when Christ returns to earth on the last day He will scarcely find the faith on earth and that before the return of Christ the falling away will be more universal than ever before. Thus the Chiliast cannot state the truth when he misapplies Revelation 20 for the purpose of saying that a 1000 years before Christ's return the Church on earth will find itself in a position of glory.

GENERAL PURPOSE OF SCRIPTURE.

Also the general **purpose** is a means of exposition. The general purpose of Holy Scripture is to reveal Christ and to lead men to salvation by faith in Christ. Therefore when an interpretation of Scripture has been brought forward which conflicts with this scope, then by this very fact itself it shows the evidence that it is false.

Gerhard⁶⁴ speaks as follows about the rule: *Scripture interprets Scripture*: "Since Scripture (1) is perfect, containing all things necessary for faith, morals, divine worship, and so to the attaining of salvation, it is not necessary to patch on to it unscriptural teachings. Since Scripture (2) is clear, using proper, clear, and lucid words in presenting the articles of faith, it needs no light from without because what is obscure is illuminated by that which is clear. Since (3) the rule of faith⁶⁵, a comparison of the passages, the consideration of what precedes and what follows, the examination of the sources, and the like, are not outside Scripture, therefore the proper interpretation of Scripture is that which is done from it and by it." (Loc. de interpr. S.S., par. 126).

Be on guard: *Whoever brings an interpretation which has not been taken from Scripture, he adds something to Holy Scripture*; he also overthrows the perfection of Holy Scripture. Therefore every exposition must again be **Scripture itself**, not something invented outside of Scripture. Furthermore: when anyone brings an interpretation which has not been taken from Scripture itself, then he brings additional **light** which is not contained in Scripture itself; *then he actually thereby denies that Scripture is bright and clear*. Now, however, just as certainly as Scripture is clear, *so certain it must be that wherever a dark passage is found, Scripture will be able to enlighten it with its own light*, so certain must every exposition be taken from Scripture itself.

Hence a very important rule now however follows to which we have to hold fast also over against especially modern theology. *If Holy Scripture explains itself, then we must accept every exposition as infallibly correct which agrees with Holy Scripture*. This presupposes, of course, the acceptance of the **inspiration** of Holy Scripture, the belief that the **entire** Holy Scripture is **not man's word**, but **God's Word** and that therefore also when Holy Scripture itself explains itself, this exposition is not of a man, but the exposition is of God Himself. Modern theology has indeed abandoned the doctrine of inspiration as an out of date⁶⁶ doctrine, as a doctrine which no one any longer holds to with the best of intentions. Consequently, one speaks of the exposition which the Apostle Paul in Gal. 3:16 gives of Gen. 22:18, and so forth, as of a Rabbinical exegesis. Yes, many recent theologians have gone so far that they have said that the Lord Christ Himself has not correctly expounded the Old Testament, but has been ensnared in errors at times. *Of this abomination we will have nothing to do with. Woe betide us* if the attitude should spread among us that we no longer want to accept as infallibly correct the exposition which Scripture itself gives us. It is *truly alarming* that people who no longer accept as infallibly correct the exposition of the Old Testament contained in the New Testament are wanting to give us a revised translation of the Bible.

WHAT LUTHER, BRENZ AND RAMBACH TEACH ON THIS.

⁶³ Those who falsely believe in a 1000 year earthly rule of Christ.

⁶⁴ John Gerhard who lived 1582 to 1637 was an outstanding, faithful Lutheran teacher of God's Word.

⁶⁵ This is another expression for the Analogy of Faith.

⁶⁶ Obsolete.

Let us listen further to Luther, Brenz, and Rambach on this point, that an exposition which the Scripture itself gives must be valid as infallibly correct without dispute.

Luther writes: “Jerome mentions among others, besides this one, that in the psalms there is this fixed usage that always ten psalms following one another belong to the author whose name is mentioned in the one named first. This perhaps he has taken from the Rabbinic tradition. But I do not doubt that this one psalm (Ps.90) should be assigned to Moses and not the following which are without a title; for the Epistle to the Hebrews (4:7) declares expressly concerning the words Ps. 95:7,8: ‘**Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart,**’ and so forth, that God spoke them through David. Hence we must assume that at this point Jerome followed the fables of the Jews.” (Exposition of the 90th Psalm [1534], V, 1086, SL V, 736).

Brenz: “If Paul interprets this psalm (Ps. 18) of Christ, no other interpretation, not even that of an angel, is to be recognised.’ (Ad Ps. 18).

Rom. 15:9 of course applies Ps.18:49 to Christ. These are the words: “**For this cause I will confess to Thee among the gentiles, and sing unto Thy name**” (Rom.15:9). [Ps.18:49, “**Therefore will I give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praises unto Thy name.**”⁶⁷]. First of all, there are in Ps. 18 the words of David as it proceeds from verse 1, but then such matters which have been stated by David are true only in Christ, the Son of David. These words (Ps.18:49) having been quoted in Rom.15:9 remove all doubt for us.

Brenz says further (on Psalm 2): “Since we have the testimonies of the apostles, who are the foundation of the church, that this psalm (Ps. 2) must be understood of Christ, the Son of God, no angel is to be listened to, not to mention an unbelieving rabbi, who teaches something else.” (Ad Ps.2. Tom. III, fol. 199).

The second Psalm belongs exclusively to the Messianic Psalms. In the second Psalm the words are spoken *only* by Christ and they have no reference to David. Of this we are quite certain, because the second Psalm has been expounded as referring to Christ in five places of the New Testament, Acts 4;25; 13:35, and so forth. Certainly, one can already also from the second Psalm itself recognise that it applies only to Christ. So, for example, when in verse 8 a Kingdom which covers the entire world is being ascribed to this King: “**I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.**” That cannot be said of any earthly king. The rationalists have guessed that this refers to the entire line of the Israelite kings of David until Alexander Jannaeus, but they have nowhere at all found a foothold, and in addition must then, when a suitable person was believed to have been found among the Israelite kings, do violence to the individual words of the Psalm, for example, the words concerning universal rulership. At the conclusion of the Psalm all the blessed are praised who place their trust in this King. It says: “**Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.**” (verse 12). Now, however, it is stated in Holy Scripture that no one is to place his trust in a human being. Therefore, when in the Psalm all people are required to place their trust in this King’s Son and to kiss Him as their Lord, then this King’s Son is none other than the Son of God, the Saviour. So already also from the Psalm itself it follows that the Psalm deals of Christ.

Rambach says: “An interpreter of Scripture must carefully choose for himself skilful guides in whose footsteps he may walk safely and surely. But he will find none more skilled than Christ Himself and His infallible Apostles who in the New Testament interpret many passages of the Old Testament which according to the intention of the Holy Spirit Himself, speak of Christ, and so give us the key rightly to understand innumerable others.” (Institut. herm, Lib. II, chap. 4, par. 6, pp. 154 f.)

⁶⁷ The Messiah speaking through the mouth of David praises the wondrous things which God has done to the Gentiles for their salvation.

May you be convinced: whoever studies texts in the New Testament which expound the texts of the Old Testament, that person thereby obtains so much light concerning the Old Testament that he now also understands other passages of the Old Testament which have not been expounded directly in the New Testament. Therefore my advice to you on this is: *if you want to occupy yourself correctly, productively with the Old Testament, if you want to be rightly established in the understanding of the Old Testament, then study, above all, all the passages of the Old Testament which have been expressly expounded in the New Testament.* You will find a considerable number! If you have understood such specific passages of the Old Testament, then the entire Old Testament will be a light for you.

[Delivered by F. Pieper on 10 Jan., 1890] (To be Continued.)

[Headings and emphasis in italic are added; that in bold type is Pieper's. All Bible texts have been bolded in italics for emphasis. Larger paragraphs have been broken down into shorter ones. Quotes from Luther, Rambach, Gerhard, Brenz and Kromayer are taken from the translation of Walther's True Visible Church by Dr. J.T. Mueller.]

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PRACTICAL

(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 45- 49)

Distinction Between the Benefit of the Lord's Supper and Baptism and the Gospel.

48. The Distinction Between the Benefit of the Lord's Supper on the One Hand and Baptism and the Gospel on the Other Hand,

In the Lord's Supper we receive exactly the same as in
(a) Baptism.

Note (a): The difference between both is: Through Baptism spiritual life is mainly **brought about**; through the Lord's Supper spiritual life is **strengthened**.

Objection: If we already have forgiveness of sins in Baptism, then we don't need the Lord's Supper.
Answer: Hence one could further conclude that then we also no longer need the Gospel.

Note (b): It is so important that besides Baptism we still have the Lord's Supper because we always sin anew and so we can again always be assured of God's grace. And do we at all times believe this from the heart?

Note (c): A threefold cord is not easily broken, Eccl. 4:12⁶⁸. Also a person does not merely eat once (a week).

(b) The Gospel.

Note (a): The Lord's Supper is a special proclamation of the Gospel; in the Lord's Supper the entire Gospel is summarised.

Note (b): Nevertheless (we see) how God has dispensed His grace in such a different way.

Note (c): The **distinction** between the Lord's Supper and the Preaching of the gospel is chiefly:

(1) Through the Lord's Supper people do not first become Christians. For this purpose the preaching of the Word is necessary to raise people from their state of spiritual death and to bring them to faith in Christ. Through the Lord's Supper Christians are to be strengthened and increased in their faith⁶⁹.

⁶⁸ Eccl.4:12, "And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken."

⁶⁹ Der Lutheraner Vol.4, p.161

(2) Therefore the preaching of the Gospel is more general and goes to a crowd (group) of people; in the Lord's Supper God receives each person more individually. Private Absolution.

