

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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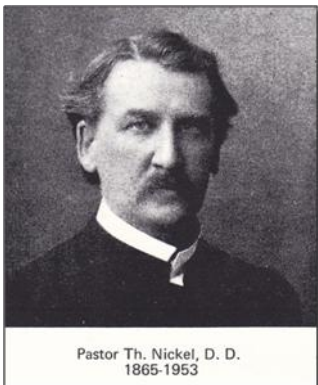
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IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN GRACE.

(Septuagesima Sunday)

[From “Der Lutherische Kirchenbote” (The Lutheran Church Messenger) the official church paper of our former ELSA here in Australia, February 1, 1917, Vol. 44, Number 3, Pages 17-19.]

(by the late Dr. Th. Nickel¹)



The disciples of the Lord once came to Christ and said: “**Behold, we have forsaken all and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore?**”²(Mat.19:27). The Lord answered them, “**Verily³ I say unto you, ‘That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration,’**” that is, on the Last Day when the Lord will come again and will create a new heaven and a new earth, “**“when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for My name's sake⁴ shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life⁵.”**” (Mat.19:28,29).

That is absolutely a glorious promise which Christ gives to His disciples, a promise which indeed is to move every individual Christian cheerfully to give and patiently endure everything for His Saviour. When we will be with God in heaven, then the Lord in a superabundant manner

¹ **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 from1903-1922. 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.

² The meaning behind the question, “**What shall we have therefore?**” is: What then will our reward be? Surely we are entitled to a treasure in heaven!

³ “**Verily**” has the force of an oath.

⁴ **Kretzmann**; “For the sake of Christ and in the confession of His name everything else must cheerfully be given up and sacrificed without a single regret, even if it means the breaking of all earthly ties.”

⁵ Salvation is alone by God's grace through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ and **in no way through our works** (Eph.2:8,9). Yet God in His wonderful love promises a **gracious** reward in heaven for those who in faith alone love and serve Him faithfully (Mat.5:12).

Kretzmann states: “All the greater will be His reward of mercy. Manifoldly, in great fullness, shall they receive from Him in return. Not only shall the value of all be restored in richest abundance, but as the climax of all the reward of mercy will include eternal life. All this for those that suffered and denied for the sake of Christ, to bear His shame and to further His kingdom.”

will graciously reward every work of love we have done in faith here on earth. Yet the Lord joins to His promise and earnest Word of admonition. He adds to this: **“But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first”**⁶ (Mat.19:30), and to this earnest Word of admonition He then connects the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard, from which we are to learn that **in the Kingdom of God nothing is more important than grace.**

Though His Word the Lord Calls Us to Work in His Vineyard.

The Lord here speaks in a parable. In a picture that He takes from daily life He wants to show us how it is in the Kingdom of God⁷, namely, that it is just like in a vineyard where the house father⁸ goes out to hire⁹ workers. The house father is the **Lord Himself**; the vineyard is **Christ’s church**¹⁰ here on earth; the workers who thus work in the church are the Christians and those who call themselves Christians. The Lord has called these to work in His vineyard. He Himself went out to look for workers and not only at one time during the day, no five times He went out -- early in the morning, at the third hour (9 am), the sixth hour (midday), the ninth hour (3 pm) and the eleventh hour (5 pm) – and urged those who stood idle in the market place to work for Him. From this it clearly follows that the dear God is not the cause why a person is lost. He seeks out the lost, through His Word He calls him to Himself and wants to see him saved.

Behold, also, how friendly a manner the Lord goes after the person. There are some who are already called very early in the morning to work in God’s vineyard. These people are all those who have been received into God’s Kingdom of Grace as children by Holy Baptism. There are others who have been called at the third or sixth hour, that is, in their youth or as adults. Others first come to the knowledge of their God by faith in Christ at the ninth hour, at the time when they are already approaching old age, yes, there are some who are first converted to God and become members of His Kingdom at the eleventh hour, that is, in the last hour of their lives.

It is By God’s Grace Alone That We are Christ’s Servants

Now what especially moved the Lord to call us into His Vineyard? Is it our work and merit¹¹? **It is alone by grace.** What have you, those who as children were baptised and received into God’s Kingdom, done, what have you given to the dear God, what have you done to please Him, that you have been called before many others? How many millions of children are there who have not been born within Christendom and have not

⁶ **Kretzmann:** “But the Lord adds a **warning** for the sake of such as are inclined to be **self-satisfied and proud of their own works**. The earlier or later calling has no influence upon a person's standing in the Judgment. **But he that wants to depend upon his works and intends to urge those on the last day as meriting the bliss of heaven, he has denied the grace and atoning work of His Saviour and will find no place in the kingdom of heaven. All poor sinners, however, that want to be saved by grace only, will find their place prepared in the heavenly mansions.**”

Dr. F. Pieper correctly explains these words: “But a claim of merit because of the works done would make the first become last; **a child of grace would thus become a child of wrath**, who will receive the just dues of the work-righteous, eternal condemnation....”

“...**Luther:** ‘...So **they lose the favour and grace of God**; they must take their temporal reward, go their way with their penny, and be damned. They did not work because of the eternal favour of God, but in order to be paid. The others, however, confessing that they have merited neither the penny nor the favour, are given more than they thought had been promised them. **These remain in grace and are saved....**’ (SL.XI:508 ff.).

“If anyone claims any merit on the basis of having performed good works, he is excluded from the Kingdom of God....” (Dogmatic III,53).

⁷ **Kretzmann** explains this further: “His Church as it appears before men, as its work is being carried out before them and for their salvation.”

⁸ Ruler of a house, farmer, or manager of the estate.

⁹ The Jewish working day lasted from 6 am to 6 pm. The word “hire” is emphasised in order to bring out the necessity of being actively engaged in labour in the Kingdom. **True Christians are called by grace not to idleness, but to labour and service in Christ’s Kingdom. As the calling and the labour is of grace, so is the reward.**

¹⁰ Visible church on earth.

¹¹ Nickel means, “Have we done anything by our works to deserve or earn our salvation?”

become God's children¹². Why has God given you a pious father and a Godly mother? Millions of children grow up as the heathen. Why have you been permitted to learn God's Word from your childhood? Why have you been permitted to attend a Christian school? Why do you have a Bible which millions know nothing about? Why are you able to hear God's Word every Sunday? Is that perhaps due to your work, your merit? **Certainly not, that is due to pure grace.**

What moved the dear God to receive King David, who had fallen so deeply, back into a state of grace? What moved Him to make the woman who was a great sinner His child? How did it occur that God received the penitent thief on the cross even at the eleventh hour? What moved Him to make a Paul from a Saul? Yes, why was King Saul rejected and condemned but David accepted? Why did Peter repent and Judas take his own life in terror? Why was one thief pardoned, but the other condemned? Why are you a Christian, but your neighbour is a heathen? Why is the Gospel proclaimed in this land, but in faraway Asia the blindness of heathendom still rules? Is that all due to our merit? **Not at all. By grace alone we are what we are. By grace alone God has called us to work in His Vineyard, in His Kingdom.**

By His Grace the Lord Calls us Into His Vineyard to Serve Him

For what purpose has God called us into His vineyard? *For work.* In a large vineyard there is much to do. If a vineyard is to bring forth good fruit, then it must be kept clean from all the weeds, the soil (around the vines) must be ploughed and the plants watered. Also you do not allow the vines to grow as they please, but all unnecessary wood, wild branches must be cut off. However all tender plants are propped up to a stake and tied. Thus there is also much work in the Kingdom of God. Even this alone that one must keep the church clean from weeds, oppose all those who are ungodly in doctrine and life, requires much work. Then, in addition, you must see to it that, as much as possible, many young grape plants (cuttings) are planted and so the vineyard is enlarged, that means, much work is required in the upbringing of the youth of the church and much labour in doing missionary work among the heathen. God desires that His Kingdom be built up, that souls who still do not know Him are brought to Him (by faith in Christ) and that His Kingdom be enlarged. This all requires much work, much prayer and many gifts.

But even this that you may work in the Kingdom of God, that God gives you the ability to build churches and schools, to maintain teachers and preachers, to provide for widows and orphans and to promote missions is due to **God's grace, unending, great grace.** Please, take notice, dear reader, the fact that you can contribute towards the building and maintenance of churches and schools, that you may give something for the purpose of being used by the church, for missions, that is not a burden, as many foolish people in heathenish lack of understanding believe, no, it is **due to grace, yes, grace so great** that therefore the angels of God, if it were possible, would envy you. How the angels of God rejoiced when they were allowed to make known the birth of the Baby Jesus to the world! How gladly they would have proclaimed **the only saving message of the Gospel of the grace of God in Christ who appeared for all mankind!** But God had not appointed them for this purpose. He wants to use His Christians for the purpose of building His Kingdom, of working in His vineyard. But how many Christians today regard it as a burden when they are to give or do anything at all for the purpose of the church, for the congregation or the synod! How few zealous workers one finds today in the church! Where does this come from? It occurs in this way that such people no longer recognize that it is **due to the great unmerited grace of God that a Christian is allowed to work for Jesus and his Kingdom.**

Unbelievers Complain Against God's Grace.

¹² What Nickel means is that there are millions of children who have not had the opportunity to be baptised and brought into God's Kingdom because their parents or relatives were not members of the visible church and did not know about Baptism. It is by **God's grace alone** that God gives us Christian parents who see to it that their children are baptised.

And what is the situation with the reward? Even the reward is a **reward of grace**. With those whom He hired¹³ in the early morning¹⁴ the Lord of the vineyard had decided upon a denarius¹⁵ as the day's pay. To the others He had promised He would give them what was right. Now when the evening came and every worker was being paid out his wages, then every worker received a denarius. Those whom He had hired at the eleventh hour obtained just as much accordingly as those who had worked the whole day. In regard to this these workers became angry and murmured against the master of the house and said: "**These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day**" (Mat.20:12).

But what answer did the lord give them? He said: "**14. Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny (denarius)? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. 15. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will (freely to give it where I decide) with mine own? Is thine eye evil (wicked), because I am good?**"(Mat.20:14,15).

When we examine our own hearts, we must confess that we would also certainly have murmured against the master of the house. He would have treated us like those whom He called early in the morning, for we all have an envious and selfish heart. He did not act wrongly in any way toward those workers. The wage paid out to them was that which the Lord had agreed with them. When the master of the house paid out more to the other workers than that which they had deserved, then that was **pure kindness** about which they¹⁶ should not have taken offence¹⁷, but rather should have been delighted for their fellow workers.

We even find this loveless disposition still today. When someone has been a member of a congregation for years, has founded and built the church, helped with bearing all the burdens, then it often occurs that he regards that as something good and thinks that he has done more than others, that he has already done his duty, that he does not need to do anything more, and that others should do for the present time that which he has done. But that is a wrong, perverted position. You are not to regard the fact that you may have to do something for God's Kingdom as a burden, but as due to the great grace of God for which you are to thank God on your knees.

Christ's Call, our Work, His reward --- Everything is Grace

Those do not have the benefit (advantage) who only came later, but you who have for years been hearers for this purpose. Yet do not pride yourself on this. You are for this reason no better before God; therefore you have no advantage over those about whom you boast that you are better, for **in the Kingdom of God nothing is more important than grace. His call, our work, His reward, everything is grace, unmerited grace**. It is by grace that God has called us into His Kingdom, by grace that He has allowed us to work in it,

¹³ In Mat.20:2 we read, "**When he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.**" The verb for "**agreed**" means: "**to agree with one in making a bargain, to make an agreement, to bargain.**" (Thayer, 598). The **attitude** of these men towards themselves, their work and their master **was wrong**. Before they went to work they bargained with the master. They would not work until they had discussed and carefully agreed with the master concerning their reward. They demanded this agreement. They stipulated certain things.

(a) They are looking at themselves and were very conscious of what they have to do and their reward.

(b) The other workers are prepared to trust the grace and kindness of the house master. They were happy with the words: "**Whatever is right I will give you.**" But not the first workers. They were not prepared to trust the grace and kindness of the master.

(c) As they worked they were keeping a careful account of all they did, what the others did, how hard and how long they had worked. **They forget the principle of grace**. These men expected to receive more because they felt they deserved more.

¹⁴ At 6 am.

¹⁵ The German uses a **groschen** which is about the equivalent of a 10 pfennig coin. The King James Version uses penny. But the Greek uses denarius which was the customary amount for a day's work. For accuracy we will use denarius.

¹⁶ The workers who worked the whole day.

¹⁷ Got angry.

by grace that He rewards us for our work. We have merited (deserved) nothing. If God desired to deal with us as we deserved, then He would only punish us for that which we have omitted and failed to do in our service by unfaithfulness and ignorance. We are and remain unprofitable servants. With God nothing is more important than grace and undeserved kindness, the forgiveness of sins. All our works are completely worthless for salvation, even in the best life. **Yes, in the Kingdom of Christ nothing is more important than grace.**

Don't Despise God's Gracious Call of Salvation.

In this truth an earnest admonition is contained. What is this admonition? First of all: Don't despise the gracious call (of salvation) of your God! When the master went out at different times of the day to seek workers for his vineyard, all those there whom he requested to work for him answered his summons. The gracious call of Christ: "Come, work in My Vineyard," has already often gone out to us. The first time the call went out to us was when we were **Baptized**, when we became God's children and members of His Kingdom. At the third hour, perhaps when we were **confirmed**, when the Lord again knocked on the door of our hearts and when we renewed our Baptismal Covenant, then we already declared for ourselves to serve Him in His Kingdom. Also **later on** in our lives when we so often **heard and read God's Word**, this call to (salvation) went out to us. There are many times in our lives, times of blessing and of joy, as well as times of difficult affliction when we perhaps stood at the coffin of a beloved child or kneeled at the death bed of a dear relative, when God called to us and we promised Him that we wanted to serve Him. From our youth onwards God has through His Word worked on our hearts.

Not one of us can excuse himself: "No-one has hired us!" As long as our time of grace continues, as often as we hear God's Word, the Lord is calling to us. Have we at all times heeded His call? Haven't we often stopped working and been idle? No-one knows how long he has to live. You may still be in the prime of your life and yet the last hour has already dawned for you. Therefore do not despise this gracious call. Do not pay attention to the alluring temptations of the world! Do not follow the lusts (evil desires) of your flesh! Hear God's Word in which your God calls to you!

