

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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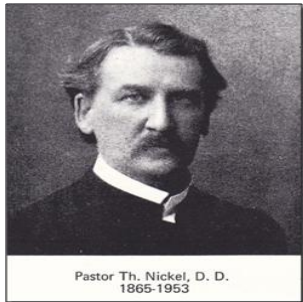
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A FOLLOWER OF JESUS

Luke 9:23, “**And He said to them all, ‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.’**”

[From “**Der Lutherische Kirchenbote**” (The Lutheran Church Messenger) the official church paper of our former ELSA here in Australia, September 28, 1916, Vol. 43, Number 20, Pages 153-155.]
(by the late Dr. Th. Nickel¹)



The Lord Jesus once directed the question to His disciples: “**Whom do people say that I am**” (Luke 9:18)? At the answer: “**They say, You are John the Baptist; but some say, You are Elijah; and others say, One of the old prophets is risen again,**” (Luke 9:19) the Lord asked them: “**But whom do you say that I am?**” (Mat.16:15) Then Simon Peter answered: “**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**” (Mat.16:16)². The Lord praised Peter as blessed for this confession and said: “**Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter,**” that is, a Rock-Man, “**and upon this**

Rock,” namely, that Christ is the Son of God, the only Saviour of the world, “**I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,**” that is, the power to forgive and to retain sins. “**Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven**”³ (Mat.16:17-19)⁴.

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 from 1903-1922. From 1924-1930 he was President of the Free Church of Saxony. He returned to Australia in 1935. He was an outstanding orthodox theologian of the Old Missouri type.

² Nickel is quoting Luther’s translation of these texts.

³ This portion according to the original Greek reads: “*Whatever you shall bind on earth it shall be as it has been bound* (Greek: uses future perfect) *in heaven; and whatever you shall loose on earth it shall be as it has been loosed* (Greek: uses future perfect) *in heaven.*” The Greek scholar **Dr. A. T. Robertson** in his **Word Studies** on Mat.16:19 states on this usage: “Note the future perfect indicative.”

Pastor F.G. Kleinig once wrote: “Note: This passage has not been correctly rendered in many Bible translations. Actually, according to the Greek, **the binding or closing the gate to heaven is brought about by the sinners**

What the Lord once said to Peter still applies today to all Christians. Blessed is the person who here has known Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. What the world with all its wisdom cannot discover and fathom, God has revealed to mankind. Through the knowledge of Christ he has become a disciple of Christ, a child of God. He belongs to the **chosen generation**, to the **royal priesthood**, to the **holy nation**, to the **people of His possession** (1 Pet.2:9). There is no person who is so highly favoured and therefore so happy than the Christian. Yet this happiness is not a happiness of the world, and in order that Peter and Christ's disciples make no false claims of the Messiah and His Kingdom, the Lord says to them not only that He will suffer and die, but also He proclaimed to them that the same sufferings would soon come upon them, yes, He said to them that no-one can be His disciple who does not deny himself and follow Christ, the Lord. And this Word of God Christ still applies to all His disciples today, "**If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me**"⁵ (Luke 9:23).

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE WORDS "TO DENY ONESELF"?

What then does the Lord require of us with these words? What are we to understand by the words "**deny himself**"? When Peter once denied the Lord, he there on oath said that he did not know the Lord; he refused to have anything to do with Him, wanted nothing to do with him. Hence Christians should deny themselves, they want to know nothing of and will refuse everything which will hinder them from submitting to the Lord and His Word and from doing His will.

Whoever wants to be Christ's disciple must deny his own *wisdom*. Certainly we are to use our reason and our understanding in things which reason submits to, but we are not to use our reason in spiritual things

impentence, and such binding takes place first in heaven, and is thereupon to be announced to the sinner by the congregation on earth in this dramatic manner that it excommunicates him from its membership and publicly denies unto him all the privileges of such membership and declares him to be a heathen. The object of all this is to move the sinner to repentance, **'that his soul may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus'** (Compare 1 Cor. 5:5). Similarly, should such action, namely the excommunication, move the sinner to genuine repentance, **the door of heaven automatically opens to him again, and as soon as his former congregation is informed of such repentance, the Lord's instruction is that it here on earth declare unto him God's full and complete pardon, and with joy over the fact that a lost sinner has been regained, gladly receive him again into its membership, and restore to him all the privileges of such membership.** The point to remember in this connection is this: **FIRST in HEAVEN, THEN on EARTH!**" (Paper on Church Discipline).

⁴ This text is quoted according to the King James Version.

⁵ The expression "**To deny oneself**" does **not** refer to **some form of false asceticism**, that is, *in order to earn one's salvation, or to be an extra holy* a person forgoes earthly possessions, or refuses to eat certain foods, even ignoring the good things in the world. Here it means in childlike faith "**to humbly submit my will to God,**" to **put Christ first in everything**, even if it means the **forgoing of our own interests** and what we want to do, to **reject the sinful things of the world** even at great personal cost, or even to forgo the good things of the world if Christ so desires us in order to follow Him. It is applying Gal.2:20, "*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I* (yet it is no longer I who live), **but Christ liveth in me,**" to ourselves.

Kretzmann comments on Luke 9:23: "He that believes on Christ and wants to follow *Him must deny his natural self, must give up his own natural wishes, desires, and inclinations*, and must patiently take upon himself all the sufferings and hardships which his confession of Christ will bring upon him. That is the Christian's cross, not a physical one like Christ's, but none the less real and burdensome."