(3) Moreover, in the Lord's Supper Christ gives us the ransom payment of his precious blood by which He has obtained forgiveness for us.

Note (d): What comfort is contained in this that here in the Lord's Supper Christ's true body and blood are partaken of.⁷⁰

“High o'er all the heav'ns He reigneth,
Yet to dwell with thee He deigneth.” (Walther Hymnbook – Hymn 210v1).

Note (e): Especially when facing trial and we ask: “Will God accept me,” the Lord's Supper was instituted for our comfort.

LORD'S SUPPER IS A PLEDGE, SEAL OF THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

49. Therefore the Lord's Supper is

(1) a **pledge**.⁷¹ Just as the engagement is confirmed⁷² by the engagement ring, so the Word of forgiveness is confirmed by Christ's true body and blood.⁷³

Walther's **Pastorale** (German p. 144; Fritz Pastoral Theology pages 130,131; Drickamer Translation page 109): “That is not the situation with the Lord's Supper. It is **not the means first to bring a person to repentance and faith** but [the means] to **strengthen** him in it. It is not the means for a person first to receive grace and become a Christian but [the means] to **seal the grace he has received through the Word and to keep, preserve, and further him in Christianity**. Through this food a person is not first awakened to faith but is nourished and refreshed when he is already spiritually alive.”

⁷⁰ **Der Lutheraner** Vol. 4, pages 126,127.

⁷¹ A **pledge** is a guarantee involving a solemn binding promise.

⁷² **Confirmed** here means “made certain as to truth and validity” of something.

⁷³ Walther **Gospel Sermons** (German p.151; English pages 146,147):

“It is true that in the Holy Sacrament no other grace is given us than that which is given us already in Baptism, the preaching of the Gospel, and the comforting absolution. If a person is baptized with water in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost into Christ's death, God on the strength of His promise receives him into His covenant of grace, grants him everything which Christ has won with His suffering and death, and washes his soul from all the guilt of his sins; and **whoever believes it has it**. Moreover, when the Gospel is preached, the general pardon which God the Father solemnly proclaimed through the resurrection of our Redeemer is published to all hearers in the Name of the great God; forgiveness of sins is offered and given to all hearers; and **whoever believes this has it**.

“Finally, if a servant of Christ or a Christian pronounces absolution in God's Name upon another Christian, it is on the strength of Christ's promise nothing else than as if God Himself had pronounced this absolution from heaven and had Himself offered, bestowed and sealed the forgiveness for all sinners; and **whoever believes this has it**. It might now appear as if every person were sufficiently provided with the treasure of forgiveness; it would matter little if the Holy Supper with its forgiveness of sins were shortened or even completely taken from him.

“But this is not true. Really, the Holy Supper is the very crown of all the means of grace, which Christ has conferred upon His Christian Church. In the Lord's Supper Christ gives His Christians the consecrated bread with the words, ‘**Take and eat, this is My body which is given for you**,’ and the consecrated cup with the words, ‘**Take and drink, this is My blood which is shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins**.’ With these words the Saviour clearly wishes to say: Take My body and eat it, not as food for your body but as that body which was given into death for your sins; take My blood and drink it, but not as drink for your body but as that blood of the reconciliation which was shed on the cross for the forgiveness of your sins. Oh, who may express what a glorious, comforting, heavenly, sweet supper the Lord's Supper is? There not only the forgiveness of sins is preached, announced, imparted in words, **certified, and sealed** to us as in the other means of grace, but at the same time Christ gives His Christians His very body and blood as a **pledge**.

“Tell me, is not this assurance of the forgiveness of our sins so great, that it cannot be made more certain? Can a debtor still be afraid of his creditor, if his warrantor not only pays his debts but even gives him the very sum into his hands with which he has paid his debt? Certainly not! Can a person still doubt that he will have no more trouble with his guilt of sin, that he has a share in Christ's reconciliation, when the very ransom itself, which God had received as the complete payment of the guilt of all men, is given into his hands, into his mouth, and into his heart? No, **there can be a no more precious, a no more incontestable divine pledge**.

(2) a **seal**⁷⁴ of forgiveness.

Note (a): Story which illustrates this: The Lutheran Vol.3, Page 106⁷⁵.

Note (b): Hence through the Lord's Supper the communicant is

- (1) **made certain** of the forgiveness of sins. Where that does not occur, a person has received the Lord's Supper in vain.
- (2) strengthened in the **faith** in the forgiveness of sins.⁷⁶

“You see, those who do not want to take Christ's words, ‘**This is My body, this is My blood,**’ as they read intend to rob the Christian Church of the **greatest pledge of our Redemption** and make merely an empty memorial feast out of the Holy Supper.” [Donald Heck Translation].

⁷⁴ A **seal** on a document has the legal significance serving to impress upon the parties **the certainty of the agreement** being made. In the Lord's Supper when the communicant receives **Christ's true body and blood** it is the **seal** which makes the communicant certain that they have **personally** received the **assurance of forgiveness of sins** obtained for them by Christ.

Walther **Epistle Sermons** (German: p.172; English - Translated by Donald Heck page 178):

“Therefore happy can we be! Christ has not only won God's grace for the whole world but, has also instituted **three precious means of grace** by which He **offers, gives, appropriates, and seals** to men the grace He won; and these three means of grace are: **The Gospel, Holy Baptism, and the Lord's Supper**. They are **three treasure chambers** in which Christ has stored all the treasures of His grace; they are **three rungs on the ladder** of heaven upon which this grace descends to us; they are **three overflowing fountains of grace** dug and filled by Christ from which all who thirst can draw and quench the thirst of their souls; they are **three hands** of the Triune God with which He hands us Christ's dearly bought grace; they are **three divine witnesses** upon earth which audibly and visibly testify to what the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit inaudibly and invisibly testify concerning the salvation of sinners; they are **three golden keys** of heaven which unlock the heaven of eternal blessedness and glory prepared for us by Christ; they are the **path** upon which grace comes to men and the man to grace; the Word is the divine letter of grace, **Baptism and Communion His inviolable, eternally valid divine seal.**’ (bolded emphasis added).

⁷⁵ “**Use and Necessity of the Sacrament.** Once Emperor Maximilian came upon a fortress and wanted to take it by storm the next day. Therefore, the evening before, he held a banquet with his most prominent counsellors in war. All were jovial, but only one in attendance was melancholy, in a dark mood. The emperor asked him: “Why so down, Captain?” This man replied: “I have good reason for my heavy heart.” Maximilian said: “So, can you tell me about it?” The captain replied: “Yes, your Imperial Majesty, you may well be in a position to help me.” The emperor admonished him to tell him of his burden. The captain said: “Yes, if your Majesty will not become angry or take a disliking to me.” Maximilian responded: “I give you my imperial word I will not get angry. Only tell it to me straight.”

Then the captain said: “Most gracious lord, tomorrow we shall strike the enemy. Now the sword that consumes the one also consumes the other, as David says in 2 Sam.11:25. “*Anceps furtune belli,*” that is, no one knows who finally will be buried. But I have an evil conscience and am troubled by how, in this case, I might be saved in my trouble, for I have embezzled 30,000 ducats from the soldier's pay. If your Imperial Majesty will give this to me and forgive me, then I will be gladdened and tomorrow I will bravely ride into battle.”

Maximilian considered this, chuckled and said: “That's certainly no small sum, but I will give it to you, forgive and forget, only be glad, tomorrow a brave act of heroism will set everything right.” The captain was most grateful. But he was not satisfied with those words, but rather said: “If your Majesty would be so indulgent and drink to me a good drink so that I also can know by that it is excused and forgiven.” The emperor did that.

- Even that is how God also treats us in his grace. For he lets us know and hear his will through his Word and then lets us also see his good intention towards us in the most praise worthy sacrament with our eyes, so that our hearts can be freed from all disbelief and doubt. (Herberger's Postils). [Pastor Baseley's Translation.]

⁷⁶ Walther **Epistle Sermons** (German: pages 179, 180; English Donald Heck: pages 185-186):

“No; the sense of this mystery is a far different one. When the Saviour says: ‘**Take and eat; this is My body which is given for you; this is My blood which was shed for you,**’ He indicates that our body should take this heavenly food and drink, not to nourish our body but our soul by means of our faith; **our soul's should be strengthened.**”

“When Christ adds: ‘**Which is broken for you, which is shed for you,**’ He indicates that the most important thing in the Holy Supper is not that His body and blood are in it, but that it is that body which was given into death **for us**, and that blood which was shed **for us**. The words: ‘**for you**’ are therefore the key which unlocks this mystery of grace in the Lord's Supper. These words are the real heavenly sun, the **true star of grace**, which shine in the Holy Supper. These words are the **divine signature** which give this Supper its true worth, its great meaning, its incomparable preciousness. By the words: ‘**Broken for you, shed for you,**’ Christ shows that the real point in the use

Note (c): How necessary such strengthening of faith still is! Our faith should not always remain weak.⁷⁷
Note (d): What a glorious meal is the Lord's Supper! There one should esteem it highly⁷⁸.

LORD'S SUPPER IS ALSO A MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION.

50. Means of Sanctification.

Through the Lord's Supper the new man in the Christian is strengthened. Christ, the Bread of Life, is the true food for our soul. That means through the Lord's Supper the following is increased:

(a) **Love for God.** Such love of God for us must move us to love Him in return.