"Now is the time of grace,
Now wide stands Heaven's portal,
Now may true blessedness
Be hope for by each mortal.
He who this day doth waste
Nor will to God repent
Will mourn himself at last.
When he to hell is sent." (Hymn 223:1; by J. Heermann 1620. Translation from Walther's Hymnal page 171).

"Do not despise the gracious call of your God, "that is the exhortation to which the Lord directs us in the Gospel.

Make the Most of the Time of Grace God Has Given Us.

Yet there is another admonition contained in this parable, namely, work, make the most of our time God has called us into His Vineyard. For what purpose then? Now, for work. God wants to have workers in His Vineyard, diligent workers. A worthless servant is of no use whatever. He is dismissed with scorn and contempt for he only cause harm because he leads others astray by his bad example or by his bad work he destroys what others have built up by faithfulness. The Lord says, "**No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.**" (Luke 9:62)¹⁸. Yes, He even says, "**Cursed be**

¹⁸ **Kretzmann:** "No one having laid his hand to the plough and then looking behind him is fit for the kingdom of God. To follow Jesus in His ministry is the highest calling, and it requires a firm intention and a steady eye. Any labor is unfruitful unless the whole man takes part in it and devotes his entire mind to the subject in hand."

he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully (German: *negligently*) (Jer.48:10). Whoever is lazy, indifferent and worthless in the service of the Lord, whoever has no zeal, no love for God's Kingdom, is a hindrance to the Kingdom of God and brings severe punishment on himself¹⁹. For in the building up of the Kingdom of God, with the work in Vineyard of the Lord, we are indeed concerned with God's honour, we are dealing with immortal souls.

What **responsibility**, therefore, do, for example, parents bring upon themselves who do **nothing** in regard to the **Christian upbringing of their children**, who act just like, as one might say, people do in raising cattle! They care very much for the bodies of their children, but allow their souls to perish. How grievously Christians sin who here know the need of the church, the crying need in home as well as overseas missions, but who do not raise a finger to remedy the situation! What guilt do those bring upon themselves whom God has blessed with earthly goods, but who let the Vineyard of God grow wild and want to do nothing and give nothing for the extension and maintenance of the church! The Lord admonishes all His Christians: Work, work, as long as it is day²⁰. By His mercy He implores us: Work! There is so much to do in the Kingdom of God, so much to do in our families, in the congregations, in the synod. The harm also is so great, so immensely great, if we are idle and remain inactive, therefore: Work!

Never Trust in Your Works, But Alone in God's Grace in Christ.

Yet another admonition is contained in our text, namely: **Do not trust in what you have done, but trust alone in God's mercy and grace in Christ**. It lies in our nature that we gladly glory in what we have done. We like to hear our names being called, when a person praises our zeal for matters in God's Kingdom. We also like to make a comparison between ourselves and others, between what we and others do, and think in our hearts that we are still more zealous than others. God has no pleasure in such a way of thinking. When those workers who had been called in the early morning hour murmured about this that the master had given them the same as those who had only worked one hour while they expected a greater reward, when the master called to them: **"Take what is thine and go away"** (Luther's translation), He dismissed them. Such people who pride themselves on something they have done, profane God's mercy and blaspheme God. The Lord wants nothing to do with them. They have their reward there (in this world).

Because in God's Kingdom nothing is more important than grace, we ourselves need to praise solely and alone the grace of our God. Whoever wants to glory, let him glory in the Lord who has out of grace called him into His Vineyard. Go will indeed (graciously) reward faithfulness. What we in His Name do and suffer, the Lord will certainly not let that go unrewarded, but we do not have the right to demand any reward, the reward remains a reward of grace. Whoever relies on his own merits (works) is rejected and cast off, for **in the Kingdom of God nothing is more important than grace**. Therefore never take pride in how good you are in this that you have already been a member of the congregation for a long time, that you have occupied the Office of an elder for many years, never take pride in how good you are when you have contributed great sums of money for the extension of the Kingdom of God: **all of these things are only the grounds to praise the grace of God who has (graciously) deemed you worthy to serve Him in His Kingdom**. Praise God's mercy so that this Word of God will also not be true for you: **The first shall be last and the last shall be first**²¹. For **"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."** (James 4:6²²).

[Headings, bolded emphasis and extra paragraphs have been added. BLW]

¹⁹ Compare Rev. 3:16.

²⁰ John 9:4.

²¹ Cf. Mat.20:16. See Footnote 6.

²² **Kretzmann** states on this verse: "For this truth we have the authority of the Word, in which the Holy Spirit Himself gives us the assurance that, while God always resists the proud, it is His good pleasure to give grace to the humble. Cp. Prov. 3:34; 1 Pet. 5:5. A Christian's constant effort, then, will be to **conquer and vanquish the natural pride of his heart, through the power of the Spirit that lives in him, and always to offer to the Lord a heart that is willing to hear and to keep His will.**"

LECTURES ON THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH THE TRUE VISIBLE CHURCH OF GOD ON EARTH by Dr. F. Pieper.²³

FIFTH LECTURE: A CHURCH BODY IS AN ORTHODOX CHURCH IF IT HOLDS FAST TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE CLARITY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.



Above all things, one must **know the languages** in which Holy Scripture lies before us. If you wish to understand Holy Scripture in the original languages, then you must learn, above everything else, the original languages of the Scriptures; and, of course, not in a way where you can translate a passage with difficulty and with the help of a dictionary; but instead **you must learn the languages** so that they become familiar to you. If the original languages do not become familiar to you, **then the Scriptures are not clear to you in the original languages.** But then you should not also accuse the Scriptures of being dark (Ed. obscure), instead, when looking for the blame, you must look at yourself. This applies also to the reading of Holy Scripture in translations.

Many, also Lutheran Christians, in their hearts accuse Holy Scripture of being dark. When they hear the sentence spoken: “Holy Scripture is absolutely clear,” then, although they may agree with this outwardly, yet in their hearts they put a question mark behind the clarity of Scripture. Why is this? The reason for this is: they do not read Holy Scripture diligently. “They are not familiar with the Scriptures,” as Luther says; they read perhaps once a week in Holy Scripture and so Holy Scripture remains unfamiliar and dark to them. One must diligently study the Scriptures. Whoever is a diligent reader of Holy Scripture will also agree with ever greater confidence with the judgement which Holy Scripture passes about itself, namely, that it is a light to our path.

What Luther Teaches on the Clarity of Scripture.

Luther writes further (V, 456ff): “But if anyone of them attacks you and says: You must have the interpretation of the fathers, for Scripture is obscure, you must reply that this is not true. No clearer book has ever been written upon earth than Holy Scripture, which, compared with all other books, is like the sun compared with all other lights. They say this only to lead us away from Scripture and to exalt themselves as masters over us so that we should listen to their dreams. It is indeed a great and atrocious shame and vice perpetrated against Holy Scripture and all Christendom, to say that Scripture is obscure and not so clear that everyone may understand it and teach and prove from it his faith. Note this: Would it not be a great shame for you and me to be called a Christian and yet we would not know what we believed? But if I know what I believe, I know also what is written in Scripture, for Scripture teaches no more than Christ and the Christian faith. Hence if the believer only listens to Scripture, it is so clear and lucid to him that he could say without the glosses of all fathers and teachers: ‘That is true, and that I also believe...’

“It is indeed true that some passages in Scripture are obscure, but they teach nothing else than what in other places is set forth in clear and lucid passages. But then the heretics came and interpreted the obscure passages according to their own opinions, and with them they attacked the clear passages and the foundation of the faith. So the fathers fought against them with the clear passages and with them shed light upon the obscure, thus proving that what is said in the obscure passages is the same as that (said) in the clear...

²³ **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.

“Be fully assured and do not doubt that there is nothing clearer than the sun, that is, Scripture; even if a cloud passes before it, there is nothing else behind it than the same clear sun. If, then, there is an obscure passage in Scripture, do not doubt that behind it is surely the same truth which in another place is (taught) clearly; let him who cannot understand the dark (passages) hold to the clear.” (Exposition of the 37th Psalm [1521], V, 456 ff.; SL V, 334ff.).

The Entire Christian Doctrine is Revealed in Bible Texts which do not Require Interpretation

Regarding the clarity of Scripture we do not reject the work done by the expositors (Ed. commentators). That would be wrong. But the service that the expositors provide for us does not consist in this that they themselves explain Holy Scripture, but instead solely in this that they **show how Holy Scripture explains itself**.

Therefore, the pope hangs on so tenaciously to the position that the Scriptures are a dark book, because he himself wants to interpret the Scriptures, he wants to act the role of Oedipus. If the pope lets go of his fundamental position that Holy Scripture is a dark book, then he would have to resign. Then he would also not be able to build his empire with “tradition”. With the clear Scriptures in their hands Christians would reject all traditions that contradict the Scriptures. Therefore the pope must make the Scriptures dark to Christians, so they do not dare to argue against tradition with the Scriptures. Indeed, even his so-called “infallibility” would be of no help to him, if he were to let the position of the clarity of Holy Scripture stand, because then Christians would also judge him by the Scriptures. Then if he comes with his edicts (decrees) against the Scriptures, the same would happen to him as happened to the god Dagon which fell over when placed beside Israel’s Ark of the Covenant²⁴. No error can stand up beside the clear Scriptures, not even the papacy. That is why it is of the utmost importance for the pope to declare that Scripture is dark. I have already drawn your attention to the group of dark passages where there is no direct association with the doctrines of faith, but instead they contain historical events and chronological details. However, there are also such passages of Holy Scripture which deal with the doctrines of faith and still present difficulties for the expositor. In the face of such, how do the Scriptures remain clear?

As **Luther** explains²⁵ if there are passages of Holy Scripture, which, although they deal with doctrines of faith, are nevertheless dark, then there is contained in these passages nothing else written there than that which lies revealed in the clear passages. The same doctrine which, for example, is revealed in twenty-five places with quite clear words, may perhaps be presented in five places somewhat veiled; and intentionally so, namely, as Augustine says, for the purpose of preventing weariness [Ed. satiety], of encouraging diligent reading of the Scriptures and of continuous reflection on the words of Scripture. One could say: Is that not an arbitrary assumption? Not at all! **This assumption is based on Scripture itself**. Because Holy Scripture calls itself a light, so clear, that also the simple-minded and the foolish can understand it, all doctrines of the Scriptures must be revealed in passages where they present no difficulties for the uneducated and the lesser experienced. That is why Luther characterizes the true and the false teachers thus: The **true teachers** proceed in such a way that they **hold the clear passages against the dark ones**, and in the light which these clear passages shed on the doctrines, they expound the dark passages. The **false teachers** do it the other way round; as much as it is possible **they seek out the darkest passage** of Holy Scripture, put in their own meanings and from there now seek **to pervert the clear passages**. We have an example for this with the Chiliasts. When the Chiliasts wish to prove their Chiliasm, they particularly love to go into the Revelation of St. John, which, according to its whole nature as a book of prophecy, would have to present difficulties with the interpretation. In accordance with the Revelation of St. John they seek then to interpret all of Holy Scripture.

Luther’s position is this, as has been mentioned before: **All** of Christian doctrine is revealed in such passages of the Scriptures which do not require interpretation, that is, texts where obscurities do not need to be removed, but instead can be understood by mere listening and reading. This has already been said by

²⁴ 1 Sam.5:2.ff.

²⁵ In his own words Pieper discusses the previous Luther quote from his exposition of Psalm 37.

Augustine, as well as also by Luther and Chemnitz, and the theologians who came after who had Luther's spirit. In our time the opinion has underhandedly taken hold in the church that the Scriptures must first be "worked on exegetically," before one could obtain the Christian doctrines from them with certainty. In this respect it becomes clearly evident how far one has departed from the Lutheran name, from Luther and the Lutheran Church. They scarcely dare to go near the Scriptures without commentaries. But it is nevertheless obvious that the understanding of the Scriptures **are not determined first of all by the use of commentaries**, but instead by **mere listening and reading**. As it follows from Col. 4:16²⁶ and 1 Thess. 5:27²⁷, the apostolic letters were understood by mere listening and reading. Therefore **Luther** says: "When the believer only listens to the Scriptures, then they are so clear and bright to him that, he without all the glosses (notes) of the fathers and teachers, says: 'That is true; that I also believe.'" All that matters is that **one understands the language of the Scriptures and makes himself familiar with it**. Thereupon **Luther** points out again and again, that, according to its own declaration, Scripture contains "nothing more than Christ". **Christ is the scope and the real content of the whole Scriptures** (Acts 10:43²⁸; 1 Cor. 2:2²⁹). Now since Christ in His Person and in His work of Redemption "is known by clear and plain passages," what does it matter, "if some passages which deal with the same subjects are still dark?"

Reasons Why Scripture Is Dark to Many

Then what is the reason why Scripture is and remains dark to many? To this Luther (Pieper summarises Luther, Ed.) **says:**

1. The knowledge of the language is lacking or also one does not make himself familiar with the language of Scripture. "Otherwise nothing is more easily understood than God's Word." "No clearer book has ever been written upon earth than Holy Scripture." Also we must emphasize this for our time: If people nowadays would read the Scriptures as diligently as they read newspapers and other publications, then they would not accuse the Scriptures of being dark.

2. In the Scriptures one must distinguish between the "that" and the "how". The Scriptures reveal clearly **that** God is Triune, and Christ is God and Man in one Person, that Christ has through His substitutionary work and suffering reconciled us with God, and **that** we have now through faith in Christ righteousness, life and salvation without the works of the Law. But **how** this all happens and **how** it is possible, the Scriptures do not reveal and it is also not necessary for us to know.

3. The false teachers have made the clear passages in the Scriptures dark for themselves and others because they have always mixed the questions in regard to the how into the Scriptures. So the task falls upon the faithful teachers to **leave out** the questions in regard to the how and to **lead Christians back to the Word of Scripture and to keep them there.**

4. In regard to the understanding of Scripture there is also a blindness (delusion) through God's just judgment. He who does not want to believe God in His Word, but instead wants to hold to his own thoughts when faced with God's Word, and therefore wants to instruct God, to him will happen what Christ expressed with the words: "**That seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand**" (Luke 8:10) and: "**I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes**" (Matt. 11:25).

5. Because of their natural condition, all people are blind in regard to the wholesome understanding of the Scriptures. Therefore it is necessary while listening to and reading the Scriptures to pray: "Lord, open my eyes, that I can see the wonders of your Law."