On Mat.16:24 **Kretzmann** states: "*Denial of self, of all self-righteousness, of all selfishness*, is natural for a Christian that partakes of the spirit of Christ."

A detailed translation of Luke 9:23 which brings out the full force of the original Greek reads as follows: "**Let him disregard his own interests, and let him at once, once and for all, pick up and carry his cross day after day, and let him take the same road with Me that I take as a habit of life.**"

The word "**deny**" means: "^[a]**disown himself**, ^[b]**forget, lose sight of himself and his own interests**, ^[c]**refuse and give up himself**" (^[a]James Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary*. ^[b] Joseph Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*. ^[c] Hermann Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon*).

The words "**follow Me**" mean: "^[d]**cleave steadfastly to Me, conform wholly to My example in living and, if need be, in dying also.**" (^[d] Joseph Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*).

to be the master of God's Word. Rather here we are to take our reason captive to the obedience of Christ⁶, because it has pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to here save all who believe⁷.

We are to deny (or reject) our own **righteousness**. Whoever imagines that he is someone of importance where he is still nothing before God, whoever here thinks that because he has lived a pious life, has been preserved from sin, has also given everyone what belongs to him, that already because of this God must save him, he separates himself from Christ who came into the world to save **sinners**. Whoever wants to be a Christian must, as a poor, lost sinner, flee to Christ and cast off all his own righteousness and glorying in himself, and implore Him for His grace.

Furthermore, self-denial involves this that we deny (resist) everything that is connected with our **sinful nature**. Christ wants to save us from our sins, but He cannot save those who do not want to let go of their sins. Whoever here thinks he can be saved when he also (deliberately and wilfully) continues to sin, he makes Christ a servant of sin and violates⁸ grace⁹. Whoever wants to be a Christian, he is to deny himself, he refuses everything which pleases his sinful flesh; he must crucify his flesh and blood¹⁰ together with all sins and evil lusts¹¹; he must put to death the activities of the flesh with the (power of the) Spirit; he must reject all worldly conduct and deny (resist) all fleshly lusts and live a moral clean life, be upright and decent in his life here in this world¹².

Yet we are not only to avoid and deny (reject) everything that is openly sinful, but also that which in any way may be dangerous for our spiritual welfare. We are to be prepared for the sake of Christ to avoid everything, to give up everything which may take us away from Christ. We are to be followers of Christ. Of **Moses** it is reported to us that he preferred to bear the disgrace and shame of his people (for Christ's sake), the despised Jewish people, than to be **called a son of Pharaoh's daughter**¹³. Hence the Lord also says,

⁶ 2 Cor.10:5 (b), "Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

Kretzmann states on this verse: "Instead of permitting reason to usurp authority and to master the Word of God, the **intellect, the reason of man must, in all things, be guided by the revealed truth of the Lord**. It is only when human reason, through the power of the Spirit in the Word, is **made subject to the obedience of Christ and defers in everything to revealed truth**, that it in reality can apply its powers, chiefly in the service of Christ, direct or indirect. Reason, enlightened by the knowledge of God, **does not attempt to penetrate into the secrets of God's essence**, finding its delight rather in unfolding the beauties and powers of the Gospel and of the revelation of God in all its particulars."

⁷ 1 Cor.1:21, "*For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*"

Kretzmann comments: "Since thus the world, with its own wisdom, could not find the way to the wisdom of God, therefore it pleased God, according to the good pleasure of His will, to lead men to the knowledge of His essence by a way which alone can bring sinful mankind to Him. **By that which is considered the foolishness of preaching, by the proclamation of a message which is ridiculed as unreasonable by the wise men of this world, God brings salvation to the believers....** Through the very same message of salvation which seems to man the essence of foolishness, **God takes away the conceit of this human opinion and works faith in his heart.**"

⁸ Desecrates or defiles it.

⁹ See Heb.10:26,27: "*For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.*"

¹⁰ In Mat.16:17 the expression "**flesh and blood**" is used in a similar sense to the way Nickel uses it here. It refers to our "**own nature and reason**" (Kretzmann).

¹¹ This is a reference to Gal.5:24, "*They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh* (the godless sinful human nature which we have inherited from Adam) *with the affections* (evil disposition and passions) *and lusts* (evil desires which seek gratification)."

¹² This can only be done through **the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ** as Titus 2:11,12 teaches us: "*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly* (self-control in conformity with God's Law), *righteously, and Godly, in this present world.*"

¹³ This refers to **Heb.11:24-26**: "*By faith Moses, when he was come to years* (had grown up), *refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season* (temporarily); *esteeming* (after weighing and comparing the facts in the case, he considered) *the*

“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake” (Mat.5:11). Christians are always to be prepared to give up their highly valued good name and their honour rather than deny their faith or deny their Saviour.

Furthermore the Lord says: “If any man come to me, and hate¹⁴ not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26). Certainly Christians are to devote themselves especially to loving father and mother, brother and sister, for love is the fruit of faith¹⁵, and where there is faith, there is also love, sincere, affectionate brotherly love. But if our family are in any way hindering our soul’s salvation, if they want to prevent us from confessing the Truth and from living as Christians, then we must deny them (refuse to listen to them), then we must announce to them that we cannot give them obedience in these matters, and rather let it happen that all bonds of friendship and relationship are broken if necessary than that we deny Christ. “He that loveth father or mother more than Me,” the Lord says, “is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Mat.10:37). Whoever denies the Truth out of love for parents or children or for anyone else, whoever in order not to incur the displeasure of the world, in order not to suffer any loss in his business or calling is silent where he is to speak up for Christ or denies the Lord and His Word, he cannot be His disciple.