(b) **Love for the neighbour.**⁷⁹ "For more fervent love among us all." The fruits must not be missing:
"Love thy neighbour without ceasing."⁸⁰

of the Sacrament is not the eating and drinking but knowing and believing that that body and that blood which we receive was given **for us** and shed **for us**. The words of Christ, "**for you**," cannot possibly be a useless addition, something merely added to describe Christ's body and blood. No; whenever we celebrate the Holy Supper and hear Christ's word "**for you**," He clearly invites us to appropriate to ourselves His sacrificial death in firm faith. That is why we read in the Small Catechism: 'It is not the eating and drinking indeed that does them, but the words here written, 'Given and shed for you for the remission of sins.' For the words '**for you**' require all hearts to believe.'

"This word not only **requires** our faith, but it also **promotes** it in such a glorious way as nothing else in the Old and New Testament does."

"What more powerful, what more comforting, what more glorious means can there be to assure such a doubting Christian, strengthen his sinking courage, fill his dead heart with life, peace, and joy than when at Christ's command His body and blood is given him with the assurance: 'Take, eat and drink; this is that which was given and broken and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins, for your reconciliation, redemption, and salvation'!? The voice of doubt must become silent; there the general redemption at Christ's command is announced to him personally; it is appropriated with the most wonderful and positive pledge that one can have in heaven and on earth.

"Suppose we had incurred a debt which we could not have paid off and for which we would have to expect momentarily that we would be thrown into a debtor's prison; but then a rich man, whom we had offended, had someone tell us that he had paid our entire debt. If our creditor were not present, we could never be certain, the doubt would always arise, whether our debt were actually paid. But if that wealthy man would give this great sum by which he more than paid our debt into our hands, could we still doubt? Certainly not.

"That is true of also our debt of sin. Christ paid it with the ransom of His holy blood by dying on the cross. He has not only commanded that this payment be told to us in the message of Gospel, but – oh miracle above all miracles! Oh grace above all grace! – in the Holy Supper He gives the ransom price of His body and blood into our very hands, yes, into our mouth, in order that we do not lose it, but that it becomes completely ours. And then He expressly adds, in order that we do not misunderstand Him: 'See, this is My body which was given **for you** on the cross; this is My blood which was shed **for you** on the tree of the cross'

"Dare we, **can** we still doubt that we share in Christ's payment of our **debt**? That we share in His reconciliation, redemption, and salvation? Indeed not!"

⁷⁷ Walther **Epistle Sermons** p. 180 (German): See Footnote 76.

⁷⁸ Walther's **Hymnal**: Hymn 202 verses 8-10.

8. By faith I call Thy holy Table

The testament of Thy deep love;

For, lo, thereby I now am able

To see how love Thy heart doth move.

Lord, may Thy body and Thy blood

Be for my soul the highest good!

9. What higher gift can we inherit?

It is faith's bond and solid base ;

It is the strength of heart and spirit,

The covenant of hope and grace.

Lord, may Thy body and Thy blood

Be for my soul the highest good!

10. This feast is manna, wealth abounding

Unto the poor, to weak ones pow'r,

To angels joy, to hell confounding,

And life for me in death's dark hour.

Lord, may Thy body and Thy blood

Be for my soul the highest good!"

⁷⁹ Walther **Gospel Sermons** (German: p.146; English Donald Heck Translation: p.142):

"The Holy Supper is a feast of love not only because Christ Himself instituted it out of burning love for his own but, as was said, because of its **purpose**; it's purpose is to be the source and bond of the most intimate, brotherly love among Christians. Thus the Apostle Paul writes, '**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? For we being many are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.**' 1 Cor. 10:16,17. He also adds, '**We have been all made to drink into one Spirit.**' 1 Cor. 12:13. He means to say: Because we Christians partake of the consecrated bread which makes us partakers of Christ's body, and the consecrated cup which makes us partakers

Note (a): 1 Cor.10:17⁸¹: One bread --- one body. The most intimate fellowship exists among communicants⁸².

Note (b): The same Jesus in everyone!

Note (c): Whoever obtains forgiveness in the Lord's Supper, can he still be angry with his brother?

Note (d): This is the test⁸³ as to whether you have received the Lord's Supper beneficially.

(c) **Hatred against sin.** John 5:14: "Sin no more." Will our sins be forgiven so that we can continue living on in sin?

Note: In the Lord's Supper we receive the strength to fight against the devil, the world and our flesh⁸⁴ and we are armed against all affliction.

of Christ's blood, we all become one body and one spirit, almost one person, one individual. All communicants do not divide Christ's body and blood, not even one part of Christ's body and blood. All partake of the one and the same complete body of Christ and the one and the same complete blood of Christ. They thus become intimately united with one another as their body with their soul.

"Is not the Holy Supper then really a feast of love? Beyond a doubt. As little as it is possible for a person not to love himself, so little is it possible for a communicant, who heartily believes in the mystery of the Holy Supper, not to love his fellow communicants, for he knows that the same body and blood is in them which is in him. We read that because the first Christians continued 'in the breaking of bread' they actually were 'of one heart and of one soul.'"

Walther **Hymnal**: Hymn 195v3.

<i>"3. May God bestow on us His grace and favor To please Him with our behavior And live as brethren here in love and union Nor repent this blest Communion! Kyrieleison!</i>	<i>Let not Thy good Spirit forsake us ; Grant that heav'nly-minded He make us; Give Thy Church, Lord, to see Days of peace and unity : Kyrieleison!?"</i>
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⁸⁰ Walther's **Hymnal**: Hymn 205v10.

*"10. But the fruits must not be missing,
Love thy neighbor without ceasing;
That true love let him receive
Which here to thee thy God doth give."*

⁸¹ 1 Cor.10:17, "**For we being many are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.**"

⁸² Walther **Epistle Sermons** (German: p. 181,182; English: Donald Heck Translation: p. 188):

"The Apostle Paul expresses it this way: '**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? For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.**' 1 Cor. 10:16,17. The apostle means to say: My dear Christian, when you partake of the cup of blessing and the bread, **all** partake of the body and blood of Christ; **all of you become one**; you enter into **an intimate relationship**; for as one loaf of bread is made from many kernels of grain, so in Holy Communion you become one body, one mass, even though you are many, because you partake of that one bread and that one and the same body and blood of Christ.

"So you see, because in Holy Communion Christ's body is present and partaken by all, communion is a meal of the closest inner union; it is at the same time a feast of the greatest love, which promotes such inner love as well as demanding it. We all gather like children around the family table of our one heavenly Father. Though the difference between communicants in **civil life** may be great, here in Holy Communion all these differences vanish; **we all become equal**; all eat of the same earthly and heavenly bread and drink the same earthly and heavenly drink; the subject as well as his king, the slave as well as his lord, the beggar as well as the rich, the child as well as the aged, the wife as well as the husband, the most simple as well as the most learned; all communicants are equally poor sinners and beggars, hungry and thirsty for grace. Though the one may be present in a coarse frock, the other in satin and silk with gold and pearls, when they leave they all who were hungry and thirsty carry away Christ's blood and righteousness as their beauty and glorious dress. No one receives a better food and drink. All receive the same Jesus and with him the same righteousness.

"Since we, who come to the Lord's Table, know that our fellow communicants have the same Jesus in their hearts as we do, and since **they** know that we have the same Jesus in our hearts as **they** do, **what else can this produce but the most intimate, ardent brotherly love?** Yes, since we by partaking of the same body and blood of Christ become, as it were, one body, one person because we have all, so to say, received the same soul, which common soul is Jesus, we can do nothing else; we must love our fellow communicant as our second self; no person can cease loving himself. The early Christians understood this thoroughly; whenever they celebrated the Holy Supper, they after they had become one heart and one soul embraced each other."

⁸³ Or: "Touchstone."

(d) **Strives to do good works** and live a God-pleasing life⁸⁵.

(e) **Patience in bearing the cross.** We will be armed against all tribulation.

(f) **Christian Joy.**

(g) **Hope.** The Lord's Supper is a symbol, a "down payment" of the Resurrection. In this way God makes us certain that He does not always leave us in this misery. Where there is forgiveness, there is life.⁸⁶

(h) **Union With Christ**⁸⁷. This is always an intimate union. I am Thine, Thou art mine. Christ lives in me. Gal.2:20⁸⁸.

Note: Yet this unity is not an essential one, but only a spiritual one.

LORD'S SUPPER INVOLVES A CONFESSION OF FAITH.

51. Confession of Faith⁸⁹. When we attend the Lord's Supper our attendance testifies to a united confession of Faith⁹⁰. Therefore, also, where possible, the Lord's Supper must always be celebrated publicly; and in particular, the communicant confesses that he

(1) **wants to continue to be a Christian**, that Christ has also died for him.

Note (a): Therefore Paul says: "**Proclaim the Lord's death**" (1 Cor.11:26).⁹¹

⁸⁴ Sinful nature which we have inherited from Adam.

⁸⁵ Flowing from faith in Christ and out of love to Him.

⁸⁶ Walther **Hymnal**: Hymn 202 verses 18, 19.

*"18. Thy holy flesh hath pow'r to wake me
And raise me out of death's abyss,
No darksome grave therefore can shake me,
For Thou shalt change it into bliss.
Lord, may Thy body and Thy blood
Be for my soul the highest good!"*

*19. My flesh, tho' dead, again shall flourish,
Though long consumed, it yet shall live
Thy flesh which here doth feed and nourish,
New life to it again will give.
Lord, may Thy body and Thy blood
Be for my soul the highest good!"*

⁸⁷ **Book of Concord** (Triglotta, p. 361.): "The Sacrament was instituted to console and comfort terrified minds, when they believe that the flesh of Christ, given for the life of the world, is food, when they believe that, being joined to Christ [through this food], they are made alive."

Walther **Hymnal**: Hymn 375 verses 11, 12.