²⁶ Col.4:16, "And when this epistle (letter) is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea."

²⁷ 1 Thes.5:27, "I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren."

²⁸ Acts 10:43, "To Him (Christ) give all the prophets witness that through His name, whosoever believeth in Him, shall receive remission of sins."

²⁹ 1 Cor.2:2, "For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

Luther expresses himself also about this chief point in the following words (XVIII, 2066ff):

“If in some places there is any obscurity in Scripture, it is because of the **words and idiom**, or to express it in Latin or Greek, because of the **grammar**; and it is commonly such an obscurity that does not hinder the recognition of the principal figure and all the fundamentals of Scripture; for what greater, higher, or deeper mystery can there be than Christ? But now since the seal has been opened (Rev. 6:1) and the stone has been rolled back from the grave (Matt. 28:2), and so the greatest mystery has been made manifest, namely, that Christ, the eternal Son of God, is true Man (Heb. 2:14,16), that there is an eternal God in three Persons (1 John 5:7), that Christ died for our sins (Rom. 4:25) and rules forever in heaven (Mark 16:19), as this is taught publicly in the whole world so that even the children hear and know it, what greater or more obscure matter or mystery can there be than Christ? If you take Christ out of Scripture, tell me, what mystery is left? Therefore it is very foolish and unchristian — since it is true that the chief parts [of the Christian faith] and everything a Christian must know, stand in clear and bright light, taught in Scripture in plain language — that because of some passages you would say: ‘There are still great hidden things concealed in them,’ though there can be nothing greater than to know Christ. Even if in some places of Scripture the passages are obscure, they are nevertheless clear in other places. This certainly is the one chief thing or matter, namely, **faith and Christ**, which Scripture teaches all men, here in clear and lucid words and there in obscure and dark expressions. What does it matter if the fundamentals of the whole Bible are set forth in plain language as, for example, in the epistle to the Romans, should some passages, which treat of the same matter, still be obscure?....

“However, if there are some, as the sophists and others, to whom the fundamentals of Scripture and the Word of God are **hidden**, that is not owing to the obscurity of Scripture, but **rather to their own blindness**, namely, that **they are so hardened** that they neither know nor care to know the evident truth, as St. Paul says of the Jews in 2 Cor. 3:15: ‘Even unto this day the veil is upon their heart’; and again in chapter 4:3: ‘If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.’ If indeed in that way and for that reason I must regard Scripture as obscure because I could not understand much of it, then I might also say that the sun is dark, were I to veil my eyes or step out of the light into darkness. But why do these poor, blind people accuse Scripture and the holy, pure Word of God, charging it in their blindness with being obscure?....

“So also the examples amount to nothing by which you secretly wish to stab at — I do not know what — concerning the three Persons of the Godhead (1 John 5:7), the communion of the human and divine natures in Christ (John 1:14), and the sin against the Holy Ghost (Matt. 12:13); of these articles you say that they are still obscure and not yet explained. If by that you mean the vain wrangling of the sophists which they started in connection with these teachings, what cause has the Word of God and the pure Holy Scripture given you that you blame it for the abuse of these wicked sophists? **Scripture certainly is sufficiently clear** when it says that there are three Persons, but one God (1 John 5:7), that Christ is true God and true man (Gal. 4:4; Heb 2:14), and that there is a sin against the Holy Ghost which will not be forgiven (Matt. 12:31; Mark 3:26~29). **There is nothing dark or obscure about that.** But the manner in which all this takes place, Scripture does not describe; nor is it necessary for us to know this.

“With regard to these teachings the sophists have **made known their own dreams according to their own minds**. Blame them, but **Scripture is guiltless**. However, if by your words you mean that these very articles were obscure, you again must not blame Scripture, but the Arians and their fellows, to whom the clear Gospel was hidden so that through the blindness of Satan they could not understand the clear passages concerning the Trinity and the humanity and divinity of Christ.

“But to express it briefly; there is a **two-fold clarity and a two-fold obscurity of Scripture**. The one is **outward**, namely, in Scripture itself as it lies before us. With regard to that **there is nothing obscure or doubtful, but everything is set forth to the whole world, clearly and lucidly, in unmistakable Scripture passages**. The other is the **inward**, in the heart of man, so that he **cannot understand and know the spiritual truths and matters which Scripture teaches** (1 Cor. 2:14). If you speak of this kind of obscurity, there is no man on earth who can understand or perceive even the smallest tittle of Scripture except those

who have the Spirit of God, for regarding these matters all men are by nature and descent blind and have a darkened mind so that, though they may read and speak much of the Scriptures, they do not perceive, know, or recognize anything concerning them, nor do they believe sincerely or truly that there is a God or that they have their body, life, and creation from God, just as Ps. 14:1 says of this congenital blindness: ‘The wicked said in his heart: God is nothing, there is no God’ (Luther’s translation). For indeed without the Holy Spirit no one on earth can know or understand Scripture, not even the least [thing] in Scripture.” (Reply to *Erasmus’ Tract On the Freedom of the Will* [1525], XVIII, 2068—2072, SL XVIII, 1681ff. Dr. J.T. Mueller’s translation taken from Walther **True Visible Church**, pages 58-60)

Rely On Clear Texts of the Bible Not on Man’s Interpretation of It.

When we Lutherans maintain the distinction between orthodox church bodies and sects and say that only the church body which remains in all parts with God’s Word is an orthodox church body and, in comparison, the church body which in the doctrines of faith deviates from God’s Word is to be called a heterodox church, a sect, then also the **objection** is put to us by the **unionistic side**: “Who is to say with such certainty, if a church body has remained with God’s Word or not? It depends on the **interpretation** of the Scriptures.” They do not want to say that the Reformed had no Scriptural basis for their particular doctrines, but by this they want to say: Zwingli and Calvin and their followers **had only interpreted** the Scriptures differently than Luther and his people. Indeed, if we examine more closely this basis of unionism, then we find revealed in it its **chief lie**³⁰: “Actually, a person cannot be exactly sure who stands on Scripture, because it depends not so much on the Scriptures as on the **interpretation** of the Scriptures and this interpretation is naturally different with different people.”

This error that the correct understanding of Scripture does not so much **on Scripture itself** as on the **interpretation** of it is a position that not only the papal church confesses and practises, but it is a position which also governs the whole of modern theology; indeed it is a position which in itself has chiefly an appearance of truth for many a naive Christian.

However, you **must under all circumstances** hold fast to the belief that **absolutely nothing depends on the human interpretation of the Scriptures**. After all – of what matter is it to me finally – since I as a **Christian want to base my faith on God’s Word** how this or that teacher in the church has interpreted God’s Word. Indeed, if it is clearly evident that a teacher offers **his own interpretation** of the Scriptures, then no Christian should believe such an interpreter.

(Delivered on 6 December, 1889.) (To be Continued.)

(Headings and italicised emphasis added. Larger paragraphs have been broken down into shorter ones

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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 40- 43)

The Lord’s Supper-Form of Distribution.

38. Form of Distribution.

(a) The Form of Distribution

- (1) does not belong to the essence of the Sacrament.
- (2) It is a part of Christian Liberty³¹.

³⁰ **πρωτον ψευδος** [**prooton pseudos**]

³¹ Walther **Pastorale** page 183. **Drickamer** (Pages 140-142) translates this as follows:

“As the words of consecration are God’s Words, which constitute the Sacrament, the words of distribution should contain the confession of the church. There is indeed no single distribution formula which alone is

(3) It is to be a confession (of faith)³².

(4) Historical Background.

- (a) At the time of the Apostles: The body of Christ ----- the blood of Christ, the cup of the Life³³.
- (b) In the Sixth Century: the body of our Lord Jesus keep you for eternal life.
- (c) At Luther's time: the same³⁴.

(b) **The Lutheran Form of Distribution:** the true body³⁵. This:

- (1) originated towards the end of the Sixteenth Century³⁶.
- (2) is a confession against the Reformed³⁷.

justified. But any one (formula) is to be **rejected** which **does not contain a confession that Christ's body and blood are here present and are distributed and received;** or which **purposely tries to circumvent any such confession,** such as the distribution formula of the (Prussian) Union Church: 'Take and eat; **Christ says,** 'This is My body,' etc.,' which **leaves it up to everyone to believe what he wants and so makes doubtful the confession at the Lord's Table,** where His death is to be proclaimed.

"With this distribution formula the Unionists make themselves like the Jews who did not want to tolerate the inscription on the cross, 'This is the King of the Jews,' because they did not believe it, and wanted instead, 'He said, 'I am the King of the Jews;'" (Luke 23:38; John 19:19-22).

"But if the Unionists and pseudo-Lutherans raise the objection that it is an addition to God's Word when we Lutherans say, 'This is the true body,' etc., that (objection) is **based on a confusion of the Word of God that constitutes the Supper and the confession of the church in the celebration.**

"It is proper for the preacher to follow the distribution formula that is predominant in the ecclesiastical fellowship to which he belongs. The formula: 'Take and eat; that is the true body of your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, given into death for your sins; may it strengthen and preserve you in the true faith until eternal life. Take and drink, that is the true blood of your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, shed for the forgiveness of your sins; may it strengthen, etc.' has been accepted in several Lutheran church orders **since the end of the Sixteenth Century** (see *Sacramentworte* by Rudelbach (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1837) p. 78)." [emphasis added]. See Dr. Fritz **Pastoral Theology** pages 146,147.

³² Walther **Pastorale** page 183. See above in Footnote 29.

³³ **Der Lutheraner** Vol.2, page 11: "Indeed, we also regard the words of distribution as they are used in the Ev.-Lutheran Church as most appropriate, especially in this age when so many who even call themselves Lutheran deny the essential presence of the body and blood of Christ in the holy Lord's Supper. Further, we also regard our formula as gloriously well selected to arouse and strengthen the faith of communicants at the reception of the blessed elements, yet we would never dream of claiming that just these words of ours are the only ones that can be legitimately used. In the orthodox church a great differentiation is also acknowledged between these matters that are free and others. According to the so-called apostolic constitutions in the first age these simple words were issued: 'The body of Christ – the blood of Christ, the cup of life.'

"Only in the sixth century were the words expanded: 'The body, the blood of our LORD JESUS Christ preserve you (your soul) unto eternal life.' Luther also had a desire to intentionally retain this last formula until 1523, as we observe this in his writing: *Formula Missae* which Luther also affirmed until 1526 in a second writing: *Deutsche Messe*. In the Agenda that Duke Henry of Saxony had published for his territory, these words appear: 'The body of our LORD JESUS Christ, given for you in death, strengthen and preserve you in faith unto life everlasting. Amen. The blood of our dear LORD JESUS Christ, shed for your sins, strengthen and, etc.' The words: "Take and eat – take and drink,' we first find added in the Nuernberg Agenda of Veit Dietrich from the year 1543. But not until the end of the 16th century, so, long after Luther's death, were they dispensed in most Lutheran congregations with the words: 'The true body – the true blood.' This occurred because at that time in the lap of the evangelical Lutheran Church, crypto Calvinists were being uncovered."

³⁴ **Der Lutheraner** Vol. 2, page 11. See Quote in previous Footnote.

³⁵ **Theological Quarterly** 1905, p.126: **Pastor Kuegele** states: "The consecration is performed by reciting the Lord's Prayer and the words of institution over the elements, whereby they are set apart for the Sacramental use, and the words of distribution should always express the fact of the real presence of Christ's body and blood in an unequivocal manner. This is attained by using the word **true:** 'This is the true body; this is the true blood.' This word must not be used in the consecration, but in every Lutheran Church it ought to be used in the distribution, so that every man may know what those who commune at this altar believe of the Sacrament."

³⁶ **Der Lutheraner** Vol.2, page 11. See quote in Footnote 33.

³⁷ **Der Lutheraner** Vol.2, page 11,12: "Further, we bear in mind what instigated the selection of this formula: 'Christ says, etc.' Even an unsuspecting Lutheran should **be on high alert against this.** Of course, this innovation **first**

appeared in a few Reformed and rationalist Church books and had thereby, according to Dr. Marheineke's theory, been received into the new Prussian Agenda, for the sake of its being able to be used by Lutherans as well as the Reformed and thus to bring about a church union along with an ongoing encouragement for diversity in faith. Now **how can a respectable Lutheran in good conscience accept a formula that has been chosen so that by it whatever one personally believed was right could be believed! No Christian anywhere should confess his faith with words intentionally chosen to allow a double meaning: Being two faced at the altar of the LORD must appear utterly heinous and atrocious.** If that stated formula were introduced into a church that otherwise confesses the true presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament, it could only be dismissed as inappropriate, but when it is embraced by a Church in service of **achieving her syncretistic goals**, and chosen as her **shibboleth**, by which the mystery can be believed but also not believed, **then we would have to condemn the formula as a spawn of hypocrisy, that deserves the same punishment, since it attacks the unassailable holiness of the divine truth.**

“The **Formula of Concord**, that important confession of the Lutheran Church, says it is this serious: ‘We believe, teach and confess that **in a time of confession** when the enemies of God's Word desire to obscure the pure doctrine of the holy Evangel (Gospel), – since in that case **we must not surrender** to the opponents nor allow anything, even in such adiaphora, nor allow anything from our opponents that weakens the true worship of God or introduces and affirms idolatry by might or by deceptive persuasion. – For here it no longer has anything to do with adiaphora, whose nature and essence are free, in and of themselves – but rather this is **primarily a matter of the highest article of our Christian faith**, as the apostle witnesses, ‘so that the truth of the Gospel might remain,’ Gal. 2.5” –

“What an injustice Mr. N has done us ... because we find the **Evangelical distribution formula renders the truth of the Words of JESUS dubious**, as this can be observed, for example, in no one less than that strict Lutheran, Dr. Tittmann who has judged it in the same way. This fellow writes: ‘**In this addition (Christ says), in this context**, it has no other sense than if it said: Christ, indeed, says: This is my body, etc, **but you can take it anyway you want.** In this context **these little words can mean what they say or the opposite, which is the only purpose for this addition.** That word added to the very Words of Christ (this is my body, this is my blood) in the administration of the consecrated signs of the Sacrament is at least superfluous, but these words **are more than superfluous.**’ (See how he handles this in his *On the Union of the Evangelical Church*, p. 10).....