Christ has not come to bring peace but a sword¹⁶. He says: “For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household” (Mat.10:35,36). Therefore it is better that a Christian endure constant conflict and disharmony in his home than that he denies Christ, His Saviour. Whoever wants to be a Christian must be prepared (if necessary) to deny (refuse to listen to) his own family who are against Christ.

reproach of Christ greater riches (wealth) than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect (steadily kept in view) unto the recompence of the reward (gracious reward).”

¹⁴ The Greek word **μισῆι** (misei) besides meaning “to hate intensely” also means “to love less” (Thayer). Jesus does not here mean that one must hate his father or mother of necessity, for Matt. 15:4 proves the opposite. It is only where the element of choice comes in (cf. Matt. 6:24) as it sometimes does, **when father or mother opposes Christ**. Then one must not hesitate. A good translation of this is rendered as follows: “If anyone comes to Me and **does not love his own father and mother and [likewise] his wife and children and brothers and sisters—[yes] and even his own life also — less than Me, he cannot be My disciple.**”

The word “misei” is in the **present tense** in the Greek which indicates that the Christian is to **keep on as a way of life loving Christ more than anyone or anything else**.

Kretzmann correctly explains this: “If any one comes to Him, with a view to close and permanent discipleship, sacrifices are necessary from the standpoint of this world. First of all, **the love of Christ must precede all other love, even that of the nearest friends and relatives**, Matt. 10:37. Absolute devotion to Him and to His cause requires that natural love to one’s relatives be relegated to the background, that life itself be denied, that the heart be torn away from temporal possessions.... All rival masters and interests must be put away that the love of the great Master may be supreme. If this devotion and work should demand the final sacrifice of life, according to His example, even that must be willingly given for the sake of the love He bore us.”

¹⁵See **Gal.5:6**, “*But faith which worketh* (constantly shows itself effective) *by* (through) *love*.” **Kretzmann** explains this well: “By faith the believers obtain the salvation earned for all men by Christ’s atoning work; and this same faith shows its life in the manifold deeds of love which are praised so highly in Scriptures.”

¹⁶ Mat.10:34. **Dr Walther** states on this text: “Not as though the Lord took pleasure in peace-destroying wars; not as though He had come into the world to start dissensions and discord among men; but He means to say: ‘**My doctrine is of such a nature that, if it is properly proclaimed, thetically and antithetically, peace among men cannot possibly be preserved. For as soon as My Word is proclaimed, men will divide into two camps: some will receive it with joy, others will be offended by it and will begin to hate and persecute those who receive it.**’”

“Moreover, preachers of the right character remember that the **Church is not a kingdom that can be built up in peace**; for it is located within the domain of the devil, who is the prince of this world. Accordingly, **the Church has no choice but to be at war**. It is *ecclesia militans*, the **Church Militant**, and will remain such until the blessed end. Wherever a Church is seen to be, not *ecclesia militans*, but *ecclesia quiescens*, a **Church at ease**, that — you may rely on it! — is a **false Church**.” (Law and Gospel, pages 266-267).

The same applies to our possessions and our earthly goods, to all our property. Whoever does not deny all his property, whoever does not want to be prepared, for Christ's sake, to sacrifice everything that he has, he cannot be His disciple. Whoever wants to be a Christian must **deny himself**, rule over himself, control his will, his temperament, his violent emotions, he must be prepared to give up his freedom, his peace and his own comfort, yes, even his own life for Christ's sake.

WHAT IS MEANT BY "BEARING CHRIST'S CROSS"?

What is required of everyone with these words the Lord shows when He continues: "**If any man will come after Me ---, let him take up his cross daily, and follow Me**" (Luke 9:23). This is figurative language. Those who had been condemned to death on the cross usually had to carry their own cross themselves on which they would be executed, as we indeed know this from the Lord Jesus. Now the Lord says that His disciples are to be cross bearers. By the cross is to be understood all kinds of trouble and trial which God places upon us, His children, according to His wise counsel and will. Now just as Christ, for our sakes, has carried His cross, so we are willingly to take upon ourselves our cross and follow after the Lord. "*Take your cross and hardship upon yourselves, follow My mode of life.*"¹⁷ says Christ our Champion. We are not to make our own cross for ourselves, but we are to carry the cross which Christ places on us. We are to be prepared, if it is God's will, to endure troubles and trials, poverty, sickness, hardship, misery, persecution, insult, shame, to go to prison for Him and to give up our own lives for Him. We are to die to ourselves, to put to death our own will and flesh and blood¹⁸, to drown our old Adam with all sins and evil lust, to crucify and to put to death our own sinful ego, the old idols which our sinful heart so gladly serves and to which it offers sacrifices.

We are **daily** to do that. Every day has its own trouble and every day it applies that we are to die to ourselves and to live for Christ. Death by crucifixion is a painful death, and to crucify one's own flesh and blood and to deny oneself, is not an easy matter. The follower of Christ is engaged in a constant, difficult battle in which we easily become worn out¹⁹. But the Lord requires of us to engage in such a battle against sin and against everything which seeks to separate us from Christ, even to the shedding of our blood.