*"11. Lord, my Shepherd, take me to Thee.
Thou art mine; / I was Thine
Even ere I knew Thee.
I am Thine, for Thou hast bought me;
Lost I stood, / But Thy blood
Free salvation bought me.*

*12. Thou art mine; I love and own Thee.
Light of Joy, / Ne'er shall I
From my heart dethrone Thee.
Savior, let me soon behold Thee
Face to face, - / May Thy grace
Evermore enfold me!"*

⁸⁸ Gal. 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

⁸⁹ See Dr. Walther's Essay on "**Theses on Communion Fellowship with Those Who Believe Differently.**"

Walther **Pastorale** (German p.145; English Drickamer Translation, p. 110):

"The Holy Supper is one of the marks, one of the banners of the church, one of the seals of the doctrine and the faith (Rom. 4:11; see 1 Cor.10:21; Ex. 12:48). In whichever church one receives the Holy Supper, one is confessing that church and its doctrine. There cannot be a more inward, brotherly fellowship than that into which one enters with those in whose fellowship he receives the Holy Supper. The apostle says, 'For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come' (1 Cor.11:26). And 'For we being many, are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread' (1 Cor.10:17).

"There is a big difference between once hearing a sermon with them in a strange [foreign, *fremd*] church fellowship and participating there in the celebration of the Holy Supper. One might sometimes hear the sermon there, perhaps to become familiar with their doctrine, without participating in the false-believing worship. **But the Holy Communion is an act of confession.** If one communes in a strange church, one is actually joining it, presenting himself as a witness for its doctrine, and declaring its members to be his brothers and sisters in the faith."

⁹⁰ German reads literally: "Attending the Lord's Supper is a Confessional attendance."

⁹¹ Walther **Brosamen**, p.115; **Epistle Sermons**, p. 175:

Note (b): That occurs with words (singing) and actions.

(2) **that the doctrine of the congregation in whose midst he communes is the same as his.** Whoever goes to the Lord's Supper of the Methodist Church one is quite justified in regarding him as a Methodist. What his flag is to a soldier, the Lord's Supper is to the Christian.⁹²

Note (a): In heterodox church bodies one can listen to a sermon under certain circumstances⁹³, without thereby confessing the teachings of that church. It is a completely different matter with the Lord's Supper.⁹⁴

“That apostle, my friends, demands of all communicants that by their receiving the Lord's Supper they are also **'proclaiming' the LORD's death**, so he is, in the first place, obviously demanding that they want to celebrate this Holy Supper, though above all for their own sakes, yet, also, for the sake of their neighbours, both among their brothers and those in the world, that they should, indeed, be preaching and commending to them all, in this way, the atoning death of the LORD. The **altar at which the Holy Lord's Supper is celebrated** should, therefore, be to the laity **like their pulpit**, to proclaim the virtues of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvellous light. If the preacher has ended his sermon in the pulpit, then from among those who have listened in the believing congregation **those communing must now step up and through the public reception of the Holy Lord's Supper, proclaim by their act before the whole world the crucified Christ, who had been preached in Words**, and they thereby prove that they are the church. That is, if Christ had only instituted the Office of Preaching and not also the Holy Sacrament then no one could know where they could, then, find the church or the congregation of believers to join. For people also hear preaching who do not want to be believers and to whom the crucified Christ is still foolishness and offensive. So that is why those who through the preaching of the Gospel have come to faith in Christ, who already through Baptism have publicly departed from the world, have entered into the church of believers and have sworn to Christ eternal faithfulness, and now must also appear, time and time again, **at the altar of the LORD, thereby giving witness that they still keep in mind their covenant and are disciples of the Crucified One, remaining true to Him, and so, here is the Church.**

“How gladly we must, therefore, come eagerly to the Holy Lord's Supper! How we must also, then, especially in our age of unbelief let that motivate us to come often to the table of the LORD, not only to **proclaim the death of the LORD to our brothers, but also to the unbelieving world** and thus to **let the world know that the Church of the Crucified One has not yet disappeared**, not yet died out, not yet been defeated, but that there are yet hearts that will always believe in Him, who find in Him their salvation and love Him as their highest good! So the thoughts with which we rush to the altar should be as those expressed by a recent poet:

*'If all depart, unfaithful
Yet steadfast let me be,
That gratitude in this world
May never die to Thee.'*

“Yet, my friends, when the apostle writes in our text: **'As often as you eat this bread and drink of this cup, you shall proclaim the LORD's death until He comes,'** when he, thus, at the same time, declares that the reception of the LORD's Supper is a **congregational act of faith and a congregational confession of faith**, so **he demands of us and of others, thereby, that we must only celebrate the Holy LORD's Supper with those who confess with us the one and the same faith.** Were the Holy Supper only instituted for the goal of our orally eating the true body of Christ and orally drinking His true blood then we could and we should certainly enjoy it altogether wherever the same is rightly administered according to Christ's institution. But when Paul says that through it we **'proclaim the LORD's death until he comes,'** that means **we must confess.** So it would obviously be against Christ's will if we would celebrate it where our confession of faith is denied.

“Wherever it is celebrated, the Holy LORD's Supper is the banner and flag of the church or congregation in the midst of which it is received. As one publicly enlists in the army to whose flag he pledges allegiance and finds peace and a rallying point in war around that flag, so every Christian enlists in his congregation, in whose midst and in whose fellowship he enjoys sharing Holy Communion. Now **if the congregation confesses the true faith, so the communicant also confesses that same faith by appearing at her altar with her.** But **if the congregation confesses a false faith, so the communicant also confesses her false faith through his partaking of her celebration of communion**, and publicly gives evidence by his actions that he denies the true faith.” [Pastor Baseley's Translation. Bolded emphasis added.]

⁹² *Der Lutheraner* Vol.4, p.162.

Triglotta (p. 179): “Thus in the Church the Lord's Supper was instituted that by remembrance of the promises of Christ, of which we are admonished in this sign, faith might be strengthened in us, and **we might publicly confess our faith, and proclaim the benefits of Christ**, as Paul says, 1 Cor. 11:26: *As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death, etc.*” (Bolded emphasis added).

Walther **Brosamen**, p.116. See Footnote 91 last paragraph.

Note (b): Therefore the heterodox are not to attend our Lord's Supper and we are not to go with the heterodox to attend their Lord's Supper. See the section: **Abendmahlsgemeinschaft** (Communion Fellowship).

Note (c): Everyone who wants to attend the Lord's Supper with us must therefore give up his previous false confession. See sections: **Beichtanmeldung** (Confessional Announcement); **Pruefung** (Examination before Communion).

Note (d): Only there where the correct practice of the Lord's Supper exists is the Lord's Supper a distinguishing mark of faith. ----- Sacramental fellowship without doctrinal unity is an absurdity.

Objection (a): Then the Lord's Supper becomes a divisive meal.

Objection (b): We are to admit everyone provided that they are true believers. ----

Answer: But, on the other hand, we only prevent people from coming to the Lord's Supper who have a false confession.

Faith and the Lord's Supper.

52. Faith and the Lord's Supper.

(a) Although the essence of the Lord's Supper does not depend on faith, yet faith belongs to the **beneficial use** of the Lord's Supper⁹⁵. Without spiritual eating and drinking⁹⁶ the Sacrament is of no benefit.

⁹³ Without joining in the worship service. A person is present solely to witness what they teach or out of respect on a certain occasion, for example, a funeral.

⁹⁴ **Der Lutheraner** Vol. 4, p.162;

Walther **Pastorale**, p. 145. See Footnote 89.

⁹⁵ Walther **Epistle Sermons** (German, p.179). See Footnote 76.

Triglotta (p.761): "Thus we have the entire Sacrament, both as to what it is in itself and as to what it brings and profits. Now we must also see **who is the person that receives this power and benefit**. That is answered briefly, as we said above of Baptism and often elsewhere: **Whoever believes it has what the words declare and bring**. For they are not spoken or proclaimed to stone and wood, but to those who hear them, to whom He says: **34] Take and eat**, etc. And because He offers and promises forgiveness of sin, **it cannot be received otherwise than by faith. This faith He Himself demands in the Word when He says: Given and shed for you**. As if He said: For this reason I give it, and bid you eat and drink, that you may claim it as yours and enjoy it. **35] Whoever now accepts these words, and believes that what they declare is true, has it**. But whoever does not believe it has nothing, as he allows it to be offered to him in vain, and refuses to enjoy such a saving good. The treasure, indeed, is opened and placed at every one's door, yea, upon his table, but it is necessary that you also claim it, and confidently view it as the words suggest to you **36] This, now, is the entire Christian preparation for receiving this Sacrament worthily. For since this treasure is entirely presented in the words, it cannot be apprehended and appropriated in any other way than with the heart. For such a gift and eternal treasure cannot be seized with the fist.**" (Bolded emphasis added).

Triglotta (p.49): "**1] Of the Use of the Sacraments** they teach that the Sacraments were ordained, not only to be marks of profession among men, but rather to be signs and testimonies of the will of God **2] toward us, instituted to awaken and confirm faith in those who use them. Wherefore we must so use the Sacraments that faith be added to believe the promises which are offered and set forth through the Sacraments. 3] They therefore condemn those who teach that the Sacraments justify by the outward act, and who do not teach that, in the use of the Sacraments, faith which believes that sins are forgiven, is required.**" (Bolded emphasis added).