“We cannot avoid concluding with a **warning to our dear Lutheran reader.** Should he have one pastor (*Seelsorger*) or another who distributes the holy Lord's Supper with the words: ‘**Christ says:** this is my body, etc.’, then he might **respectfully protest its usage**, as he seriously presents to his preacher the reasons why this distribution formula is **offensive to his conscience.** But if the preacher reveals in this protest that he **harbours a Zwinglian or Calvinistic faith**, or far worse, **unbelief, or that he uses that formula so that Lutherans as well as the Reformed minded are able to commune with him, then he must avoid the LORD's Supper of that minister of the church, even if he might then have to do without the Sacrament for the rest of his life.** For with that kind of communion he would not strengthen his faith, but rather, much rather, **shamefully deny it and thereby lose it.** He would also thereby **forsake the Lutheran church, his mother church, for the Sacraments are the seals of her faith in which churchly fellowship he therefore receives the same, whose doctrine is confessed.**

“This is not our advice, but **Luther's**, who writes this: ‘Whoever knows that his pastor (*Seelsorger*) **publicly teaches as a Zwinglian, must shun him, and must rather do without the Sacrament, and should rather die or suffer anything than to receive it from him.** But if his pastor is **duplicitous**, whose mouth claims that the body and blood of Christ are present in the Sacrament, and yet **renders doubt** as to what he's peddling, and intends something other than what the words say, then go to him or send for him and let him clearly explain to you what it is that he is distributing with his hands and that you are receiving with your mouth, regardless of what is believed or not believed in the heart, plainly asking what is there held in the hand and placed into the mouth. If he is an **honest enthusiast** (*Schwaermer*), who wants to deal forthrightly with you, **he will tell you he is merely distributing bread and wine** to you by which you should think about and believe in the body and blood of Christ, etc. But if he's a **story teller** playing in the basement, he'll mumble something and swish it around in his mouth and so slaver (slobber, drool): Oh, you only have to believe in the body that Christ had in mind. He calls that answer good enough and giving the hope that is in us, as St. Peter teaches in 1 Pet. 3.17.

“– ‘Yet what must this horrible play acting be? Here they want to teach the people and tell them nothing but rather guide them into a dark hole and say: Believe what Christ has in mind. **But they don't want to tell you what Christ had in mind.**’ (L. Works. XVII. 2440) Here Luther portrays them in real life, as they also now say: ‘We are going back to the clear passages of Scripture and remain with them,’ while they refuse to explain them.”

Note: In Saxony they had again erased the word “true” in order not to offend the feelings of those who thought otherwise.

Objection: The words “the true body” are falsifying Scripture.

Answer:

(1) It is only another way of expressing what Christ said.

(2) We leave the Words of Institution unfalsified in the Bible.

(3) In the distribution we do not use the Words of Institution, but **our** Confession (This is based on a confusion between the Word (of God that constitutes the Supper) and the confession (of the church in the celebration).)³⁸.

(4) If our form of distribution is unbiblical because of the word “true,” then also the United³⁹ are unbiblical because of the addition: “Christ says.”⁴⁰

(c) The United Form of Distribution: They add, “Christ says.”

(1) Historically:

(a) The same (form of distribution) already appeared in some of Zwingli’s Agendas⁴¹.

Note: For this reason Melancthon offered the hand (of fellowship to him).

(b) It was taken up by the Rationalists.

(c) It became a part of the Prussian Agenda (Order of Service)⁴².

(d) It was in the Pennsylvania Agenda, 1818⁴³.

Note: The first edition, 1786, was Lutheran.

(2) (They claimed) the meaning is the same: Christ indeed said that, but you could now take (interpret) it as you wanted⁴⁴.

Note (a): Here the confession of everyone has disappeared.

Note (b): The United act like the Jews (at the time of Christ): That He said, He is the King of the Jews⁴⁵.

Note (c): This form of distribution *in itself and absolutely* is not **to be rejected**, but the circumstances are to be considered among whom it is being introduced⁴⁶. It is certainly to be rejected as wrong:

(a) when it is used in a church body which denies the real presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper and therefore has a double meaning⁴⁷.

(b) It is now the Shibboleth⁴⁸ of the Reformed Church. Confessional Ceremony.

³⁸ Walther **Pastorale** page 183. See above in Footnote 31.

³⁹ Prussian Union Church.

⁴⁰ **Der Lutheraner** Vol.2, page 11. See Footnote 33.

⁴¹ Here it refers to a form of Order of Service for the Lord’s Supper.

⁴² **Der Lutheraner** Vol.2, page 11. See Footnote 37.

⁴³ **Der Lutheraner** Vol.1, page 47; Vol.2, p. 81.

⁴⁴ Walther **Pastorale** page 183. Footnote.

Der Lutheraner Vol.2, page 12. See Footnote 37.

⁴⁵ Walther **Pastorale** page 183. See above in Footnote 27.

Der Lutheraner Vol.1, page 36.

⁴⁶ **Der Lutheraner** Vol.2, pages 11,12 (See Footnote 37); Vol.1, page 36; Vol.3, Page 9.

⁴⁷ If the church body as such denies the doctrine of the real presence, then using the formula, Christ said, “This is My body, etc.,” can only convey the Reformed interpretation of it, namely: Christ said, “This is My body, “ but what He meant, as we (the Reformed) understand it, is “This represents My body.”

⁴⁸ This is a word frequently used by our Lutheran fathers. The term originates from the [Hebrew](#) word *shibbólet* (שִׁבְּלֵת), which literally means the part of a plant containing grains, such as an [ear of corn](#) or a stalk of [grain](#) or, in different contexts, "stream, torrent". The modern usage derives from an account in the [Hebrew Bible](#), in which pronunciation of this word was used to distinguish [Ephraimites](#), whose [dialect](#) lacked an “sh” sound (as in [shoe](#)), from [Gileadites](#) whose dialect did include such a sound.

In the [Book of Judges](#), chapter 12, after the inhabitants of [Gilead](#) inflicted a military defeat upon the tribe of [Ephraim](#), the surviving Ephraimites tried to cross the Jordan River back into their home territory and the Gileadites secured the

Note (a): Therefore congregational members are:

(i) to protest against such a form of distribution⁴⁹.

(ii) not to go to the Lord's Supper where such a form of distribution is used⁵⁰.

Note (b): Pastors are not to use Agendas (Orders of service) with such forms of distribution⁵¹.

Note (c): A rationalistic form of distribution is found in **Der Lutheraner** Vol.81, page54.

The Celebration of the Lord's Supper

39. The Celebration of the Lord's Supper⁵². Ceremonies. From the earliest time in the Lutheran Church the ceremony of the Lord's Supper has been essentially the same as we celebrate it still today. Parts of this are:

(a) The Preface⁵³.

(b) The "Holy."⁵⁴

(c) The Admonition.

river's fords to stop them. In order to identify and kill these refugees, the Gileadites put each refugee to a simple test as this is explained by Kretzmann:

"5. And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites, the fords which led to the country of Ephraim; and it was so, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped, who had not been killed in battle, said, 'Let me go over,' that the men of Gilead said unto him, 'Art thou an Ephraimite?' For they did not want to slay any innocent persons. **If he said, 'Nay'; v. 6. then said they unto him, 'Say now *shibboleth*' (stream, flood); and he said '*Sibboleth*'; for he could not frame (was not able) to pronounce it right.** It was a difference in dialect, and the Ephraimites simply could not get the sound right; their pronunciation betrayed them. **Then they took him, every Ephraimite who was thus exposed, and slew him at the passages of Jordan; and there fell at that time, in the entire campaign, of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand.** Thus the rebellious arrogance of Ephraim was punished." They could not pronounce the Hebrew letter "Shin," and said, "*Sibboleth*" instead of "*Shibboleth*."

It has become a word or phrase that is used to distinguish members of a group from outsiders. During the [Battle of the Bulge](#), American soldiers used knowledge of [baseball](#) to determine if others were fellow Americans or if they were German [infiltrators](#) in American uniforms. During [World War II](#), some United States soldiers in the Pacific theater used the word [lollapalooza](#) as a shibboleth to [challenge](#) unidentified persons, on the premise that Japanese people [often pronounce the letter L as R](#) or confuse Rs with Ls.

In orthodox Lutheran theology it is used as a distinguishing mark to identify truth from error.

Dr. F. Pieper points this out: "The Arians (denied that Jesus was true God, BLW) **played a double game:** In their own schools they perverted Scriptures by adding false comments, but before the emperor and the Council they would quote these passages without any comment. Therefore it became necessary to summarize the teaching of Scripture **in one watchword and to ask the Arians whether they accepted Christ *homoousios*** (that according to His divine nature Jesus is of the same essence of the Godhead, BLW) **as the Scriptures so plainly teach in many instances.** It is the same as when the Pelagians wanted to drive us into a corner because we employed the term 'original sin' or 'Adam's malady,' since these terms do not occur in Scripture. **But Scripture mightily teaches what these terms designate** when it says that we were conceived in sin (Ps. 51:5), are by nature the children of wrath (Eph. 2:3), and are all sinners by one man's transgression (Rom. 5:12)." (St. L. XVI:2211 f.)." (Dogmatics, I, 427; emphasis added).

Again **Dr. F. Pieper** states: "Because we are justified by grace, for Christ's sake, through the Gospel, therefore we **are justified by faith alone, to the exclusion of works.** And **this is the sole purpose of the Lutheran shibboleth *sola fide*: to bring out the truth that faith alone is the medium of receiving (*medium ληπτικόν*) justification, that our works are excluded as the means of acquiring justification.** The *sola fide* re-echoes the words of Scripture: 'By faith—not by works' (Rom. 3:28); 'not ... by the works of the Law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ' (Gal. 2:16). Its purpose is, as the Formula of Concord has it, to exclude, as the means or instrument (*medium et instrumentum*) of justification, anything about or within man, whether it precedes faith, such as contrition, or follows after it, such as sanctification." (Dogmatics, II, 532; emphasis added).

⁴⁹ **Der Lutheraner** Vol.2, page 12. See Footnote 37.

⁵⁰ They are in duty bound according to Mat.7:15; Rom 16:17; Titus 3:10,11, after instruction, warning against this error to sever fellowship with such congregations or church bodies who persist in this dangerous error.

⁵¹ **Der Lutheraner** Vol.5, page 17; Vol.2, page 82; Vol.4, page 137.

⁵² **Der Lutheraner** Vol.5, page 156,165.

⁵³ For Australian readers see the old Church Liturgy for the former ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia) which the ELCR still uses see pages 19-21 beginning: "The Lord be with you!"

⁵⁴ See old ELCA Church Liturgy pages 21-23

- (d) The Lord's Prayer.
- (e) The Words of Institution.
- (f) Christ, Thou Lamb of God.
- (g) The Distribution.
- (h) The Lord's Supper Hymn.
- (i) The Giving of Thanks.

Note (a): Before the Reformation the distribution of the Lord's Supper followed the Words of Institution.

Note (b): It does not matter whether the liturgy is sung or spoken, as long as it is done clearly and distinctly⁵⁵.

Note (c): One is not to change the standard usage unnecessarily and without the approval of the congregation, since the pastor is only the servant of the congregation⁵⁶.

Note (d): **Ceremonies** are

- (i) the sign of the cross.
- (ii) the holding up of the consecrated elements at Luther's time whereby the congregation bow⁵⁷.
- (iii) the laying of the hands on the container⁵⁸ of wafers and the cup⁵⁹.
- (iv) Genuflecting⁶⁰.

10. Different Kinds of Suggestions.

(a) For the Congregation.

- (1) The communicants should sit together.
- (2) The congregation should not leave the church before the Lord's Supper (and the church service has ended)⁶¹.
- (3) In cities early Communion can be introduced for those who are not able to attend the entire worship service⁶².
- (4) Where necessary an English celebration of the Lord's Supper should be provided for.
- (5) It is a good custom if the men first come forward to the altar, then the women⁶³.

(b) For the Pastor.

⁵⁵ Walther **Pastorale** page 185.

⁵⁶ Walther **Pastorale** page 185.

Theological Quarterly 1905, p.126: **Pastor Kuegele** states: "As to forms and ceremonies, the pastor should accommodate himself to the usages of the congregation by which he is called. A pastor should, of course, aim to introduce or to preserve approved Lutheran forms and ceremonies, but so to insist on the changing of usages as to cause disturbances and commotions in the church would not be in harmony with Article VII of the *Augsburg Confession*."

⁵⁷ **Der Lutheraner** Vol.5, page 106.

Walther **Pastorale** pages 54,55.

⁵⁸ It is called in our church the [paten](#) (a small plate).

⁵⁹ Walther **Pastorale** page 184.

⁶⁰ **Genuflection** (or **genuflexion**), bending at least one knee to the ground, was from early times a gesture of deep respect for a superior. The gesture is **mostly restricted to Catholic religious practices**. Genuflection, typically on one knee, still plays a part in Roman Catholic religious practices, as well as those of the [Eastern Orthodox church](#) and parts of the [Anglican Church](#) and other churches; it is different from kneeling in prayer. In the Catholic mass the communicant genuflects when arriving or passing in front of the altar at the communion rail. Its meaning is as follows: "According to the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 'A genuflection, made by bending the right knee to the ground, **signifies adoration**, and therefore it is reserved for the Most **Blessed Sacrament**, as well as for the Holy Cross from the solemn adoration during the liturgical celebration on Good Friday until the beginning of the Easter Vigil' (274)."

⁶¹ Walther **Pastorale** page 188.

⁶² Walther **Pastorale** page 189.

⁶³ Walther **Pastorale** page 187. Dr. Fritz **Pastoral Theology**, page 148, "In many churches it is customary that the men receive the Sacrament first and then the women; in other churches men and women come promiscuously (here meant: in a mixed or indiscriminate manner, BLW) to the altar."

- (1) The entire celebration, consecration and distribution are not to take place frivolously, but with dignity⁶⁴.
- (2) When distributing the wine, the pastor can turn the cup so that each person touches it at a different place⁶⁵.
- (3) If a wafer falls to the floor, it is not to be used, but place it on the altar⁶⁶.
- (4) One is to refrain from drinking the last remaining drop of wine⁶⁷.
- (5) The Communion vessels are to be kept clean.

41. Use of the Individual Cup. In order to avoid the danger of the spread of infection in many churches the individual cup has been introduced. Others make use of small Communion containers⁶⁸, or they want to do away with the individual cup completely⁶⁹.