And are we doing this? Are we following Christ? Are we patient in tribulation²⁰? Are we denying ourselves (resisting those things which endanger our soul)? What self-denial do we practise for Christ's sake? What is the cross that we are carrying after the Lord? Are we crucifying our flesh and blood? Are we denying (resisting) the sinful world and what is in the world, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life²¹? It is certainly true that whoever follows his unregenerate²² heart, whoever refuses to suffer for the Lord's sake, whoever lives according to the lusts of the flesh (sinful nature) and treats the sinful world in the same way, whoever has a mind for earthly things and has an aversion for bearing the cross, he

¹⁷ These lines are a literal translation of the German, but are found in our Hymn 387v1 as: "O bear the cross, what'er betide, Take My example for your guide." Synodical Conference Hymnbook 421v1.

¹⁸ Here it means **all that they are as a human being**, e.g., feelings, actions, reason, thoughts, etc. in so far as these parts which make up a human being are against Christ.

¹⁹ Or "tired".

²⁰ Rom.12:12.

²¹ **1 John 2:16.** The lust of the flesh is the passionate desire or the craving that comes from the evil nature.

The lust of the eyes is the greedy longings of the mind and the passionate cravings of the eyes for satisfaction.

The pride of life: **Thayer**, the Greek scholar, defines as: "an insolent and empty assurance which trusts in its own power and resources and shamefully despises and violates divine laws and human rights."

Kretzmann: "The lust of the flesh, the desire to have and enjoy that which pleases their corrupt nature, the evil inclination of their hearts, whether this be in eating and drinking or in sensual delights; the lust of the eyes, when people seek to gratify the sensuality of their hearts by such sights as are intended to satisfy this desire, as in impure, lewd pictures and filthy theatrical exhibitions; the pride, the braggart boasting, the conspicuous ostentation of this life, when people make it a point to show off their wealth, very often ill-gotten gains."

²² Unconverted.

cannot be Christ's disciple. If in spite of everything he still desires to call himself a Christian, the Lord will at once say to him, "I have never yet known you²³!"

But whoever has learnt to deny himself and accordingly strives to learn ever better how to become ever more like Christ, His Saviour, whoever in the power of faith as a result strives to carry out the will of His God and for this reason puts to death his own will, whoever regards everything as loss so that he may win Christ²⁴, whoever patiently carries his cross after the Lord and more and more dies to the world²⁵, he is indeed a disciple of Christ, whom, when he is weak, the Lord leads, strengthens and preserves in the faith for eternal life.

IMPORTANCE OF DENYING ONESELF AND FOLLOWING CHRIST.

How important it is that we deny ourselves and follow the Lord, the Lord shows when he continues: "**For whosoever will save his life,**" that is, his earthly life, "**shall lose it,**" that is, he will become lost: "**but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it**" (Luke 9:24). Whoever denies Christ and does not want to deny himself, whoever, for the sake of his earthly life in order to gain earthly profit, honour and advantage, does not want to follow Christ, does not want to bear earthly humiliation nor take upon himself his cross, *he will lose his life, his true life, his eternal life*. And what then has he gained? What benefit does that man have if he gained the whole world with all its riches, honour and joys if he himself is lost and has ruined his soul?

Let us suppose, dear Reader, that a man could really gain the whole world, *what would that benefit him if he had to die*? What benefit would it be to a dead person if ten million pounds²⁶ were placed with him in his coffin? He cannot enjoy his riches because he is indeed dead. It is far better poor and alive than rich and dead. Now how much more precious is the soul, the eternal life, than the earthly life! What can the man give if he has lost his soul²⁷? All the riches of the earth cannot change it. If a soul is lost, everything is lost. And whoever does not want to deny himself and to follow the Lord, loses his soul.

"**For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words,**" says the Son of God, **of him shall the Son of man be ashamed²⁸, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels**" (Luke 9:26). These are very serious words. Whoever is ashamed of the Lord and of his Word, of His Truth, and His congregation, whoever denies Christ before the world because of fear of men, whoever appears as if he does not know the Lord, or as if he does not agree with the Word of the Lord, the Lord will also deny him before His Heavenly Father.

There are many who are ashamed of the Lord, and they take offence at His Person, His Office and His Work (of Redemption). God's Word is too severe for them, His demands are too strict, they are ashamed of the Truth, His congregation, they do not want to confess the Lord, they are frightened of mockery, scorn, shame, loss in their business and dismissal from their job, hence they deny the Lord. To them the Lord will one day say: "**I never knew you**" (Mat.7:23). Christ will come again in great glory, in the glory of His

²³ Mat.7:23.

²⁴ Phil. 3:8.

²⁵ In the power of Christ's cross the Christian ceases living for the world and its evil ways. As far as the Christian is concerned he is alive only for Christ and to live for Him

²⁶ Approximately 20 million dollars, although the value of an English pound in those was much greater when you consider that a years salary for the average working man was about 200 pounds a year..

²⁷ **Kretzmann's** comment on Mark 8:38 is pertinent on this point: "There is nothing in the wide world which can measure up to the value of a single soul, especially not if one considers the fact that the Son of God shed His blood for that soul." If that soul is lost and spends eternity in hell, no amount of money will be of value to be able to bring him to heaven. It then is too late!