Triglotta (page 313): "It is still more needful to understand *how the Sacraments are to be used*. Here we condemn the whole crowd of scholastic doctors, who teach that the Sacraments confer grace *ex opere operato*, without a good disposition on the part of the one using them, provided he do not place a hindrance in the way. This is absolutely a Jewish opinion, to hold that we are justified by a ceremony, without a good disposition of the heart, *i.e.*, without faith. And yet this impious and pernicious opinion **19]** is taught with great authority throughout the entire realm of the Pope. Paul contradicts this, and denies, Rom. 4:9, that Abraham was justified by circumcision, but asserts that circumcision was a sign presented for exercising faith. Thus we teach that in the use of the Sacraments *faith* ought to be added, which should believe these promises, and receive the promised things, there offered in the Sacrament. **20]** And the reason is plain and thoroughly grounded. [This is a certain and true use of the holy Sacrament, on which Christian hearts and consciences may risk to rely.] **The promise is useless unless it is received by faith. But the Sacraments are the signs [and seals] of the promises. Therefore, in the use of the Sacraments faith ought to be added**, so that, if any one use the Lord's Supper, he use it thus. Because this is a Sacrament of the New Testament, as Christ clearly says, he ought for this very reason to be confident that what is

Note (a): This truth is also contained in the words: “*Do this in remembrance of Me.*” No one can carry out these words without faith⁹⁷.

Note (b): What kind of faith does the Lord’s Supper require? Does it require only faith in the Real Presence of Christ’s true body and blood in the Lord’s Supper? Even the devil believes that. But above all things faith in the words, “*Given and shed for you*” is necessary.

Note (c): Therefore the Sacrament is to be administered only to true believers in Christ.

(b) The Lord’s Supper does not operate **ex opera operato**⁹⁸, for the sake of having performed the mere outward work, even without faith. It does not operate physically like medicine which helps even when it is taken when we are sleeping. The Sacramental eating and drinking does not do that⁹⁹.

promised in the New Testament, namely, the free remission of sins, is offered him. And **let him receive this by faith**, let him comfort his alarmed conscience, and know that these testimonies are not fallacious, but as sure as though [and still surer than if] God by a new miracle would declare from heaven that it was His will to grant forgiveness. But of what advantage would these miracles and promises be to an unbeliever? **21]** And here we speak of *special faith* which believes the present promise, not only that which in general believes that God exists, but which believes that the remission of sins is offered. **22]** This use of the Sacrament consoles godly and alarmed minds.”

⁹⁶ “**Spiritual eating and drinking**” is here just a reference to faith in Christ. It has nothing to do with the doctrine of the Real Presence. In other words, if a person does not believe in Christ he will partake of Christ’s true body and blood to his damnation.

⁹⁷ **Triglotta** (page 409): “The Sacraments are signs of God’s will toward us, and not merely signs of men among each other; and they are right in defining that Sacraments in the New Testament are signs of grace. And because in a sacrament there are two things, a sign and the Word, the Word, in the New Testament, is the promise of grace added. The promise of the New Testament is the promise of the remission of sins, as the text, Luke 22:19, says: *This is My body, which is given for you. This cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.* **70]** Therefore the Word offers the remission of sins. And a ceremony is, as it were, a picture or seal, as Paul, Rom. 4:11, calls it, of the Word, making known the promise. Therefore, **just as the promise is useless unless it is received by faith, so a ceremony is useless unless such faith is added as is truly confident that the remission of sins is here offered.** And this faith encourages contrite minds. And just as the Word has been given in order to excite this faith, so the Sacrament has been instituted in order **that the outward appearance meeting the eyes might move the heart to believe [and strengthen faith]. For through these, namely, through Word and Sacrament, the Holy Ghost works.**

“**71]** And such use of the Sacrament, in which faith quickens terrified hearts, is a service of the New Testament, because the New Testament requires spiritual dispositions, mortification and quickening. [For according to the New Testament the highest service of God is rendered inwardly **in the heart.**] And for this use Christ instituted it, since He commanded *them thus to do in remembrance of Him.* **72]** For to remember Christ is not the idle celebration of a show [not something that is accomplished only by some gestures and actions], or one instituted for the sake of example, as the memory of Hercules or Ulysses is celebrated in tragedies, but it is to remember the benefits of Christ and receive them by faith, so as to be quickened by them. Psalm 111:4,5 accordingly says: *He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered: the Lord is gracious and full of compassion. He hath given meat unto them that fear Him.* For it signifies that the will and mercy of God should be discerned in the **73]** ceremony. But that faith which apprehends mercy quickens. And this is the principal use of the Sacrament, in which it is apparent who are fit for the Sacrament, namely, terrified consciences, and how they ought to use it.”

⁹⁸ Without faith; only due to the mere outward act of eating and drinking.

⁹⁹ **Triglotta** (page 313): See Footnote 95.

Triglotta (page 387): “**11]** For in our Confession we have shown that we hold that **the Lord’s Supper does not confer grace ex opere operato**, and that, when applied on behalf of others, alive or dead, it does not merit for them *ex opere operato* the remission of sins, of guilt or of punishment. **12]** And of this position a clear and firm proof exists in that **it is impossible to obtain the remission of our sins on account of our own work ex opere operato** [even when there is not a good thought in the heart], but the terrors of sin and death must be overcome by faith when we comfort our hearts with the knowledge of Christ, and believe that for Christ’s sake we are forgiven, and that the merits and righteousness of Christ are granted us, Rom. 5:1: *Being justified by faith, we have peace.* These things are so sure and so firm that they can stand against all the gates of hell.”

Walther **Epistle Sermons** (German, p.178; English Donald Heck Translation: p.185):

“But how do many Christians, yes, entire denominations view the Holy Supper ? Alas, not as a work of **Christ’s** greatest love, but as a work by which we are to show **our** miserable love to Him! The Holy Supper is viewed merely as a holy, meaningful ceremony, a way of thankfully remembering His bitter suffering and death.”

Note: Then it would also have to have an operation different from the Word¹⁰⁰.

Antithesis (Those who teach contrary to God's Word):

(a) Catholics: The Lord's Supper operates **ex opera operato**.

(b) Recent Theologians: See Sections 45 (b) and (c).

Note (a): This error also becomes a part of many Christians who regard their going to the Lord's Supper as a **good work** in order to obtain grace for themselves. They want to do God a service (by going to the Lord's Supper)¹⁰¹.

Note (b): In that case the person seeks to obtain forgiveness by his works. In this way true Christianity is being overthrown.

Note (c): We are only guests at the Lord's Supper.

[We would like to thank Pastor Baseley for his permission to quote from his translation work.](to be continued)

“The first question which we will try to answer today is this: ‘Does the mystery that Christ's body and blood are truly present in the Holy Supper promote the Christian's **faith**?’

“That many nowadays do not recognize this, yes, deny it, is undoubtedly often based on the fact that **they do not see the relationship of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament to faith**. They suppose that if they admit that Christ's body and blood are truly present in His Sacrament and are received by all communicants, worthy and unworthy, one must also admit that **merely receiving this heavenly treasure saves a person**. And so they believe that such a mystery would hinder true Christianity more than help it. And it is true that if such would be the case, it would be far removed from promoting true Christianity; **it could serve only to hinder it**. Then it would be a **work** and not faith which would save us, and such a **miserable work** that even the grossest hypocrite could do it and be saved.”

Walther **Pastorale** (German: p. 145; Drickamer Translation pages 109,110):

“Receiving the Holy Supper is not something good **in and of itself**. It depends on how one receives it. **It does not work ex opere operato** (by the work worked, the Romanist doctrine that the mere outward action bestows spiritual benefit)! It is **not like a medicine** that only needs to be taken so that it works. It is rather a treasure chest, the treasures of which can be taken only **by the hand of faith**. He who **has no faith receives** the real and whole Sacrament, not only bread and wine but really and truly, by mouth, in, with, and under these elements, **the body and blood of Jesus Christ** as a precious pledge of grace and forgiveness. **But he leaves without the blessing that is there for the salvation of his soul**. How can even such a precious and valuable pledge help a person, how can it serve for his assurance in a matter, **if he does not believe that it is such a precious and valuable pledge**?

“Whoever receives the Holy Supper without the correct faith, and so [receives it] in an unworthy manner, not only does not receive the grace that is in it, but finds in it instead of grace--anger; instead of life--death; instead of a blessing--a curse. He becomes, as St. Paul writes, "**Guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.... For he... eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body**" [1 Cor.11:27,29]. So horrifying is the sin he commits, and so terrifying is the judgement he draws down on himself who receives the Holy Supper unworthily.”

¹⁰⁰ **Triglotta** pages 313, 387: See Footnote 99.

¹⁰¹ Walther **Epistle Sermons** (German, p.173; Translation by Donald Heck, p.179):

“At the institution of the Lord's Supper, when He gave His disciples to eat of His body and gave them to drink of His blood, Christ said twice: ‘**This do in remembrance of Me**,’ we see that to partake of this Holy Sacrament properly we are not to go through the motions; rather everything depends upon the purpose and the disposition of heart. So we see: He who goes to Holy Communion merely because it has been his custom from his youth, because he sees all good Christians do so, and because he considers this a good custom which all good Christians should observe; he who is moved to go once again to the Lord's Table only because he has made it a rule to do this at least two, three, or four times a year; he who is not reminded by his heart but alone by the passing of several months that it is again time to do this holy work, he does not comply with the demand which Christ has made of His guests; their partaking of the Holy Supper is not only not a profitable but even a harmful, yes, a damnable work.

“When Christ says: ‘**This do in remembrance of Me**,’ He demands not only that His guests not partake of His Holy Supper thoughtlessly, but with holy devotion of heart.” (in all of Walther's quotations bolded emphasis has been added).



Theses 5: In reference to the call to a definite ministerial charge (pastoral office), two things must be considered: 1.) whether such a call be valid [ratus] (vocatio rata), and 2.) whether it be rightful [legitimate (legitimus, rectus)] (vocatio legitima s. recta). The call is valid, when it is extended by those who before God are entitled and empowered (have the right and authority from God) to issue such a call; and it is rightful (legitimate), when it has been obtained in the proper (correct) way.