Note (a): Also an arrangement by which the cup is antiseptically cleansed during the use has been discovered⁷⁰.

Note (b): We remain with Christ's method who there says: "Drink ye all of it,"

- (1) because such a case of infection has never yet been observed.
- (2) because Christian fellowship and communion are expressed also outwardly by drinking from the one cup.

42. Administrator.

(a) The Lord's Supper is to be administered by the called servant of the congregation.

Note: Can a pastor give the Lord's Supper to himself?⁷¹

- (1) It is never to occur in private⁷².

⁶⁴ **Theological Quarterly** 1905, p.125: **Pastor Kuegele**: "The administration in all its parts should be performed by the pastor with the utmost solemnity. The celebration of the Lord's Testament is a solemn act, and the pastor's behaviour should show that he realizes this fully. There is nothing more offensive in the church than administering this Sacrament in a perfunctory (done in a mere routine, indifferent manner, without care or sincerity), careless and easy-going manner. If churchly decorum is to be observed by the pastor in all things, then certainly in the administration of this sacred Supper."

⁶⁵ Walther **Pastorale** page 186. See Dr. Fritz **Pastoral Theology** page 149.

⁶⁶ Walther **Pastorale** page 185. See Dr. Fritz **Pastoral Theology** page 148, "If a wafer falls to the ground, it should be picked up, but not used."

⁶⁷ Walther **Pastorale** page 189, 190. Dr. Fritz **Pastoral Theology** page 149 states: "Unused wine from the chalice of the Communion table should be poured away; it is not a good practice that the janitor or some church official drink what is left; least of all should the pastor do this."

⁶⁸ Tubes (lit. translation)

⁶⁹ See Dr. Fritz **Pastoral Theology** page 149 regarding a discussion on the use of the individual Communion cup. He states: "There is no dogmatical reason why the individual Communion cup should not be used. In many churches two cups are used, why not more? But there is also no good reason why the old practice of using the common Communion cup should be discontinued."

⁷⁰ Dr. Fritz **Pastoral Theology** page 149, states: "Sanitary reasons do not absolutely forbid it (the use of the common cup, BLW). The danger of infection is very remote. **The pastor should see to it that all vessels used at the Communion table are kept scrupulously clean.** When administering the wine, the pastor should turn the cup, so that the lips of no two communicants touch it at the same place, and therefore not too many communicants ought to be permitted to come to the altar at one time. **After each round of wine, the pastor should, with a clean white cloth (purificator) wipe the rim of the cup carefully.** People who have a diseased mouth, a cancer on the face, a boil, or the like, should be asked by the pastor to receive Communion privately." (emphasis added).

⁷¹ Walther **Pastorale** pages 198-200. See Drickamer's Translation page 151.

Dr. Fritz **Pastoral Theology** page 146, "Rather than to give Communion to himself (which he might legitimately do; of course only in the regular church service and not privately), the pastor should ask the congregation to request a layman (a member of the church council [e.g. an elder, BLW]) to administer the Sacrament to him."

⁷² **Triglotta** p.465: "But if any one should advance the pretext that as **an act of devotion** he wishes to administer the Sacrament, or Communion, **to himself**, he is not in earnest [he would commit a great mistake, and would not be speaking seriously and sincerely]. **For if he wishes to commune in sincerity, the surest and best way for him is in the Sacrament administered according to Christ's institution. But that one administer communion to himself is a human notion, uncertain, unnecessary, yea, even prohibited.** And he does not know what he is doing, because without the Word of God he obeys a false human opinion and invention. So, too, it is not right (even though the matter

- (2) It can occur publicly before the congregation, perhaps in a case of necessity.
 (3) It is always better if the pastor allows the Sacrament to be given to him by someone else⁷³

were otherwise correct) for one to use the common Sacrament of [belonging to] the Church **according to his own private devotion**, and without God's Word and apart from the communion of the Church to trifle therewith." (emphasis added).

⁷³ See Footnote 67. **Dr. Pieper's** classroom remark is a good solution: "The congregation may appoint a congregational member, perhaps an elder, for the purpose of giving the Lord's Supper to the pastor." (CTM, Vol.14, 732-733). Dr. Kretzmann (CTM, Vol.11, p.612) says the same.

PETER ANTON WIDVEY discusses this in an essay which was originally published (in Norwegian) in *Teologisk Tidsskrift* (April 1905)[English translation prepared by Nils Oesleby]: "It is not surprising that in our day the question has arisen as to the benefit of the **pastor's self-communion**, for it is a common complaint within the entire Lutheran Church, also within our synod, that the Sacrament of the Altar is neglected to a disquieting degree. But what avails this complaint, when among other things the pastor is cut off from the opportunity to set a good example for his congregation by participating with them in the reception of the Holy Supper? The power of example is certainly greater here than many will admit.

When the pastor proclaims to his hearers God's way of salvation, when in the Aaronitic benediction he absolves the congregation, then he himself can also be along, then he can serve himself at the same time that he serves his congregation. But when the climax is reached in the divine service, when the congregation is to enter the holy of holies to receive that food and drink which gives the tired, languid, and dejected soul the right strength and refreshment, then, yes then, he is like one who does not belong with the communing congregation.

It is of course true that we pastors can **turn to our neighbor pastors or we can partake of the Lord's Supper at our pastoral conferences, circuit meetings and synod conventions**. But thereby we hardly become completely what we should be for our own congregations. With reference to this we may read in the **Brandenburg-Nurenburg Agenda of 1535**: "The servants of the church shall also accustom themselves, as has been the custom in the time of the apostles and everywhere in the churches, that they communicate also, and do this as a good example for the churches and congregations. [A. L. Richter, *Die ev Kirckenordn. des 16en Jarh.* I, p. 208.]

Now if that restraining band, which, by the prohibition of the ritual, is laid upon pastors and congregations can no longer be said to be for the benefit and edification of God's kingdom -- whatever it may have been in the church of our fathers -- then it ought to be possible to remove the prohibition and to go back to the old paths -- or, if it be found serviceable, to substitute something better. Concerning all such changes the Epitome of the Formula of Concord says, "We believe, teach and confess that the congregation of God of every place and every time has the power, according to its circumstances, to change such ceremonies in such manner as may be most useful and edifying to the congregation of God. Nevertheless, that herein all frivolity and offense should be avoided, and especial care should be taken to exercise forbearance towards the weak in faith" (Epitome X, 2,3. Compare also SD X, 9). It is probably with reference to this that **Dr. [C. F. W.] Walther** in his *Pastorale* says with reference to the self-communion of pastors, "*The congregation shall naturally always be given prior instruction as to the **lawfulness of self-communion**, that thereby offence may be warded off*" (p. 198). When the lawfulness of the pastor's self-communion with the congregation is sufficiently announced, then the offense is warded off. **But "the lawfulness of self-communion" is not based upon any express command given in God's Word, but is based upon this, that no prohibition is given in God's word against the self-communion of pastors and that in the church's practice in the first 1600 years of its existence, the right to communicate has never been taken from the liturgist.**

The following testimonies should come into consideration in dealing with this matter:

- 1) Christ has himself commanded all his disciples to receive the sacrament and **has given no prohibition with respect to the one who administers** the service of consecration, and who distributes the holy gifts, not as though from his own hand, but **as from the hand of Christ, and therefore the liturgist also has the right to be along.**
- 2) The apostles have not given any prohibition that the "servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" should be cut off from serving themselves with the gospel and the sacrament of the altar, and thus the "servants of Christ" must have the right to be along. [In his *Examen* **David Hollaz** (d. 1713) says, "Just as the servant of God's word can and ought to comfort himself with the divine word, **so also there is nothing to hinder that he strengthen himself by receiving the sacrament which he himself distributes.**"]
- 3) If we consider **St. Paul's own method** of procedure in Troas, Acts 20:11, where we read that he "had broken bread, and eaten," and that the congregation "came together to break bread," v. 7, then **it appears most clearly not only that there is nothing in God's word which forbids the self-communion of pastors with the congregation (cf. Acts 2:42-46) but the lawfulness of being along is also confirmed by the example of St. Paul.**
- 4) When furthermore, the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 not only rebukes the Corinthian congregation for the misuse, but also arranges for the correct use of the sacrament of the altar, he says, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." And **so neither here is the liturgist forbidden to be partaker, when he fulfills the conditions for a worthy participation.** And so, when
- 5) The apostle Paul adds to his written orders these words (1 Corinthians 11:34), "the rest I will set in order when I come," then we have the right among other things to conclude that the essentials, which lie at the bottom of the oldest churchly liturgies, have their origin with the apostles; for "God is a God of order." To these testimonies from the **Scripture** can be added,
- 6) The testimony from the **church's oldest times**. In the **liturgy of St. James** we read, "The pastor says this prayer before he himself communicates: Lord our God, heavenly bread, the life of all things, I have sinned against heaven and against thee, and am

not worthy to take thy pure mysteries, but make me, merciful God, worthy, without falling into thy condemnation, to receive thy holy body and thy precious blood for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.”

In the liturgy of St. Mark we read: “The pastor says: The Lord be with you all! The answer: And with thy spirit! The pastor says: May He bless it! Thereupon the pastor communicates during an audible prayer or Psalm 42: ‘As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.’ etc. And when the pastor begins the distribution, he says: “This is the holy body -- the blood of our Lord and God and Saviour.”

In the Liturgy of Clement (from the end of the second century) we read, “Thereafter shall the bishop also partake of the Lord’s Supper.”

According to the liturgy of Chrysostom, (from the end of the fourth century) the pastor takes a piece of the holy bread and says: “The precious and holy body of our Lord God and Savior is given to me for the forgiveness of sins and an eternal life.” While he drinks three times of the cup, he says, “The precious and holy blood of our Lord and Savior is given to me for the forgiveness of sins.”

In the *First Apology of Justin Martyr (written about the year 139 A.D.)* we read: “The apostles had in their records, known as gospels, delivered to us the command which Jesus...gave them, namely that he took bread, gave thanks and said, ‘This do in remembrance of me!’ and likewise took the cup, and gave thanks and said: ‘this is my blood!’ whereupon he let them -- only them -- partake of the supper. As soon as we have finished the prayers, then there is brought forward bread, wine and water. The leader sends up prayer and thanksgiving. ... Then comes the distribution of the gifts which have been dedicated by thanksgiving, and each one partakes of them” (*First Apology* 65-67). [Concerning the mixing of wine and water, which the oldest church as well as the later used at the Lord’s Supper, Luther says: “It suits me better, to have wine alone used without any mixture with water, for the meaning of such a mixture seems to me an evil thing, for Isaiah 1:22 says Thy wine is mixed with water; for pure wine signifies the pure, unadulterated doctrine of the Gospel.” Luther’s Works W (Old Walch), X, 2757. “Wie es bey Ausspendung des h. Abendmahls zugehen sole.” WA Br 3, 195-197; *Luther’s Works*, American edition, 49, 57-59.] See also The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, X[3] for what Cyril says concerning the Lord’s Supper).

7) That also the oldest Lutheran church joins itself to the old church is shown, apart from what is previously adduced, by the following testimony:

In *Formula missae* of 1523, **Luther** says: “Thereupon he distributes the sacrament both to himself and to the people, while the Agnus Dei is being sung. -- A Bishop or pastor is also free to choose the order in which he will receive or distribute both elements. For he can bless both, bread and wine at the same time, **before he partakes of the bread**, or between the blessing of bread and wine, he may partake and give to others as much as they desire of the bread; thereafter also bless the wine, and likewise give all to drink” (Richter I, 4, Luther’s Works X, 2760,2761) [See note 3].....

Likewise it plainly appears from Luther’s two letters to Simon Wolferinus in Eisleben in 1543, that it was **customary at each celebration of the Lord’s Supper for the officiating pastor also to communicate**, for he says, “You can, like the rest of us always do, drink up and eat up with the communicants what is left of the sacrament.” “The ceremony lasts until the communion is finished, the cup entirely drunk up and the bread eaten up” (Luther’s Works XX, 2010,2013 [WA Br X, 348 f.]). Although Luther later on, namely, January 11, 1546, at the end of a letter to Nicolaus Amsdorf, says concerning bread and wine, that “apart from the real use there is no sacrament, just as the baptismal water, apart from the use, is no baptism” (Luther’s Works XXI, 1561), yet no one from these words can force the conclusion that Luther in his last days departed in the least from his earlier teaching concerning the pastor’s self-communion with the congregation. So far the testimony from our old fathers, in whose steps we surely ought to walk.

Seemingly, but **only seemingly**, the above quoted testimony of Luther seems to be contradicted by what Luther says in the second part of the Smalcald Articles [II, 2,8], where we read: “But if any one should advance the pretext that as an act of devotion he wishes to administer the Sacrament, or Communion to himself, he is not in earnest. For if he wishes to commune in sincerity, the surest and best way for him is in the Sacrament administered according to Christ’s institution. But that one administer communion to himself is a human notion, uncertain, unnecessary, yea, even prohibited. And he does not know what he is doing, because without the Word of God he is obeying a false human opinion and invention. So, too, it is not right (even though the matter were otherwise correct) **for one to use the common Sacrament of the Church according to his own private devotion**, and without God’s Word and apart from the communion of the church to trifle therewith.”

It certainly ought to be clear that **Luther does not here have in mind the pastor’s self-communion with the congregation**, but on the contrary **only the pastor’s reprehensible or wrongful self-communion excluding the congregation in the so-called “Private Mass” or “Sacrificial Mass.”** It is this which is forbidden in the Smalcald Articles, because it is “trifling” which is done “without God’s word and apart from the communion of the church.” The testimony of Luther, given above, deals on the other hand with the self-communion of the pastors together with the congregation, and therefore with the use of God’s word within the fellowship of the church, and this use is not only permitted, but much rather is regarded as self-evident. And if we compare Article 2 of the Smalcald Articles of 1537 with Luther’s letter to Lauterbach in 1539, we will be convinced of the most complete unanimity between these two. According to Luther’s opinion, there must be at least two, so that there shall be “communion,” and only then can the “sacrament be distributed according to the institution of Christ; let this be noted. (See also the citation of J. B. Carpzov in Walther’s *Pastorale*)

In our confessional writings no direct mention is made of the self-communion of the pastor with the congregation. It was not necessary. Yet our glorious fathers were farsighted enough to make an indirect acknowledgment of it. In Augsburg Confession XXIV, this fact is mentioned, “The Mass with us had the example of the church, taken from the Scripture and the Fathers,” and therefore, “We are confident that it cannot be disapproved, especially since public ceremonies for the most part like those hitherto in use, are retained.”