²⁸ **Kretzmann** states on this verse: "Whosoever here in this world has served the world, has been a slave of the lusts of the world, will **receive the judgment of damnation on the last day**. Of him the Son of Man will be **ashamed** when He returns in all His glory with all His holy angels."

Father which He had before the foundation of the world was laid; He will come in the fellowship of the holy angels, He will come for Judgement. Whoever is now ashamed of Him and denies Him before men, the Lord also will be ashamed of him, He will not want to know anything about him. Whoever has preferred the honour of the godless world to the honour of God, he will also be condemned with the world. The denial of Christ leads to condemnation.

How important it is, therefore, that we (in faith) deny ourselves and follow Christ! How important it is that we die to the world and live for Christ! We have all already denied Him and with Peter said, "I do not know the Man²⁹." We have already often been ashamed of our Saviour and preferred the honour before men to the grace of our God. We need to humble ourselves before God and implore Him: "Cast us not away from Thy presence. Forgive us our unbelief. Be gracious to us for the sake of Thy mercy." Also for our sin of denying Christ and also for our sin of unfaithfulness against our God and Saviour, Christ has atoned and paid. Whoever penitently acknowledges and confesses these as his sins, implores God for grace, will receive grace (in Christ). This undeserved grace of our God which is still daily offered to us (in the Gospel) is to give us joyful boldness so that we ever more and more die to ourselves³⁰ and live for Christ our Savior.

Whoever in faith lives for Christ, whoever is prepared to deny himself and the world³¹, to die to himself and the world³², he will live (eternally). Whoever loses his life for Christ's sake, he will find it³³. Whoever forsakes father and mother, and son and daughter, wife and child, fields and houses for the sake of his faith³⁴ he will receive it again an hundredfold³⁵ not only in this world, but also in the world to come³⁶. Whoever confesses the Lord, whoever follows Him, the Lord will also confess him before His Heavenly Father³⁷. The Savior will not be ashamed of us, but will acknowledge and receive us as His dear disciples before His Father and all the holy angels if we have followed Him here on earth as His faithful disciples. And we are to be with the Lord and enjoy His blessed fellowship eternally. Where He is there, there will also His servant be³⁸. By this promise the Lord will move us to follow Him. He will give us His power with joyful boldness to confess Him. If it is too difficult, He leads the way, He stands faithfully by our side, He Himself fights for us, He makes a path through all our trials, He is all our help in every trouble. His power will make us strong in our weakness. He gives power to the weak and sufficient strength to those who have no power³⁹. Through His Word He will strengthen us.

²⁹ Mat.26:72

³⁰ put to death our sinful nature.

³¹ In faith cease living for ourselves and for the world and its evil ways, and to live only for Christ.

³² In faith he regards his old self and the sinful world dead, as Christ who gives him new life lives and rules through him.

³³ But he that loses his life for Christ means in faith he denies his old sinful self, crucifies his sinful nature with all lusts and desires. Then he will find and save his soul, he will by God's grace through faith in Christ possess it as an eternal gain, he will have eternal life as his reward of grace.

³⁴ What the Lord here means is that none of these things are to be more precious than Christ and His Word. If through these things we are going to lose our faith, it is far better not to listen to them or even to do without them if necessary. It is much like a doctor having to amputate a man's arm because it is cancerous, rather than that he lose his whole body.

³⁵ If one leaves all that has been dear to him in this world, for the sake of the Redeemer and because of the Gospel, Christ's reward of mercy will be correspondingly great, yes, **an hundredfold** greater and richer than a person could expect. He that loves Christ and His service more than anything on earth, will **receive a compensation far exceeding all that he can understand....** And all these gifts merge into the **still more wonderful possessions of eternal life**, where the fullness of God's riches of mercy will be showered upon those that have remained faithful to the end. This hundredfold compensation, **extending into the life beyond**, is so certain.... The depth, fullness, and satisfying beauty of this reward of mercy cannot be adequately described with human language. (adapted from **Kretzmann** on Mark 10:30).

³⁶ Mark 10:30.

³⁷ Mat.10:32

³⁸ John 12:26.

³⁹ Is.40:29, "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength."

“If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me⁴⁰,” the Lord says. Once more let us answer: “Lord Jesus, we will follow You, please help us.” Yes, “Jesus, strengthen Thy children
 And make those overcome
 Whom Thou bought with Thy blood!
 Create in us new life,
 So that we always praise Thee.
 When our courage wants to fail us
 Pour out on us Thy Spirit,
 From this Thy love flows
 Into the heart;
 So that we remain faithful to you
 In life and death for ever and ever.”⁴¹

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

LECTURES ON THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH THE TRUE VISIBLE CHURCH OF GOD ON EARTH by Dr. F. Pieper.⁴²

SIXTH LECTURE: NO HUMAN INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE IS TO BE ACCEPTED UNLESS IT AGREES WITH SCRIPTURE.



How are we to understand this? Didn't God give a special gift of explaining Scripture to particular people in the church and therefore does He not also desire that Christians make use this of gift which has been bestowed upon individuals in order to understand Scripture? Certainly! And yet He at the same time wants us to continue to stand firm on this truth that Scripture does not in the least depend upon man's interpretation.

What kind of people are these selfsame expositors of Scripture? When human

⁴⁰ Luke 9:23.