NOTE 5.

It is not only sinful and dangerous to usurp an office without a valid and legitimate call; it is also sinful and dangerous to decline a valid and legitimate call because of human considerations (Jer.1:4-8; Ex. 4:10-14). That is also not justified by a feeling of one's own inability or unworthiness, for "Who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor. 2:16 [Luther's translation: "Who is fit for it?"]).

About this in a most masterly way speaks **Luther** who in agreement with his whole theology also refers the call to the holy Office of the Ministry back to the universal commandment:

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Among other things he writes the following (*): "The other (indirect, mediate) call does not need any signs. Like: I would never preach here at Wittenberg, if I was not forced to it by God and required by the Electoral Prince of Saxony that I must do it. Also it is the same with others too. For if the people want to force and urge me, and I can do, or even if I cannot do, what is required of me, I will do it to the best of my ability. There He [God] is driving me through people, and so God's command also stands there, which the Holy Spirit also calls to me and says, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself (Lev. 19:18). No human being should live for himself alone but should also serve the neighbor. This commandment is directed to everyone, to me and to you. If the same commandment grabs me and is held before me, no resistance would help unless I would resist so long that I came under God's wrath because of it. Now this call is through human beings, but it is also confirmed by God. So I remember and serve God in it, else others come tumbling in to little fields and push themselves into the Offices where they have not been called and also have not been asked nor have they been requested. The other call, when it occurs through human beings, has been before established by God's command on Mount Sinai, Lev.19:18; Deut. 6:5. 'Love God and your neighbour as yourself.' If you are driven by this command, then you need no sign, because God has first commanded it and I must do it. The people now take this command and hold it to me: in this verse Moses and God in heaven have authorised me, if I follow the same. So if I preach without any sign, and it is nevertheless the call of God, for it proceeds from the command of love and is forced by God." (Commentary on Some Chapters of Exodus, 1524-1526; Walch, III, 1076ff.; Erlangen, XXXV, 58ff.).

[**Walther's Footnote (*)**: "These sayings of Luther serve at the same time for the comfort of those who are already in the Office of the Ministry and are troubled about thoughts concerning their own inability or unworthiness."]

About God calling Moses who wanted to withdraw from the call because of his stuttering, **Luther** writes: "If God were as smart as we are, He would certainly have begun everything better than otherwise happened. For here He takes for this difficult, high work one who cannot speak well, as Moses himself confessed. But God says to him: 'Go and carry it out.' That is the same as if He told a blind man that he should see well, a lame man that he should run well, a mute man that he should speak well. Could God not find someone else to use for this work?"

"But it is written so that we may learn God's attitude. What counts in the eyes of the world, He does not regard. He rejects and discards what others grab for. He throws away what others love and exalt. And what the devil does not want, that He accepts. He gives Moses a correct answer and says: You are a clever

¹⁰² 1811-1887.

and a fine fellow. That is nettling, as if He meant to say: Do you think that I do not know that you stutter, as if I did not hear it?

— “So it seems to us, for we always want to outdo God in His works, as if we were the very first to see these faults, shortcomings, and frailties, but God did not see them. What does it matter, God says, so what if you are deaf, blind, or mute? If I say and command something to you, can I not give you sight, hearing, and speech? Who is the one who is talking to me? It is not some shoemaker but rather the One Who gives eyes and sight to the blind, ears and hearing to the deaf, and can make the inarticulate eloquent, but silences the great babblers. And you who cannot speak want to set the goal and standard for Me, Who has chosen you, because you cannot speak! If you could speak well, you would yet get too proud for yourself. But if you now see that I am the One Who does it, and not you, then I will use a stutterer like you for this work. For if one were as capable as Gabriel and all angels, and God did not call him, he would still not accomplish anything. God makes both the eloquent and the dumb (those who cannot talk). Again, if one is not a good speaker, and God calls him, he will carry it out, no matter how he is, so that the world may see that we are not pushing it, but God Himself is doing it.... We ignore and do not think about it that God is so near and we should perhaps doubt that God has made me a mouth, but think instead that we are born with the ability to speak well. But there is nobody on earth who could speak a word if God did not give it. We cast it to the wind and think we have it dropped directly into our laps. ---

“Now Moses finds himself caught by God and encircled from all sides. Still he says: I do not want to do it, and does not move further, for then he says: My Lord, send whom you want to send; as if he should say: Send someone else if you want to, I would be happy, but just do not send me. Now when Moses from his own mind and will wants to reject his call, the Lord then becomes very angry with Moses and says: Eh, do I not know then that your brother Aaron from the tribe of Levi can speak well? etc. (Ex. 4:14-17). So Moses had to yield.... That God had dealt with Moses with many words, is sheer sin and shame.” (Walch, III, 1129-32; Erlangen, XXXV, 102-104; S.L. III, 757).

In regard to those who therefore refuse a call because they especially regard themselves as incapable and unworthy of administrating the Lord’s Supper **Luther** writes: “It is also nothing if someone wants to object that he is unsuited because of his weak faith, frail life, or cold devotion. They should look at their call and Office, indeed, at God’s Word that has called them. If they are impure or unsuited, the Office and the call or the Word is still pure and suitable enough. And if they certainly believe that they have been called, then they are also suitable enough themselves through such faith. For whoever believes he is called to the Office of the Ministry in the Church, definitely also believes that his Office and his work, and he himself in such an Office, are acceptable and just before God; if he does not believe this, then it is also certain that he does not believe that his call is entrusted to him by God.

“Those who doubt that they are called to such an Office should be kept far away from the Office of the Ministry in the Church, for they are no good. Those who are certain that they have such an Office entrusted to them by God through the urging of the governing authorities or the prayer of the brethren, should enter into such a call with joy and confidence, and not look at any worthiness (suitability) or unworthiness (unsuitability) of their own. For: faith in the call is necessarily connected with faith in justification because it is a faith which is trusting and courageous on the basis of the Word of God who does the calling. (**Fides vocationis habet conjunctam necessario fidem justificationis, cum sit in verbum vocantis Dei fidens ac praesumens**).

“Whoever believes in his call will definitely have all necessary devotion, desire, and eagerness, because it is impossible for him who is certain of his call not to take into consideration the power of grace (**cum sit impossibile, eum non sentire vim gratiae, qui certus est de sua vocatione**). After all, such a man cannot say: I shall go and commit adultery, or some other evil. But he must say: I shall go and take care of my Office. But what else is this than saying: I want to be obedient to my God and serve my neighbour? This intention, however, is devotion; it is the desire to become devout and to do good or

to improve oneself -- unless it could not be called devotion or the desire (to be devout), if I am willing to obey God.

“It is of course true that whoever wants to examine himself and decides whether he is worthy (suitable) or unworthy (unsuitable), (or) make himself worthy, without regard for this Word of his call and faith in his Office, does nothing but judge himself in terms of human work and feeling. These persons certainly must lament that they are not always worthy; as a matter of fact, they are at all times unworthy. After all, until now we have preached to the laymen not to pray, or to receive the Sacrament, to rule, or serve, or do anything worthwhile on the basis of their own worthiness; rather in all things they should hold on to God’s promise, command, calling, or coaxing, and based on this undertake and do whatever has to be done. How then could the ministers of the Church be unworthy -- they who are called and made worthy by God through the Word, provided (only that) they believe this?” (1528 Letter to Lazarus Spengler; Walch, X, 2780-82; Erlangen, LIV, 32-33; S.L. X, 2258; Am. Ed. 49, 207-208.)

(Thanks to the late Pastor K. K. Miller for his help. Bolded emphasis is editor’s. All other emphasis is Dr. Walther’s. To be continued.)

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MINUTES

of the free Pastoral Conference involving both Synodical bodies of the Australian Synod and the Immanuel Synod which was held on 29 and 30 June, 1887 at Bethany¹⁰³, South Australia. (Taken from KB Jan. 1888 pages 6,7) [Continued from May-July, 2014 Issue of **Morsels**].

Afternoon Session, 29 June 1887.

The debate continued on Theses VI and VII¹⁰⁴ which occupied the time of the entire afternoon. The discussion mainly dealt with the question as to what limit is the binding nature of the “**quia**” (**because**) subscription to the Confessional writings to be understood, in other words, how far can one say with a good conscience that he thereby obligates himself to the Symbolical Books **because** they agree with Holy Scripture.

The pastors of the Immanuel Synod¹⁰⁵ then declared that they understood that the Symbolical Books agreed with Holy Scripture only concerning those doctrines which are stated in it which the church itself from former times bore testimony concerning specific doctrines which were in **controversy**, although they also were otherwise accepted generally by the church, even if at the time of the formulation of the

¹⁰³ This was at the church of **Pastor George Heidenreich** (1828-1910) who studied at Hermansberg Mission Institute, Germany (1862-66). He was pastor at Bethany, South Australia from 1866. In 1902 he was expelled from the ELSA for his support of the Finke river Mission in Central Australia run by the Immanuel Synod and of Hermansberg in Germany.

¹⁰⁴ **Thesis VI** reads: “**We confess our allegiance to the Book of Concord of 1580 not merely “in so far as,” but for this reason, because it agrees completely with God’s Word.**”

Thesis VII reads: “**We confess our allegiance to the Book of Concord in this manner that we regard as binding not only the doctrinal content which is given in it, but also the phrases which are used in it by which the doctrine is expressed.**”

This is also stated by our faithful orthodox Lutheran fathers in the **Introduction to the Book of Concord of 1580** where they state (and may we hold steadfastly to the same): “Therefore we also have **determined not to depart even a finger’s breadth** either from the **subjects** themselves nor from the **phrases which are found in them**, but, the Spirit of God aiding us, to persevere constantly, with the greatest harmony, in this godly agreement, and we intend to examine all controversies according to this true norm and declaration of pure doctrine.’ (Triglotta, p. 23).