(b) The Lord's Supper administered by a *lay man* would be just as valid (*rata*) as an emergency Baptism.

Note: As a spiritual priest every Christian possesses the entire Office of the Keys⁷⁴.

(c) Nevertheless since:

(1) the Lord's Supper presupposes the (work of a) **Seelsorge** (Caretaker or Shepherd of Souls or Pastor, BLW) for which everyone is not suitable, and

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The Self-Communion of the Clergyman (From "Sumptio," *Kirchliches Handlexikon* (Leipzig: Verlag von Justus Naumann, 1900), Vol. VI, pp. 488-89; quoted in *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 65, No. 3 [July 1968], pp. 199-200, 188, 200.)

It is still necessary to touch upon a question which recently has come in for much discussion in the Lutheran church, the question of the so-called **self-communion of the clergyman**, i.e., whether the clergyman distributing the Sacrament, in the event that no other clergyman is present who might give it to him, **is authorized to give it to himself** (*se ipsum communicare*). From the earliest days the custom prevailed **without being questioned** that the **officiating clergyman as a rule communed along, and in this way that under the circumstances referred to above he received the Sacrament from himself**. With the appearance of the custom in the Roman Catholic Church of the Middle Ages that the priest celebrated **private mass** (*Winkelmesse*) this led to the abuse that the officiating clergyman was the only communicant, and the false interpretation that in the reception of the Sacrament he in his person was representing the congregation.

At first the Lutheran Reformation **raised no objections to the self-communion of the clergyman** in connection with the communing of the congregation. **Luther** in the *Formula missae* of the year 1523 expressly says: *Deinde communicet tum sese tum populum*. Cf. CA XXIV, 34: "Now since the mass is not a sacrifice for others, living or dead, to take away their sins, but is to be a communion in which the priest and others receive the Sacrament for themselves, this manner is observed among us that on festivals and otherwise, if there are communicants present, mass is celebrated and some who have the desire are communed." A number of Lutheran church constitutions (*Kirchenordnungen*) of the 16th century have in part allowed, in part even called for self-communion. But at first opposition to the abuse of the private mass caused Luther to have second thoughts which were unfavorable to self-communion: "It is a confusion of offices if one communes himself, just as if one were to baptize himself." Compare also Art. Sm. Part II, Art. II, 8. Furthermore at least instinctively the opposition to the Reformed trend helped along. For in Reformed churches the participation of the ministrant in the meal of the congregation was specifically ordered, and that in this way that he, as he gives the chalice and the paten to another of the communicants, in turn for his part receives it from one of them. Here too the above mentioned conception of the Sacrament found expression, one which contradicts the *dosis* in the Lutheran sense. Over against this most of the Lutheran church constitutions quietly abolished the self-communion of the clergy and in part expressly forbade it (so, as the first one, Bugenhagen's church constitution for the city of Goslar, 1531: "No one shall administer or give the Sacrament to himself"), so that even in the course of the 16th century this custom gradually disappeared and especially since the middle of the 17th century only appears as an exception which was hardly tolerated.

The main reason for this strange phenomenon that the Lutheran church dropped such a venerable and common custom is expressed in an opinion of the theological faculty of Wittenberg of 1612, that for the Lord's Supper both *dosis* and *lepsis* are requisite. (cf. **Joh. Gerhard**: "Since two people are needed for the Lord's Supper, one who distributes and one who receives, the clergyman would act more correctly and more in accordance with Christ's institution if he were to receive the Sacrament from another and not from himself."). Still the fact has never been overlooked in the Lutheran church that the liturgical *dosis* **in itself is an adiaphoron**, and very prominent theologians like **Chemnitz, Gerhard, and Hunnius** have **asserted that the self-communion of the clergyman is permissible at least in an emergency**, with the argument that the clergyman even when receiving the Sacrament for himself is still functioning as collative organ of God.

Recently, especially in the 1850s, since receiving the Sacrament has again come to be appreciated more, the demand has been raised in the clergy that self-communion be permitted either as a general practice or at least under certain conditions. For it is evident that the prohibition of self-communion has made a more frequent reception of the Sacrament impossible for the great majority of the clergy, and with it the possibility has been removed by one's own example to encourage the congregation.

The obstacle to granting the request seems to be that the reception of the Sacrament is attached to the confession and absolution which precede. The objection was raised that this prerequisite is not absolutely necessary, that the clergyman may include himself in the general absolution, furthermore that he might still as before let another clergyman grant him absolution and the Sacrament. If nevertheless ecclesiastical authorities in the main have resisted the demand, the decisive factor seems to have been consideration for the congregation, for whom the self-communion of the clergy must appear to be offensive and contradictory.

[From [Lutheran Theology Web Site Home Page](#)].

⁷⁴ Walther **Pastorale** pages 176-180.

(2) **no such emergency** occurs as in Baptism, since a person (who has faith in Christ) can die without the Lord's Supper and be saved, and it is not the lack of, but only the despisal of the Sacrament which damns, then no lay person should administer the Lord's Supper⁷⁵.

Note (a): **Emergency cases** where a lay man could perhaps give the Lord's Supper would be if there was no pastor (perhaps in a desert) and where a person was in deep affliction or dying and strongly desired the Lord's Supper (and there was no pastor available, BLW)⁷⁶.

Note (b): In such a case even a student (of theology) can give the Lord's Supper (provided that he has been authorised by the congregation to do so, BLW).

Note (c): If a lay man is called by the congregation to administer the Sacrament, then he acts as a servant of the congregation⁷⁷.

43. The Lord's Supper is to be administered publicly and corporately⁷⁸, because

(a) Christ and the Apostles did it that way.

(b) The Lord's Supper is a public confession proclaiming the Lord's death (1 Cor.11:26), but a proclamation does not happen in a corner⁷⁹.

(c) It is a bond of fellowship. See Communion. 1 Cor.10:17: one body.

Note (a): The place for the celebration (of the Lord's Supper) is therefore the Church, the public worship service of Christians.

Note (b): It is just in the celebration of the Lord's Supper that the chief part of the worship service finds its culmination.

Note (c): If one wanted also to administer the Lord's Supper privately in homes, then

(i) division would easily arise⁸⁰.

(ii) everyone might soon have it so.

Note (d): Emergency cases, where exceptions are permitted, are

⁷⁵ Walther **Pastorale** pages 175.

⁷⁶ Walther **Pastorale** pages 178-180.

⁷⁷ Walther **Pastorale** pages 180-181.

⁷⁸ Walther **Pastorale** pages 175,188.

Der Lutheraner Vol.4, p.46.

⁷⁹ Walther **Pastorale** page 175.

Walther **Epistle Sermons**, p.175. (English pages 181-182): "If the apostle demands that all communicants '**show**' **the Lord's death** when they go to Communion, it is plain he demands that, although they celebrate Communion mainly for their own sakes, **they do so also for the sake of their neighbour, their brethren and the world**; thus they are to preach and strongly recommend the reconciling death of the Lord. **The altar at which the Holy Supper is celebrated should, as it were, be the chancel of the laity to announce the praises of Him** who has called them out of darkness into His marvellous light....

"Therefore, how gladly we should be to be diligent in going to Holy Communion! Now this very age of unbelief should drive us to come to the Lord's Table often, **preach the Lord's death not only to our brethren but also to the unbelieving world, and let them know that the Church of the Crucified has not yet disappeared, nor died out, nor gone under**, but that there still are those who believe in Him, find their salvation in Him, and love Him as their highest good!

"When the apostle writes in our text (1 Cor.11:26): '**As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come**,' when he calls partaking of Communion **a common act of faith and an actual common confession of faith**, he demands that **we should celebrate Holy Communion only with those who confess the faith we do**..... When Paul says, that thus we '**do show the Lord's death**,' it is against Christ's will to celebrate it **where our confession of faith would be contradicted**.

"No matter where Holy Communion is celebrated it is the **banner of the faith of the church or congregation in whose midst one partakes of it**. As one publicly joins the army of those to whose flag one clings and around whose banner of peace and war one assembles, so every Christian joins that congregation **in whose midst and fellowship he likewise partakes of Holy Communion**; if the congregation **confesses the true faith, the communicant confesses the same faith**; if the congregation **confesses a false faith, the communicant also confesses this false faith with them**; he publicly denies the true faith."

⁸⁰ Walther **Pastorale** page 175.

- (i) those sick or in prison⁸¹, or
- (ii) If someone might be setting out on a long dangerous journey and is no longer able to celebrate the Lord's Supper beforehand⁸².

{We would like to thank Pastor Baseley for his permission to quote from his translation of *Der Lutheraner*.}
(to be continued)

Walther⁸³ *Pastorale* – A Valid and Legitimate Divine Call. (*Pastorale*, pages 40,41).



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 3.

What should they do whose call is valid but not legitimate? Our theologians answer that they should not leave the call but that repentance and faithfulness are necessary in the office. Naturally that presupposes that the one so called has the absolutely necessary aptitude to conduct the office.

Thus **Luther** writes in his letter to the Bohemians: “But he who came into the ministry through these masks, let him carry on, assume the Office and administer it in a pure and worthy manner. Rejecting the office of sacrificing the mass, let him teach the Word of God and govern the Church. This he can do while inwardly condemning and hating the anointing and the whole form of ordination by which he came into the office. For it is not necessary to leave the place of the ministry though you may have reached it by wrong and impious methods, as long as the mind has mended its ways and the method has been condemned.” (Walch X, 1825. f.; S.L. X, 1563, 20; Am. Ed. 40, 14).

Thus **Luther** further writes the same: “Here the question is: whether it is permitted to offer oneself for a call? The answer is this: if it happens out of a carnal thought and intention, that is, from ambition or greed, then it is not at all fitting. Just the same, if one has come into the preaching Office in this way, and is afterwards converted so that he becomes a different man, then it is good for him to remain in it” (Walch, VII, 116f.; S. L. VII, 75,76).

A. H. Francke also writes here on this point: “The Jurists (lawyers) say: There is much which may prevent marriage, but it does not dissolve a marriage that already has been contracted. (**Multa sunt, quae impediunt matrimonium contrahendum, non slovunt tamen contractum**). The same canon Hartmann applies to Baptism.... This must give rise to very many borderline cases of conscience (**casibus conscientiae**). For it does not follow because of this very reason that Baptism must be repeated when at first it was conferred one way or another, provided that the essential parts (**Substantialibus**) had not been absent....Just as this rule holds good in this case, even so it can be applied to the Office of the Ministry as those who are leaders: In accepting a call to the Ministry there is much that, according to divine Law, ought to come into consideration, but which, if it was not all given consideration in the beginning, does not for this reason nullify the call and make it invalid. (**Ad ministerium ecclesiasticum suscipiendum multa concurrere debent ex jure divino, quae autem, etiamsi non concurrerint initio, non propterea dissolvunt ministerium, nec irritum reddunt**). If it did not proceed correctly with one aspect of his call and the **Requisita** (requirements) had not been present there which properly should have been there, then he does

⁸¹ Walther *Pastorale* pages 188.

⁸² Walther *Pastorale* pages 188.

⁸³ 1811-1887.

not need to be ordained again because of it. He also does not have the freedom either to walk away from the Office of the Ministry; but he must, since he is now already in it, turn to God in genuine repentance, and also view it in this way that our Lord God through His grace might still correct what he initially did wrong. Now whether this causes some distress (misery) initially in the conscience of such an individual who finds himself in such circumstances, yet his Office thereafter is still valid before God and man (**ratum coram Deo et hominibus**), if he enters into it and conducts himself properly in it. Yes, it is also already before valid (**ratum**) concerning the external administration of the Office (**externam administrationem officii**), even if initially the standing of the person before God is not yet as it properly should and must be.” (Collegium. pastor. re. Hartmanni past. ev. II, 60. ff.).

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

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 Bethany⁸⁴, South Australia. (Taken from KB Jan 1888 pages 5,6).

At the gathering the following pastors were present⁸⁵:
from the ministerium of the **Australian Synod**⁸⁶:-- the pastors **Appelt**⁸⁷, **Bode**⁸⁸, **Dorsch**⁸⁹, **Ey**⁹⁰, **Fuhlbohm**⁹¹, **Georg**⁹², **Hansen**⁹³, **Harms**⁹⁴, **Heidenreich**⁹⁵, **Heine**⁹⁶, **Hoopmann**⁹⁷, **Heyer**⁹⁸, **Oster**⁹⁹ and **Stempel**¹⁰⁰;

⁸⁴ 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.

⁸⁵ We giving the background of the pastors not only so that our readers can follow the discussion, but because of the principle: where you are trained and to what church body you belong influences what you teach and confess.

⁸⁶ Later called the ELSA (Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Australia). This was the church body which Pastor Fritzsche helped to establish. Later it entered into fellowship with the old Missouri Synod. This is the church from which our ELCR has originated.

⁸⁷ This was **Pastor Ernst Appelt** (1810-1891) who had studied at the **Dresden Mission Society** (1839-1843) which was a solid Lutheran organization at the time. After being ordained in 1843 he worked as a missionary in India until 1860. Then he came to Australia in 1861 and served the Gnadenberg and Dutton areas until his death. He was at Gnadenberg when this meeting occurred.

⁸⁸ This was **Pastor Joachim Georg Bode** (1842-1907). He too had studied at **Hermansberg Mission Institute**, Germany (1868-75). At the time of this discussion he was at Dutton in South Australia. His son, Armin Bode, who graduated from Concordia Seminary, Adelaide in 1916 and who die in 1972 is well known to some of our readers.

⁸⁹ **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.

⁹⁰ **Pastor Johannes Martin Rudolph Ey Snr.** (1837-1893) was born at Zellerfeld, Harz, Germany. He arrived in South Australia in 1855. At first, he was a **teacher** at Klemzig, Mt. Torrens, Blumberg, Carlsruhe, Hahndorf in South Australia. Then He studied for the ministry under Pastor Oster, who himself had been trained by Pastor Fritzsche. He was ordained into the pastoral ministry at Rosenthal, South Australia, on 16 July, 1868. He served at Carlsruhe from 1868 to 1876 and at Lobethal from 1876 to 1893. He was at Lobethal when these discussions took place.