⁴¹ This is a literal translation of this verse. It is similar to our Hymn 398 v4 (ALHB). Another translation of it reads:
 “ Jesus, all Thy children cherish
 And keep them that they never perish
 Whom Thou hast purchased with Thy blood.
 Let new life to us be given
 That we may look to Thee in heaven
 Whenever fearful is our mood.
 Thy spirit on us pour
 That we may love Thee more--
 Hearts o'erflowing;
 And then will we
 Be true to Thee
 In death and life eternally. Amen.”

⁴² **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.

expositors truly expound Scripture, they are never to bring their *own* interpretations, but always only the exposition of *the Scriptures*. True expositors always show that the exposition which has been made by them is not their own, but is that from *the Holy Scripture itself*. For example, when we therefore speak of Luther's or Chemnitz's or Gerhard's exposition of Scripture, then we do so in the sense that Luther, Chemnitz and Gerhard have shown us *from the Scripture* itself how a text of Holy Scripture is to be understood.

You must absolutely adhere to that. If you do not adhere to that, then instead of the faith of Christians standing on God's Word, it will nevertheless again stand on men's word and men's cleverness. If we would depend on a human interpretation of Scripture, we would be bound to the interpretation of certain people for the sake of their learnedness or their Office, then our faith would not rest only on God's Word, but on men's authority. Therefore we must absolutely adhere to this: No person, no number of people, as highly regarded or learned they might also be, no synod, no entire church body can lay down a decree how a text of Holy Scripture is to be understood. But everyone has to prove to each other, when they interpret Scripture that the interpretation which they offer, is not *their* interpretation, but the exposition of Holy Scripture itself.

Therefore, **“the Evangelical Lutheran Church recognises no human interpreter of Holy Scripture whose ex officio⁴³ interpretation must be regarded as infallible and binding;**

- a. not any individual person;**
- b. not any special estate;**
- c. not any special or universal church council;**
- d. not the whole church.”** (Walther TVC., p.61).

Because the Lutheran Church confesses this, *therefore it is an orthodox church*. The papal church says against this that the Scriptures must only be understood according to the interpretation of the church or the pope. Therefore the papal church is a false church. She places human authority between God's Word and the faith of the Christian. In regard to the question, “What must I do to be *saved*?” the papal church introduces human merit between the sinner and the grace of God. So in regard to the question, “What is *truth*?” it also inserts men's word and authority between God's Word and the faith of the Christian. And the modern theologians are essentially walking in the paths of the papacy in this point, when and in so far as they assert that the articles of faith are not to be obtained directly from Scripture itself, but from the so-called faith consciousness [of the person]. In this way also everything finally comes to stand on the human interpretation of Scripture. Let us continue in the way of the Church of the Reformation.

Scripture itself says in 2 Pet. 1:20 (“**Knowing this first that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation**”) that no-one may explain Scripture with his own interpretations. In his Commentary on this passage **Luther** writes: "Here (2 Peter 1:20, 21) Peter attacks the false teachers. He says: Because you know that we have God's Word, continue in it, and do not let yourselves be deceived by other false teachers, though they may come and pretend to have the Holy Spirit. '**Know this first** (for the other he will say later), **that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.**' Be guided by that and do not think that you will interpret Scripture by your own reason and sagacity. These words crush and quash the fathers' own interpretations of Scripture and forbid (us) to build upon such expositions. If Jerome or Augustine or any other of the fathers offers his own interpretation, we do not accept it. Peter has forbidden you to interpret (Scripture) of yourself; the Holy Spirit must interpret, or it shall remain uninterpreted. If, then, any of the holy fathers can prove that his interpretation is noted in Scripture, which verifies that it should so be interpreted, it is all right; if not, I should not believe him. Thus Peter attacks even the boldest and best teachers; hence we should be sure not to believe anyone even though he presents Scripture, in case he explains and interprets it of himself; for he cannot set forth its true meaning of his own interpretation. Here, then, all teachers and fathers, no matter how many there are have failed in interpreting Scripture. When, for example, they refer the words of Christ, Matt. 16:18: '**Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church,**' to the pope, that is a man-made interpretation, spun out of their own mind, and

⁴³ By virtue of one's position or for the sake of his Office.

hence we must not believe them; for they cannot prove from Scripture that it ever calls Peter the pope. But we can prove that according to Paul Christ is the Rock of faith. This interpretation is correct, for we know for sure that it has not been invented by men, but has been taken from God's Word." (Sermon on 2 Peter 1:19-21 [1523], IX, 857-859; SL IX, 1361 ff. Quoted in Walther TVC p.62))

No doubt human reason and all kinds of human knowledge can be used for the exposition of Holy Scripture, but **never as a principle but always only as the servant (instrument)**. As a rational human being, man uses the means (principles) of interpretation, but **the light from Scripture itself** is to be brought to bear on that which is necessary in order to illuminate a dark passage. That is to be absolutely adhered to.

Passages which cannot be explained with the help of Scripture, that is, from Scripture itself, **must remain unexplained**. Let no-one dare take from a passage a meaning when he cannot draw this meaning from Scripture itself! If I believe an interpreter when he brings his own interpretation, **then to that extent I fall away from God's Word. The Christian should rest his faith solely and alone on God's Word and authority**, and therefore he should not believe an interpreter when he brings his own word and authority into the foreground.