¹⁰⁵ **The Immanuel Synod** was in fellowship with and obtaining its pastors from Neuendettelsau, the home of the evil “Open Questions’ principle. Later it was in fellowship with the former Iowa Synod in America. Among the errors of the Immanuel Synod at this time involved the evil “Open Questions” principle, unionism, false attitude to the Lutheran Confessions, millennialism, the Antichrist, election, a false view of the church and ministry and to the authority of the Scriptures.

Confessional Writings they did not want them included with the doctrines in dispute¹⁰⁶. On the other hand, the pastors of the Australian Synod¹⁰⁷ held firmly to the truth that the obligation in binding themselves to the Lutheran Confessions “**because (quia)**” they agree completely with God’s Word must refer to **all** the doctrines stated in the Confessions.

In order to obtain clarity in regard to the above-mentioned matter Pastor Dorsch¹⁰⁸ read out a thorough essay concerning the question why Lutheran pastors had to obligate themselves to be bound by the Symbolical Books with **quia, because** they agree completely with Scripture and not merely with **quatenus, in so far as** they agree with Scripture. In this essay Pastor Dorsch, on the one hand, showed that in the Confessional Writings there were certainly in a formal respect human weaknesses which slipped in in spite of how careful the writers were (of which naturally also an absolute recognition of the Symbols in no way refers, but rather to the complete doctrinal content given in it). On the other hand, also the main proof of an honest and sincere obligation to commit ourselves to the entire doctrinal content of our Confessional Writings was indicated.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ In their official **Amalgamation Theses** the position of the **Immanuel Synod** is very plain:

“Although in our Lutheran symbols all fundamental doctrines are given in detailed and clear statements, which especially applies to those points which refer to our salvation, **still we maintain that they do not throw full light on all portion of Holy Scripture, especially on the abstruse passages referring to the future of God’s Kingdom** (Ed. This allows them to teach the millennium because it is not specifically dealt with as a subject there, even though there are many other Scriptural statement in the Confessions that reject it)...” (emphasis added).

“Everything which our Fathers **meant to confess** we regard as ‘Confession’, and therefore as binding upon the Lutheran Church...”

“We, therefore, hold that only those doctrinal statements must be accepted as established Scriptural Truth and, therefore as a part of the Confessions which the Lutheran Church really **intended** to lay down as her Confession, as her public doctrine, as condition of church union and church fellowship...” (ATR, 1936, p. 92-93).

But the serious error is: Each one can now please himself what the Confessors meant to confess.

¹⁰⁷ Former **ELSA** which by now had embraced the doctrinal position of the old, once orthodox Missouri Synod. The position of the ELSA on **the Lutheran Confessions** was as follows:

“The symbols are binding in respect to all their **doctrines**, whether treated expressly, or merely introduced in support of other doctrines, inasmuch as they teach no doctrine for which they do not furnish sufficient Scripture proof. Inasmuch as the subscription with “**quia**” demands acceptance of every doctrine in the symbols, no teacher is permitted to place any doctrine on the free list, cast doubt on any fact of doctrine, deny those doctrines they affirm, and affirm those they reject and condemn.” (ATR 1936, p. 92.)

¹⁰⁸ **Pastor Dorsch**: (1858-1916) studied under Dr. Walther and Dr. Pieper at St. Louis, USA and was ordained in 1881 at Adelaide, South Australia. He was the first of the Missouri trained pastors to serve in our old once orthodox ELSA. He was a brilliant man, an outstanding theologian and he served our church well. He was serving Callington-Monarto in 1887.

¹⁰⁹ See Dr. Walther’s outstanding and vitally important essay entitled: “**Why Should Our Pastors, Teachers and Professors Subscribe Unconditionally to the Symbolical Writings of Our Church?**” This was the position of our old former ELSA and it also represents the position of our ELCR.

In 1977 in an essay for the **ELCR Fellowship Day** the following points were stated (and the whole paper later was adopted as the official doctrinal position of the ELCR):

“Since the Lutheran Confessions set forth clearly the pure teaching of Holy Scripture and since our forefathers have placed before us in the Book of Concord nothing but God’s eternal Truth, every true Christian is in duty bound constantly to believe, confess, teach and practice according to it. The Confessions are not above Scripture, nor equal to it but under them. All those who pledged themselves unconditionally to the Book of Concord were regarded as true Lutherans. No church and prayer fellowship was practised with those who did not unconditionally subscribe to the Confessions. In this way true godly and Scriptural peace and unity was brought to the orthodox Lutheran Church. Subscription to the Lutheran Confessions was conducted everywhere on the principle that the signer not only agreed completely with its doctrinal content but also was prepared to practise in accordance with it.

“Dr. C.F.W. Walther tells us what an unconditional subscription to the Confession is:

‘An unconditional subscription is the solemn declaration which the individual who wants to serve the Church makes **under oath**:

1) that he accepts the **DOCTRINAL CONTENT** of our Symbolical Books, because he recognises the fact that it is in full agreement with Scripture and does not militate against Scripture in any point, whether that point be of major or minor importance;

The debate was closed at 6 pm with the promise on the part of the pastors of the Immanuel Synod that they after careful consideration of the essay by Pastor Dorsch which had just been read would early the next morning give their answer to it.

The second session was then closed. (To be continued)

THE PSALMS (Johann George Starke -- pages 17-19)

Psalm 1

A Description of the Very Different State of Affairs (Condition) of the Pious and the Godless.

[1]The Detailed Introduction – verse 1-5.

2) that he therefore heartily believes in this divine Truth and is determined to preach this doctrine without adulteration. (Concordia Theological Monthly, XVIII, April, 1947, p.241)

“When a lay person subscribes to the Confessions he pledges unconditionally to believe and practise according to it.”

Again it is stated: “**Genuine Lutherans** subscribe to the Lutheran Confessions BECAUSE (QUIA) they teach the pure Scriptural doctrine. Unionists, rationalists and compromisers subscribe to the Confessions IN SO FAR AS (QUATENUS) they agree with Scripture. The implication is that not everything in the Confessions is in accordance with God’s Word. This also leaves it up to the individual to determine what he would like to subscribe to and what he would like to omit, depending on how it suits him. This is in reality the Satanic Open Questions Theory. Dr C.F.W. Walther writes: ‘The declaration that one accepts the Symbols ‘in so far as’ and not ‘because’ they agree with Scripture is not a pledge to teach according to the Symbols, BUT ACCORDING TO HIS CONSCIENCE AND OPINIONS.’” (CTM, p.246).

Furthermore it is stated: “Dr. Walther warns: ‘Whoever permits such doctrines to be treated as Open Questions surrenders the fortress of the confession of our Church and IS IN REALITY NO LOYAL LUTHERAN’ (ibid. p.247).

“It is essential for us of the ELCR to keep in mind the reasons why in our constitution we subscribe unconditionally to the Confessions because they agree completely with Scripture. They are as Dr. Walther tells us:

“a) that our Church clearly and unequivocally confess its faith and its doctrine before the world;

b) that it distinguish itself from all heterodox bodies and sects;

c) that it may possess a united, certain, general form and norm of doctrine for all its teachers on the basis of which all other writings and teachings can be judged and regulated. But if the Church demands only a conditional acceptance of its symbols, it virtually retracts the faith and the doctrine which it had set forth in the Symbols.... Then... the charge can be raised that the Church is double tongued and deceiving the world with the Symbols.... The Church forfeits its distinctively Lutheran characteristics... and places itself on the same level with the heterodox bodies....

‘The purpose of binding the teachers of the Church to its public confessions is to remove the long controversies which have been thoroughly discussed and settled, at least in the orthodox Church. A mere conditional subscription, however, opens the door for a renewal of controversies that have already been settled and paves the way for everlasting discord.’” (ibid. p.246).

Finally, let us take to heart the appeal of the writer: “**Where members of a congregation are thoroughly acquainted with their ‘Book of Concord’ then that congregation will indeed be strong defenders of the Lutheran heritage and will be following the faith of their orthodox Lutheran fathers.** What our fathers suffered so much for in order to hand the Word to us will not then be in vain.’

“Brethren and sisters, I urge you in the name of Christ, follow the faith of our orthodox Lutheran fathers! **May we never grow indifferent and disloyal to our Confessions, for then we would be disloyal to Christ Himself!** May the Confessions always govern our teaching and preaching as well as our life and practice! Wherever in the past, true Lutherans adhered faithfully to their Confessions, **they were strong against all foes and they flourished.** But wherever these Confessions were trodden in the dust, the true Lutheran Church always fell an easy prey to her enemies: **to unionism, sectarianism, liberalism and unfaithfulness.** Therefore, dear brethren and sisters, if we shall but continue to walk in the steps of our orthodox Lutheran fathers, God will continue to bless us even as our fathers. By His grace we, too, shall indeed keep His Word pure in these last days. May there never be an arm uplifted in our midst to haul down the flag which our fathers hoisted! May there never be an effort made to remove our beloved Federation from the foundation of the pure Word which has made her strong in the Lord! May the words of our orthodox Lutheran fathers be our life-long confession:

‘Therefore we also have determined not to depart even a finger’s breadth either from the subjects themselves or from the phrases which are found in them (the Symbols, Ed.)’” (Triglotta, p.23).

(I) The Blessed Condition of the Pious is Described.

(1) With Literal Words.

(a) The Blessedness: “*Blessed is the man.*” Verse 1.

(b) The Pious People who are blessed are further described:

(i) The way of the people who are blessed is described in the Negative: “*that walketh not,*” etc.