⁹¹ **Pastor Friedrich Fuhlbohm** (1848-1916) studied at **Hermansberg Mission Institute**, Germany (1877-1882) and was expelled from the ELSA in 1899 over doctrinal difference in connection with the German **Hermansberg Mission House**. At the time he was a pastor of the ELSA in South Australia.

⁹² **Pastor Dietrich Georg** (1844-1924) also studied at **Hermansberg Mission Institute**, Germany (1872-1876). He was at Peter’s Hill at the time.

⁹³ **Pastor Joseph Hansen** (1851-1915) though born in Bethany Australia, yet he studied at the **old Missouri Synod seminary at Springfield**, USA (1876-1880). At the time he was pastor at Bright.

from the ministerium of the **Immanuel Synod**-- the pastors **Auricht¹⁰¹**, **Doehler¹⁰²**, **Heinze¹⁰³**, **Kaibel¹⁰⁴**, **Koschade¹⁰⁵**, **Kuss¹⁰⁶**, **Rechner Snr¹⁰⁷** . and **Rechner Jnr¹⁰⁸** .

Election of minute secretaries: **Pastor Stempel** from the side of the Australian Synod and **Pastor Auricht** from the side of the Immanuel Synod. A committee of pastors was appointed from both church bodies who either on the evening of every day or before the meeting of the next session were to compare completely both sets of minutes respectively and put together a joint set of minutes. To this committee were elected the pastors Dorsch, Ey, Heinze, and Kaibel. (Note: Between them there arose circumstances -- necessary previous deliberations of the pastors of the Immanuel Synod on the evening June 29 and the illness of Pastor Stempel on the following day --- which made the work of the abovementioned committee impossible (to complete, BLW) and by a further resolution at the conclusion of the whole joint gathering the minutes were accepted at the first break in discussions after this.)

⁹⁴ **Pastor Johann Harms** (1853-1919) also studied at **Hermannsberg Mission Institute**, Germany (1876-1882). At the time he was pastor of Blumberg (Birdwood).

⁹⁵ See Footnote 77.

⁹⁶ **Pastor John Heine** (1855-1927) was born in New Zealand as the son of a Lutheran pastor and **studied at Concordia Seminary St. Louis of the old Missouri Synod (1875-1878)**. He would have had Walther and Pieper as his professors. He was serving at Dimboola in Victoria at the time.

⁹⁷ **Pastor Johann Hoopmann** (1847-1937) too studied at **Hermannsberg Mission Institute**, Germany (1872-1877) and at the time was pastor at Yorketown.

⁹⁸ **Pastor Georg Heyer** (1843-1921) studied at Basel, Switzerland (1862-68). Through the study of God's Word, especially as a result of the Missouri influence he became a confessional pastor in the ELSA. He was at Grovedale, Victoria at the time.

⁹⁹ **Pastor Oster** (1830-1897), who emigrated from Germany as a result of persecution, after 15 years study, was one of the three men whom Pastor Fritzsche trained and ordained in 1855 here in Australia. As well as being a faithful pastor, and as one who embraced the orthodoxy of the old Missouri Synod with grateful thanks to God, he was also President of our old ELSA here from 1873 until 1897.

¹⁰⁰ **Pastor Stempel** (1832-1908) was one of the faithful pastors of our old Lutheran Church here in Australian who was trained by Pastor Fritzsche (himself trained by the orthodox Lutheran Dr. Scheibel in Germany). He graduated in 1855. When our church came under the influence of the old Missouri Synod in the 1880's he eagerly saw in it a faithful orthodox Lutheran church body and became a "Missourian" in doctrine and practice. He was president of our church at the time of these discussions (1897-1903).

¹⁰¹ **Pastor Johann Auricht** (1832-1907) studied first under Pastor Fritzsche here in Australia (1843-1846), then when the split came followed Kavel, especially in the Millennium, finished his training under Kavel (1846-1858). He was ordained in 1858 and later was president of the Immanuel Synod from 1900 until 1907, editing their church paper until 1907. When this debate occurred he was 57 years old. He too was an adherent of the evil "Open Questions" principle.

¹⁰² **Pastor Carl Doehler** (1854-1927) studied at Neuendettelsau (the home of the evil "Open Questions" principle) from 1878 until 1881. He was intellectually gifted having also done university studies.

¹⁰³ **Pastor Carl Heinze** (1827-1891) started studies under Pastor Fritzsche (1843-1851) and left to go to the gold fields in 1851. Later he returned and was ordained in 1862 on the Lutheran Confessions by a **Congregational minister** and later joined the Immanuel Synod. He was at Krondorf at the time.

¹⁰⁴ **Pastor Kaibel** (1850-1918) studied at Neuendettelsau (the home of the evil "Open Questions" principle) from 1873 till 1876 and was ordained in 1877 at Light Pass Straight Gate, South Australia. He was Vice-President of the Immanuel Synod from 1900-1918.

¹⁰⁵ **Pastor Carl Koschade** (1848-1939) studied at Neuendettelsau from 1873-1877. He was at Yorketown at the time.

¹⁰⁶ **Pastor Ludwig Ed Kuss** (1859-1940) trained at Neuendettelsau, Germany (1877-80) and was ordained in 1881 and served in the Immanuel Synod and later the UELCA. He was at Murray Bridge at the time of these talks.

¹⁰⁷ **Pastor Rechner Sen.** (1830-1900) had no special theological training, but he was a day school teacher and due to a split in his congregation he was called to be their pastor in 1861. He was president of the Immanuel Synod from 1874 until 1900. He had been a strong supporter of Pastor Kavel.

¹⁰⁸ **Pastor Friedrich Rechner Jnr** studied at the University of Leipzig and was ordained in 1866 at Light's Pass. There is no available reference to his date of birth, but he died in 1938. For a time he lectured in German at the Adelaide University. He was at Point Pass at the time of these discussions.

Pastor Oster (the chairman of the morning session) stated the purpose of the gathering as the discussion of the doctrinal differences between both synods and indicated the blessings which would proceed from an established union of both church bodies based on the pure foundation of divine Truth. At the same time he earnestly warned against the false principle where a person does not want to depart from a position, on any account, which has been held up till now, not even when conclusive proof (from Scripture) to the contrary is given.

Vice-president (**Pastor Rechner**) objected: He agreed with the speaker in general, but he had to call attention to this that they should not expect both parties to agree **in all points of doctrine**, that even in the less important points they would not come to agreement. In such latter cases¹⁰⁹ one must let love rule and mutually work together in love¹¹⁰.

Pastor Dorsch replied: Wherever a doctrine of Scripture is stated, there the Truth alone must rule and nothing else, because we do not want to yield¹¹¹ anything of the Truth. **First comes the Truth, then love.**

The pastors of the Australian Synod agreed with the last speaker.

Both sides agreed on this that they desired to be open to instruction from God's Word and accordingly that they would be prepared to listen to the position of the other side in the event of their error being pointed out. Everyone made known their agreement by rising.

After that, in his introduction, the statement was made by the Chairman (**Pastor Oster**) that everyone might be preserved by God's grace from such false doctrine which he carried in his heart – on account of the Old Adam. Then, in God's Name he went into the first chief point of the doctrinal differences which, as a result of the resolutions of the Langmeil Conference deliberations, should first of all be discussed, within the confines of the Confessions of our Lutheran Church and would be used as a basis for debating the subject matter. This was drawn up by the ministers of the Australian Synod and was composed of fifteen theses.

Discussion of Thesis One

“The Holy Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments as the revealed Word of God are the only rule and standard to which at the same time all teaching and teachers are to be examined and judged.”

In this Thesis – special attention was drawn to it --- it was explained that we as Lutherans neither desire to know nor accept any other source of spiritual knowledge than the Holy Scriptures. Yet it is necessary that not merely the **correctness of this Thesis which is stated be recognized**, but that the Thesis itself also **be put into practice** and therefore, in opposition to this, the distinction made between articles of faith and confession of faith which was made in the statement “the church makes articles of faith” found in “The Church and Mission Paper”¹¹² be clearly explained. The articles of faith are completely contained in the Holy Scriptures and therefore nothing else must be permitted to be set up as an article of faith which is not

¹⁰⁹ He is referring to “less important points” of doctrine.

¹¹⁰ This is the **accursed “evil Open Questions” principle** on which the Immanuel Synod and later the UELCA was based. In spite of their interpretations clearly being shown to be in error, the Immanuel Synod still wanted acceptance of them by our old ELSA or at least their toleration. They wanted their error to be given equal rights with the Truth, in other words, they wanted our ELSA pastors “to agree to disagree agreeably” on these points. This constituted the evil “Open Questions” principle on which the later UELCA was based and which is contrary to 1 Cor.1:10 and John 8:31,32.

Luther said concerning this love: “Cursed be into the depths of hell that kind of love which desires to exist at the expense of purity of doctrine.” (See Nickel Essay on Church Fellowship, p.21). Jesus taught, **“If a man love Me, he will keep My words”** (John 14:23). In 1 Cor.13:6 we learn that love, **“Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.”**

¹¹¹ Give up.

¹¹² This was the official church paper of the Immanuel Synod called the “Kirchen und Missionzeitung”.

establish in God's Word. Neither our reason, nor so-called tradition, nor new revelations, nor any system of knowledge (except Scripture) may be permitted to be set up for this purpose (of establishing articles of faith). Through the Symbols (the Confession of Faith [The Confessions of the Lutheran Church as found in the Book of Concord, BLW]) of the church, for example, on the other hand, new articles of faith are not made, but there those articles of faith which are contained in the Holy Scriptures are defended against the attacks and falsifications made by heretics and false teachers.

With the above thesis also came the discussion on the so-called modern theory of Continual Evolution¹¹³ and it was pointed out that a person actually and in Truth could not (and must not, BLW) speak of a continual evolution of Christian doctrine, because every individual doctrine cannot be changed further or developed, since it has already been fixed in God's Word. On the other hand, **there can and should be constantly occurring in the Church progress and growth in the knowledge and clarity concerning the revealed doctrines which are in Holy Scripture.** Above all, in our time one is, to an even greater degree, to be on guard against the expression "progress (evolution, BLW) in doctrine," because it is the catch-cry¹¹⁴ of today's modern theology by which it wants to conceal nothing else than the downfall of all Bible doctrine.

Pastor Auricht agreed with this, but in spite of it still also maintained a wholesome¹¹⁵ Biblical progress (evolution, BLW) in doctrine, for example, the Apostolic Creed in the second chief part of our Lutheran Catechism. **Pastor Kaibel** drew special attention then to the working of the Spirit in bringing together Biblical doctrine.

The Thesis was accepted without reservation.

(To be continued)

THE PSALMS (Johann George Starke)

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.

(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.

¹¹³ By this **error** is meant that the Scriptures are **not complete and fixed in their presentation of doctrine**, that doctrine is ever continually changing and evolving, that new "insights" and teaching can be developed. In Mat. 28:20, 2 Thes 2:15 and Rev 22:18 we are clearly taught that Christian doctrine is a **fixed body of divine truths which must never be altered, neither increased by human additions nor diminished by omissions of any kind.** With Luther we confess: "We fabricate nothing new, but **retain, and hold to, the old Word of God** as the ancient Church confessed it." (See Mueller's Dogmatics, p.75).

¹¹⁴ Or "key-word".

¹¹⁵ Healthy, sound.

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
(a) the planting.

“And¹¹⁶ he shall be like¹¹⁷ a tree¹¹⁸ planted¹¹⁹ by the rivers of water¹²⁰.”

¹¹⁶ **And he shall be:** Stoeckhardt: “ ‘and he is’ (Heb.: **wahaja**, the **wav** in Hebrew often, as here, introduces the predicate.) **Such a Godly man** is like a tree planted by the streams of waters.” (Page 15, emphasis added).

Stoeckhardt further describes “such a Godly man as follows: “Now the way of the righteous or Godly person is described in **contrast with the way of the ungodly**. The difference of the way becomes evident **in the difference of their works** (works flowing from faith which is produced by the Gospel, BLW). The works of the righteous are compared to **fruits**. Since, however, these fruits issue **not** from the righteous himself, but **as a product of God’s Word**, the Psalmist proceeds to call attention to this **source**. He wants us to see that all good works of the righteous are brought about by the Word of God.”

Keil and Delitzsch: “He becomes in consequence of this, he is thereby, like a tree planted by the watercourses, which yields its fruit at the proper season....” (Vol 5, pages 49-50).

¹¹⁷ **Like:** figure of speech called a simile.

¹¹⁸ **Tree:** Every person who is truly sorry for his sins, believes in Jesus as His only saviour and gladly and willingly shows this faith by true obedience to Christ’s Word, Mat.7:16-18.

Luther: “I believe that the palm tree is used as a paraphrase. For another Psalm says (92:12): ‘The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.’ For the palm trees love the streams of water and ... like to drink from them all year long, perpetually blooming and bearing very sweet fruits. Perhaps he derived this simile from the palm trees which are numerous at Jericho on the Jordan; for on this account, it is thought, Jericho is called the city of palms.” (Am Ed. Vol.14, p.299).

¹¹⁹ **Planted:** The Hebrew verb **שָׁתַל** actually means “to transplant,” (Koehler/Baumgartner, p.115) not merely “plant.” It means to cause to take root, to become firmly established for the purpose of stability, nutrition (food and water), growth, and eventually production but it also includes taking a plant out of one environment and placing it into another which is more conducive to production, growth, and stability. Like taking wild trees growing in barren and desert-like conditions and carefully transplanting them in rich prepared soil by streams of water.

There is a very significant application we need to note here: Before we were converted we were by nature born in sin, spiritual dead, and under God’s wrath. But God in His grace has transplanted us into Jesus Christ. He has taken us out of Satan’s kingdom of darkness and placed us into the Kingdom of His dear Son (Rom. 6:4f; 1 Cor. 1:30; Col. 1:13). As Christ’s precious children we are richly provided with all the resources to keep us in the faith and make us fruitful for Christ—the Holy Spirit in the Word, the means of Grace—which are likened to streams of living water (John 7:37-39; Ps. 1:3; Jer. 1:8).