If someone places a passage of Holy Scripture before you and says: "This is what that means," then upon whatever he bases his, "This is what that means," must be the meaning of *Scripture*; **if it is not the meaning of Scripture, then he himself interprets it and then I should not believe him**. One's own interpretation is also *impossible*. No person can explain the Scriptures by himself. Why not? Because there is no person who by himself also knows even an iota⁴⁴ of a thing which concerns our salvation. If anyone himself so dares to take from Scripture the meaning it itself has, then he leads himself and others into error; **he pretends a knowledge which he does not have at all**. It could just as well be explained to us by a madman. A madman would be just as good as interpreting the words of Scripture, as if an otherwise rational man wants to give Scripture a meaning by his own interpretation. Luther uses the Roman interpretation of Matt.16:18 as an example. The papists must introduce a two-fold human way of thinking in order to be able to apply this passage to the pope. In the first place, in this passage it is not stated that the Church is based on *Πετρος [Petros]*⁴⁵, but in a deliberate variation of the form [of the Greek word], that it is based on *πετρα [petra]*⁴⁶; *επι ταυτη τη πετρα οικοδομηω την εκκλησιαν μου [epi tautee tee petra oikodomeeoo teen ekkleesian mou]*⁴⁷. And secondly: if it were granted that the Church was based on *Petros*, what in all the world then does Peter have to do with the pope? Between Peter and the pope exists not even the least fellowship or relationship.

Gerhard⁴⁸ condemns the use of one's own private interpretations of Scripture with the following words: "Scripture is not of any private interpretation (2 Peter 1:20), but the Holy Spirit, through whose inspiration the holy men of God have spoken, is its supreme and authentic Interpreter, who alone has

⁴⁴ An iota (ι) is smallest and ninth letter of the Greek alphabet. "An iota of a thing" is an idiom which means the very smallest or tiniest amount of something."

⁴⁵ **Peter:** (1) No definite article: rock-like, stresses the character of Peter, rather than his person, "rock-like." (2) Greek is *Petros*: a detached, but large fragment of rock. (3) Gender: masculine. In confessing Christ in this manner Peter is, truly showing Rock-like faith in Jesus. Peter is becoming like the man Jesus wanted him (and wants all Christians) to be when He first called him by this name, eg, John 1:42. What Jesus means is: "Confessing Me, you are truly as your name indicates, Rock-like in faith."

⁴⁶ **Rock:** (1) Has the definite article: identifies a particular Rock, namely, Christ and His Word. (2) Greek is *Petra*: massive rock, like that in Mat.7:24. (3) Gender: feminine. Petra (massive rock) cannot refer back to Petros (detached rock). The Greek grammar is vital here: if the church is built on Peter, then the Lord would have used Petros, not Petra. But all the credit and glory belongs to God. The use of **Petra** means the thing which made Peter rock-like in his faith, the Revelation and Word of God which teaches us that Christ is the Son of the living God. See 1 Cor.10:4; Eph.2:20.

⁴⁷ Translation: "**Upon this Rock (Christ the Son of the living God as this is taught in God's Word) I will build My Church.**"

⁴⁸ 1583-1637.

such authority. He has explained its meaning unmistakably in clear and lucid passages, from which we derive the analogy of faith, according to which the interpretation of the more obscure passages is to be determined." (Harmon. ev., ad Luc. 24:27, fol. 398. Translation from Walther TVC., 62).

The **Council of Trent** has the following canon for the interpretation of Scripture: "In order to check arrogant spirits, the council has decreed that no one relying upon his sagacity, in matters of faith and morals which serve for the edification of the Christian doctrine, should distort Holy Scripture according to his own sense, or dare interpret Holy Scripture contrary to the meaning which the **holy Mother Church** has held and still holds, whose office it is to judge concerning the true meaning and interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures, or even against the unanimous consensus of the church fathers."

Here the papal church **condemns** a false principle of interpretation, namely, interpretation according to one's own opinion (wisdom) and according to one's own meaning but in order to **substitute another equally false principle of interpretation instead**, namely, the interpretation according to the understanding of the so-called church and according to the unanimous consent of the church fathers. There is no unanimous consent of the church fathers; it is **non-existent** and according to this which is non-existent the Scriptures should now be interpreted. Now, what the "holy mother church" refers to, is in the final instance there understood as the papacy *itself*.

Chemnitz⁴⁹ demonstrates in his "Examination of the Council of Trent" how absurd (preposterous) the papistical canons on interpretation are as follows: "The gift of interpretation is not outside the church in the unregenerate, for it is a **light of the Holy Spirit kindled in the hearts of the regenerate**. Of the unregenerate Paul writes 1 Cor. 2:14, 15: '**The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him. . . . But he that is spiritual judgeth all things.**' . . . It is also clear that no one when interpreting Scripture dare rely on his own sagacity⁵⁰, not even in the case of clear passages; for it is expressly stated (2 Peter 1:20) that Scripture is not of any private interpretation....

"We indeed **gratefully and reverently use the works of the church fathers**, who in their commentaries have expounded many passages of Scripture very profitably. We confess likewise that through the **witness** of the ancient church we have been **greatly strengthened** in the true and sound understanding of Scripture. We certainly do not approve it when anyone invents of himself a meaning which is at variance with all of antiquity and for which there are no testimonies of the church.