(ii) The way of the people who are blessed is described in the Positive: “*But his delight is,*” etc. Verse 2.

(2) With Figurative Words, by which the blessed condition is deduced from a tree, seeing it in

(a) the planting: “*he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,*” etc. Verse 3.

(b) the fruitfulness: “*that bringeth forth his fruit in his season,*” etc.

(c) its excellent appearance: “*his leaf also shall not wither,*” etc.

Verse 3.

Verse 3: And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

The Blessed Condition of the Pious is Described: (2) With Figurative Words, by which the blessed condition is deduced from a tree, seeing it in

(b) the fruitfulness.

“**that bringeth forth his fruit in his season**”¹¹⁰.

Comments on this part of Verse 3

in his season: With the words: **in his season**, the realm of nature is being seen in this that a tree does not at all times, but only at a certain season, bring forth its fruits. The Kingdom of grace certainly has this advantage over the realm of nature, that the **fruit must be shown immediately after planting because in conversion faith is ignited**; so just as little as one cannot remain a moment without the fruits of faith, so little can one separate the power of heat from fire and the ability to moisten from water. But there is nevertheless therefore a similarity with the realm of nature, namely, when at certain times every one goes through **particular trials**, when he soon has to especially prove that he has fruits of faith generally in self-denial, in patience, in humility, in gentleness and in love for his enemies. From this then he is required to **pay close attention to these trials** to find the most suitable opportunity and carefully to observe the signs of

¹¹⁰ **Keil and Delitzsch:** “The fruit which one expects from it, it yields, produces ... and that at its appointed, proper time ... without ever disappointing that hope in the course of the recurring seasons.”

Stoeckhardt: “He never ceases to bear the fruit of good works. The Psalmist wants to emphasize that a believer’s strength never abates but keeps on performing good works, because he thrives and draws his strength and life from the Word.”

Luther: “Oh, this is a golden and lovable word, through which the freedom of the righteous Christian is affirmed! ... But that blessed man is free at all times, in every work, for every place, and toward every person. Whatever the situation, he will serve you; and whatever his hand finds to do, he will do it... He gives his fruit in his season, as often as God or man needs his works... He serves everyone, everywhere, and always.”

Other Notes: “*Which yields its fruit in its season*”

(1) Note again the recurring Biblical principle: First the root, then fruit. First faith in Christ and then works of love flowing from faith.

(2) **that brings** or **yields:** The verb is the imperfect tense, which here stresses continual action and true faith in the Christian producing constantly works of love is always true as a general rule of life. As 1 Thes. 2:13 reminds us, constantly living in the Word should result in continued fruitfulness.

(3) **In its season:** is literally “in its time,” i.e., at the proper, suitable time (Ps. 104:27). Besides in general leading a Christian life flowing from faith this also means that as far as the believer’s fruitfulness is concerned, studying and being prepared to serve Christ in special ways according to one’s gifts and God’s timing (compare Moses, Paul and Christ). It also means being prepared to bear fruit when opportunity knocks (2 Tim. 4:2). Notice that the fruit appears “**in season**”. This signifies that the fruit was produced under the guidance and in the timing of God.

the times, Mt.16:3¹¹¹. But when all obstacles are removed out of the way then the fruits of his faithful, hard work can once more be gathered in. Because David¹¹² mentions not only the fruit but also expressly the leaves, the leaves however are a picture of the proper conduct or a custom, then therefore it is not only possible, but also necessary to be given the ability recognize the proper behaviour in a believer, 1 Pet 2:12¹¹³. On the other hand, however, even a mere respectable conduct is no proof of a good tree or people who are believers, Mat.21:19¹¹⁴

Practical Application of Verse 3.

13.) Verse 3. We are by nature barren and unfruitful trees; if we now are offered the power of grace by God and do not immediately, willingly and joyfully accept it in faith and be grafted into Christ, without ourselves doing anything for it, what spiritual benefit is it? John 15:4 ff.¹¹⁵

14.) Whoever has been grafted into Christ, he must by the Word of the Gospel continue to have faith so worked in him that after that he also communicates such Word with all the power of blessing from the fullness of Jesus. Is.61:1-3¹¹⁶; 2 Pet.1:3 ff¹¹⁷.

15.) The most opportune time to do good is the time of grace, therefore it is not to be neglected. John 12:35¹¹⁸.

(to be continued)

¹¹¹ Mat.16:3, "And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can **discern** the face of the sky; **but can ye not discern the signs of the times?**"

¹¹² Starke believed that David was used by the Holy Spirit to write this Psalm. But the text does not directly say so.

¹¹³ 1Pet.2:12, "Having your **conversation** (conduct) **honest** (excellent as it conforms to the will of God) among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, **they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.**"

¹¹⁴ Mat.21:19, "And when He saw a fig tree in the way, He came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, 'Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.' And presently the fig tree withered away."

¹¹⁵ John 15:4ff: "4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. 5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: **for without Me ye can do nothing.** 6 If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If ye abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

¹¹⁶ Is.61:1-3: "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me; because the LORD hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; 3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He might be glorified."

¹¹⁷ 2 Pet.1:3ff: "3 **According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue:** 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. 8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."

¹¹⁸ John 12:35, "Then Jesus said unto them, 'Yet a **little while** is the light with you. **Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.**'"

Kretzman comments on these words most effectively: "It would now be only a **very short time** that He, the Light of the World, would be with them. And therefore **they should make the best use of this time.** They should walk in this Light; they should give the rays from this wonderful Light **an opportunity of shining into their hearts.** If they would not receive light from this Light, then the darkness of their own heart and the destruction which follows it would remain for them. The man that travels in darkness is always **in danger of losing his way and of landing in pitfalls. He that is without Christ, the true and only Light, is helpless in the midst of the thousands of spiritual dangers in these latter days.**"

Essential Features of Luther's Principles of Hermeneutics¹¹⁹ Collected from Luther's Writings
(by P Hoppe)[Lehre und Wehre 1882, pages 57-59]

In all his writings, from the beginning until the end, from the earliest to the latest time, **Luther** has had and followed completely solid hermeneutical principles and by applying the same principles expounded the right understanding of Scripture. Without any exceptions they are the same fundamental principles and over time they have not experienced the slightest change. Based on the same principles it was possible for him with unquestionable certainty to demonstrate what the correct sense and meaning was which was indicated by him, and no different one, of either a single text or an entire section. That is why he says: "This is not a matter of *may* but of *must*. It takes no great wisdom to say, 'This or that may be so understood'; but this is real wisdom when confronted with the demand to prove it *must* be so understood and cannot be otherwise. 'Possible' won't do, 'necessary' will, as the logicians say." (Am. Ed. 37, 106).

Luther again states: "But what kind of spirit is it who directs his ingenuity only to rendering Scripture passages uncertain and doubtful, and does not on the other hand render them certain and firm again, and thus builds on sand and boasts with certainty that he is making things uncertain—well, this is easy to see. **Christ's Spirit** it surely is not; **He makes sure and certain all that He teaches**, as St. Paul (Rom.4:18) extols the *plērophoria* (full assurance, most certain confidence, Ed.), and in 2 Cor.1:19 says, "In Christ Jesus it is not Yes and No, but Yes, Yes." (Am. Ed. Vol. 37, p. 107).

For the investigation of the basic principles which led Luther to the correct exposition of the Bible, the correct answer to the preliminary question is of the greatest importance: What do we have to look for in the Bible? Luther's answer is: **The entire Holy Scripture alone teaches about the Lord Jesus Christ, from beginning to the end, in the same sense and meaning.**

- The entire Scriptures testify that **Christ was sent to take care of our great misery due to sin.**
- **Christ is the God** of Eve, of Abraham, of Moses, of the prophets, in the Psalms.
- That **God became Man in Christ** is just as clearly portrayed in the Old Testament as in the New.
- **Christ's suffering and the reason for it** is stated clearly here in the Old Testament as it is in the New, even as it is stated that we are to comfort ourselves with the same.
- In the Psalms and in the Prophets Christ's suffering and **Resurrection** as well as His **Ascension** were prophesied. **All the prophets taught faith in Christ**, declaring the fulfilment of the Gospel.
- **Christ is a spiritual King**, not an earthly king; His Kingdom is indeed the most glorious and greatest on earth¹²⁰; however it is **not an earthly, but spiritual**, eternal Kingdom, a Kingdom of faith, in which He forgives sins, gives the Holy Spirit through the Word and brings eternal salvation for us.

Corrections to May – July 2014 issue of Morsels From the Saviour.

1. Page 3 On the third line above "Unbelievers Complain Against God's Grace":
"Where **doe** this come from?" should be "Where does this come from?"
2. Page 6 On the fourth line from the top: "with the work in Vineyard" should be "with the work in the Vineyard".
3. Page 6 Fourth paragraph, third line: "**Go** will indeed (graciously) reward"
should be "God will indeed (graciously) reward".
4. Page 7 First paragraph under "What Luther Teaches on the Clarity of Scripture"
First Line: After "You must" there are a couple of spaces rather than one.
5. Page 18 On the fourth line of material from the top: "**God s** Word" should be "God's Word."
6. Page 23 Under Pastor Joachim Georg Bode, third line: "and who **die** in 1972" should be "and who died in 1972".
7. Page 24 At the top the paragraph beginning "Election," in the seventh line of this paragraph "**abovementioned** committee" should be "above-mentioned committee"
8. Page 29 On the tenth line from the top: "and above all its leaves do" should not have a double space before "not".

[Our thanks to **Kathy Barnes** and others for their kind help in proof reading both these issues].

¹¹⁹ Rules of Scripture explanation.

¹²⁰ The Invisible Church on earth.