Luther: “The psalmist says: ‘he is planted,’ wherein he distinguishes between the planted trees and the ones that grow by themselves. It becomes what it is by the care and culture of someone else, not by its own nature. In short, it is cut off from those that grew by themselves of their own nature, and it is artificially planted elsewhere as a sprout.” (Am Ed. Vol.14, p.300). **Transplanted:** is passive. This means that God in His grace working alone through the Gospel brings about faith in Christ into our hearts, that it is in no way our own doing.

Keil and Delitzsch: “**שָׁתַל** means firmly planted, so that no winds that may rage around it are able to remove it from its place.”

Luther: “The psalmist here says, ‘is planted,’ that is to say, ‘has thrust roots.’ ‘He is like a tree or wood planted,’ that is, living wood, whose root is delight in the Law (Word, BLW) of the Lord, and therefore firmly planted.” Even in the midst of the storms of life the grace of God through the Means of Grace keep the Christian immovable in the faith.

¹²⁰ **rivers of water:** The Hebrew refers to streams or channels of water split from a larger source. The word “rivers” is used in the Old Testament for irrigation channels which are connected to a river. This refers to the three Channels or Means of Grace: **the Gospel, Baptism, Lord’s Supper**, by means of which forgiveness of sins, life and salvation through the atoning sacrifice of Christ both works and strengthens faith, as well as produces true fruits of faith, namely, works of love.

Luther: “By ‘streams of water’ he certainly means the **streams of divine grace**. For it is said that the palm grows in a light, sandy, nitrous, and salty soil; therefore it wants to have perpetual rivers around it. Therefore this desire, the root of this tree, located in this arid, unfruitful life, thirsts after the brooks of heavenly waters all the more, the less it finds in the world to quicken it.... Psalm 63:1: ‘... as in a dry and weary land’; and Is. 53:2: ‘For He grew up before Him like a root out of dry ground.’ Is it not wonderful to grow trees in sterile ground, nourished only by flowing

Luther: “*He is like a tree planted beside the streams of waters.*”

He is – because of this (what is stated in verse 2: his meditation on God’s Word, BLW) he will have a good disposition of mind, and as a result, concerning his flourishing state of well-being, he is **like a tree**, a fresh green tree, Jer.17:8¹²¹. **Planted** -- which is transplanted from the dry and unproductive soil **beside the streams of waters**, in addition to obtaining grace, he is refreshed, preserved and thereby strengthened in his spiritual growth by the abundant flowing waters of divine grace and he is given the ability to prove himself as such a person.

Comments on Verse 3

עץ (ets) actually wood used for burning¹²², but also more frequently for a green tree¹²³ (**Gen.2:16, “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree (עץ) of the garden thou mayest freely eat.’”**etc. With such we are often comparing people: the ungodly with bad and decayed trees, Mat.7:17-19¹²⁴; tree without fruit, Luke 13:6,7¹²⁵; an olive tree, Rom.11:17¹²⁶; or even with dry wood, Is. 15:2,6¹²⁷; John 15:4-6¹²⁸; with a tree twice dead, plucked up by the roots Jude 12¹²⁹ because it has become unproductive in bringing forth fruit and therefore must pass into the fire. Because of their outward condition they are indeed also compared with a green bay tree¹³⁰, Ps.37:35,36: “³⁵ *I have seen the wicked in great power, and*

waters? And blessed is he who, as the world grows more sterile for him, thirsts all the more for the heavenly streams.” (Am Ed. Vol.14, p.300).

Stoeckhardt states: “A tree, planted near a stream gains its **vitality from the abundance of the water of the stream**. As it does, it increases its strength....The Word of God is the water from which the Godly man draws his life and strength to grow and bring forth fruit. The believers lives and thrives by and from the Word of God.” (Lectures of Select Psalms p. 15).

¹²¹ Jer. 17:8, “**For he**, utterly unlike the man whose description has just been given, **shall be as a tree planted by the waters**, where a plentiful supply of moisture insures a luxuriant growth, **and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh**, being unaffected by its fiery breath, **but her leaf shall be green**, on account of her perpetual supply of life-giving water; **and shall not be careful in the year of drought**, there being no cause to worry even then, **neither shall cease from yielding fruit**, because the stream at which it is located will never dry up. In order to bring this truth home with particular emphasis, the Lord describes the human heart as it is.” (Comments by Kretzmann)

¹²² Gen. 22:3,9; Lev.1:7; 4:12: used for wood, sticks, logs for fuel.

¹²³ Gen 1:11 used for fruit-bearing trees.

¹²⁴ Mat.7:17-19: “¹⁷ *Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a **corrupt tree** bringeth forth evil fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a **corrupt tree** bring forth good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is **hewn down, and cast into the fire.**”*

¹²⁵ Luke 13:6,7: “⁶ He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and **sought fruit thereon, and found none.** ⁷ Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and **find none: cut it down;** why cumbereth it the ground?”

¹²⁶ Rom.11:17. See Footnote 134.

¹²⁷ Is. 15:2-6: “² He is gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep: Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba: on all their heads shall be baldness, and every beard cut off. ³ In their streets they shall gird themselves with sackcloth: on the tops of their houses, and in their streets, every one shall howl, weeping abundantly. ⁴ And Heshbon shall cry, and Elealeh: their voice shall be heard even unto Jahaz: therefore the armed soldiers of Moab shall cry out; his life shall be grievous unto him. ⁵ My heart shall cry out for Moab; his fugitives shall flee unto Zoar, an heifer of three years old: for by the mounting up of Luhith with weeping shall they go it up; for in the way of Horonaim they shall raise up a cry of destruction. ⁶ For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate: **for the hay is withered away, the grass faileth, there is no green thing.**”

¹²⁸ John 15:4-6: “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.”

¹²⁹ Jude 12: “These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, **twice dead, plucked up by the roots.**”

¹³⁰ Bay tree: עֲזָרָח (ezrach): The Hebrew scholar **Gesenius** in his Lexikon: describes it as: “a tree native to Israel, not transplanted into another soil.” In this meaning it is found only in Ps. 37:35. The Hebrew word simply means "native

spreading himself like a green bay tree (German: Lorbeerbaum).³⁶ *Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.*”¹³¹, nevertheless with the addition that they soon wither. But the Godly, even though they are by nature unfruitful trees, Eph.2:5¹³², yet, for all that, they have, through the new birth¹³³ been implanted into good olive trees, Rom.11:17¹³⁴; they are then called trees of righteousness Is.60:21¹³⁵, they receive the constant flow of the streams of the grace of God, and are thereby able to perform spiritually good works, John 15:4 ff¹³⁶. Also they take root among themselves, Eph.3:17¹³⁷, and are more and more held firm and are well established in the ground. In this verse David¹³⁸ does not expressly name the particular kind of tree with which the Godly are being compared. Of the willow tree which was customary to be planted by the water, Ps.137:2¹³⁹, is indeed not the tree seen here, on the one hand, because of its despised form, on the other hand because of its lack of fruit, and above all its leaves do not remain green, but fall off near Winter. The cedars with which the Godly have otherwise also been compared grow on lofty mountains, especially in Lebanon and the olive trees grow in dry barren earth and in open country,

born", i.e., a tree not transplanted, but growing on its native soil, and therefore luxuriantly. If the psalmist intended by this word to denote any particular tree, it **may have been the evergreen bay laurel (*Laurus nobilis*)**, which is a native of Palestine. Instead of "like a green bay tree" in the Authorized Version, many Versions have, "like a green tree in its native soil." Kretzmann: "a tree in full foliage, teeming with strength."

¹³¹ The wicked are here described like this tree: large, green, rich in foliage, but have no fruit of benefit and are fit only to be destroyed. The wicked outwardly may be powerful, wealthy, impressive, but without faith in Christ and true Godly conduct will be condemned to hell.

¹³² Eph.2:5, "**even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved,).**" **Kretzmann:** "When we were in that terrible condition of spiritual death, as shown in our transgression of God's holy Law, when we were without the faintest bit of saving knowledge of God, without fear, love, and trust in Him, when there was in us nothing but a total inability with regard to the things which pertain to our salvation, then God gave us life together with Christ." See also Eph.2:3.

¹³³ Conversion.

¹³⁴ Rom.11:17, "**And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree.**" **Kretzmann:** "If some of the branches are broken off, and thou, as a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in among them and didst become a joint partaker of the root of the fatness of the olive-tree, then do not boast against the branches. The breaking off of the branches took place at the same time that the twigs of the wild olive-tree were grafted in... A great number of them (Jews, BLW) took offense at the crucified Christ and at the preaching of the Cross, and the result was that they were broken off the tree of the Church and removed. For with the coming of the Messiah the Church of believers had become the Church of Jesus Christ, and every one that did not accept Jesus as the promised Messiah excluded himself from the communion of saints... In the place of such branches,... the Lord grafted in some branches from a wild olive-tree; He called some Gentiles to the fellowship of the saints. They were taken from the midst of the lost and condemned heathen world, they were received into the communion of the Lord and thus became living members of His congregation. And at the same time they became partakers of all the benefits of salvation, of reconciliation with the Father, of remission of sins, of full and complete justification, of victory over death, and of eternal bliss. Therefore the Gentile Christian should guard very carefully against boasting at the expense of the Jews, against the very ones that had foolishly neglected to accept the Messiah.... To boast of possessions which have not been merited, but are the gift of free grace, instead of giving all glory to God alone, is always foolish and reprehensible...."

¹³⁵ Is.60:21, "**Thy people also shall be all righteous**, as the nature of the covenant of mercy demands, by virtue of the righteousness imputed to them; **they shall inherit the land forever**, Matt. 5:5, **the branch of My planting, the work of My hands**, a true garden of Jehovah, owing everything to His grace, **that I may be glorified**, for this is the final aim and object of His expressions of mercy." (Notes from Kretzmann).

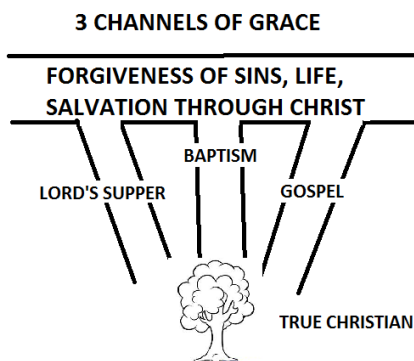
¹³⁶ John 15:4 ff: "**Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.**" ⁵ **I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.**"

¹³⁷ Eph.3:17, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love."

¹³⁸ While this Psalm may bear similar characteristics to the Psalms of David, yet there is no proof that He wrote this Psalm by the Holy Spirit. The author the Holy Spirit used is not stated.

¹³⁹ Ps.137:2, "**We hanged our harps**, otherwise used to accompany joyous and festal songs, **upon the willows in the midst thereof**, to indicate that all their joyful hymns were hushed. The silent and pensive sitting among the weeping willows by the side of the gently flowing streams agrees well with the feeling of homesickness which filled the hearts of the captives." Notes from Kretzmann.

Sirach 24:17,19¹⁴⁰. Therefore with Luther we rightly understand the tree as a palm or date tree which grows especially in the area near the Jordan at Jericho (Sirach 24:18¹⁴¹. Cf Deut. 34:3¹⁴²) and according to their nature remain constantly green.



Practical Application of Verse 3.

(13.) Verse 3. By nature we are barren and unfruitful trees. Shouldn't we now willingly, joyfully and strongly receive the power of grace offered to us by God (in the Gospel) and be grafted into Christ, without Whom we can do nothing which is truly good? John 15:4 ff.¹⁴³

(14.) Whoever is to be implanted into Christ must have faith worked in his heart through the Word of the Gospel; hence such Word also afterwards imparts to him every blessing of strength (of faith) from the fullness of Jesus, Is. 61:1,3¹⁴⁴; 2 Pet. 1:3 ff¹⁴⁵.

(to be continued)

¹⁴⁰ Sirach 24:17, 19: ¹⁷“As the vine brought I forth pleasant savour, and my flowers are the fruit of honour and riches. ¹⁹Come unto me, all ye that be desirous of me, and fill yourselves with my fruits.” Another translation: “17. I bud forth delights like a vine; my blossoms are glorious and rich fruit. 19. Come to me, all who desire me, and be filled with my fruits.” Remember this book is not a part of the verbally inspired sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament, but is a human book which is a part of the Apocrypha. This word means “hidden” and refers to those non-inspired books of the Old Testament which were distinctly kept separate by the faithful Church of the Old Testament because they were not regarded as the verbally inspired Word of God. **Dr Luther** said concerning them: “Apocrypha--that is, books which are **not regarded as equal to the Holy Scriptures, and yet are profitable and good to read.**”

¹⁴¹ Sirach 24:18, “I was exalted like a palm tree in Cades, and as a rose plant in Jericho.”

¹⁴² Deut. 34:3, “**and the south, the plains beyond the Dead Sea, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm-trees,** for these grew in the lowlands of Jericho, **unto Zoar,** at the extreme southern end of the Dead Sea. This viewing of the entire country was a ‘proof of his generally unimpaired strength of vision, which the soaring flight of faith rendered more penetrating.’” Notes from Kretzmann.

¹⁴³ See Footnote 136.

¹⁴⁴ Is. 61:1,3: “1. **The Spirit of the Lord God, of the all-powerful Ruler, the covenant God, whose name is Jehovah, is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings, a joyful message, the Gospel proclamation, unto the meek, to those subject to spiritual misery; 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; 3. to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty, an ornamental headdress, the groom’s turban, for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, of distress and discouragement; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified,** the fact that the believers have become partakers of His mercy redounding to His praise. It is the Messiah Himself who is speaking here, for so He interprets the passage in His great sermon at Nazareth, Luke 4:18-21. It is repeatedly stated in Scripture that the Messiah has the Spirit of Jehovah, that He has been anointed with the Holy Ghost without measure.... It is Christ’s prophetic office which here stands out so plainly, His work of bringing the Gospel to poor sinners. That is the essence of His work, to announce the joyful message, the glorious news of salvation, to all men.... For the purpose of His work is to bring comfort and joy to the mourners, to replace the ashes on their head with the turban and tiara of joy, like that worn by a happy bridegroom, to put on the oil of gladness and adornment after the period of deep mourning, when they were in the power of Satan.... All this will result in making the believers trees of righteousness, characterized by the fruits of righteousness in them which are the result of faith. For all this is not their own doing, a matter of self-righteous glorification, but they are the planting of Jehovah, who lives in them, and it is through His favor and mercy that they will be glorified before Him.” Notes from Kretzmann.

¹⁴⁵ 2 Pet. 1:3 ff: “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.”