"Since that is the case, what is it, then, that exposes the canon of the Council of Trent concerning interpretation to criticism? I reply: The canon certainly is phrased in general expressions for the **purpose of deception**. But there are especially **four main points** in it concerning which there is a controversy between them and us, and these are here **veiled in deceitful generalities**, though elsewhere they are explained most lucidly.

"**In the first place**, they say, the gift of interpretation is so bound to the orderly notation of the episcopal office that the interpretations of anyone who is elevated to the episcopate, no matter of what kind they may be, are at once to be received and honoured as legitimate, true, and sound, since they are valid because of a prerogative which the office possesses that is occupied by them. **Thus they say that the pope has all rights in the shrine of his heart, even though he were an ignoramus (idiot) and so forgetful that of himself he knew nothing.** . . . And such is also the opinion of the council, namely, when all bishops are there assembled, as pure and impure animals are gathered together in the ark of Noah, every interpretation put forth by them must be accepted **without any proof**, and that because, as they fabricate, the gift of interpretation is inseparably

⁴⁹ 1522-1586.

⁵⁰ Wisdom.

connected with the episcopate. But **this is wrong**, for Paul, speaking of the gift of interpretation, states expressly (1 Cor. 12:11): **'But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit dividing to every man severally⁵¹ as He will.'** In addition, the whole history of the Old Testament shows that God often raised up prophets and interpreters of His will elsewhere and from other tribes, while passing by the regular high priests and priests. And what kind of interpreters our bishops are, is known today by the whole world.

"In the second place, they give to their gift of interpretation **dictatorial authority** so that it is not necessary to prove their interpretations by firm and convincing reasons and principles of interpretation. But they demand of us that without delay and without any examination, investigation, and criticism we swear by the sense which those force upon us who arrogate to themselves the prerogative of interpretation without the proof of the Spirit. Paul, however, in 1 Thess. 5:19-21, immediately adds to his admonitions: **'Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings,'** the words: **'Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.'** Just so, according to Acts 17:11, the Bereans, when Paul explained to them the Scriptures, first searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so, and when they perceived that his interpretation was Scriptural, they approved and accepted it. So also the eunuch describes interpretation by the words **'should guide me'** (οδηγεῖν [hodeegein]: to lead, to show the way). He asks and Philip answers. In this way the foundation of true interpretation was laid so that the eunuch himself knew and perceived from the instruction of Philip what was the meaning of the passage which he read (Acts 8:30-39). In the same way Paul in 1 Cor.14:29, 30 describes **how pious teachers should search out the true meaning of obscure passages** by mutual exchange. He says: 'Let the prophets speak two or three,' and then adds: **'And let the other judge. If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.'**

"When **Augustine** in his book on Christian doctrine and elsewhere teaches others, he never uses any dictatorial authority for his interpretation, but shows how the obscure passages must be explained by those that are clear, and how the simple, sound, and **true interpretation must be obtained from the Scriptural mode of expression, the accompanying circumstances, comparison of the passage with others, and from the analogy or similarity of faith.** And since the natural man receives none of the things of the Spirit of God, but they are foolishness unto him, while the spiritual man judges all things (1 Cor. 2:14, 15), therefore the illumination of the Holy Ghost is necessary for finding and judging the true sense of Scripture. But our heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him (Luke 11:13). Therefore also Paul wishes to his congregations the Spirit of illumination (Eph. 1:17-19; Phil. 1:19; Col. 1:8-10)... Hence **in the church there is no dictatorial or papal authority for interpretation, but there are definite criteria according to which interpretation should be conducted and examined; for it is the church that has the right and liberty to judge.** But the papists arrogate to themselves the prerogative of interpretation so that at one blow they rid themselves of the burden of proof and rob the church of its privilege to judge. . .

"In the third place, when the papists in the interest of their errors have **distorted a passage of Scripture**, they carefully search the writings of the church fathers to glean a few statements which in some way favour their purpose. Then they demand that such interpretations of the ancients, handed down in some way and on some occasion, **should be absolutely accepted without any discrimination or criticism, no matter whether they agree with the words of Scripture or deviate from them.** The fathers, however, did not wish to bind their readers in such a way to themselves that they were to think that something must be believed just because it was so stated by them, but only that of which they could convince them by passages of the canonical Scriptures or by other acceptable proofs not contradicting the truth; for these are the very words of Augustine in his 112th letter to Paulina. . . . And Jerome writes to Augustine: 'This liberty as to interpretation must he

⁵¹ Individually.

preserved in the church by all means, namely, that the interpretations of all, whoever they might be, should deliberately be read and be freely examined according to their sources and reasons.'...

"In the fourth place, the papists arrogate to themselves also this prerogative that **even in the clearest passages of Scripture they freely depart from the true meaning of the words** and by their dictatorial authority patch on another so that people must believe not what Scripture says simply, properly, and manifestly, but what they themselves expound by virtue of their supreme power and authority. **By this artifice they undo the most lucid articles**, as those concerning justifying faith, the remaining sin in the regenerate, the imperfection of good works in this life, free will, the intercession of Christ, and others. Christ says: **'Drink ye all of it'** (Matt. 26:27), but they add to it their fictitious interpretation: **'Oh, no, not all, but only the priests.'** . . . The **'forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving'** (1 Tim. 4:1-3), Paul calls **'doctrines of devils.'** But this very clear light is useless, for they declare that these words are to be understood not as they read, but as they are interpreted by them. And the canon has been so worded that also in future they may play this game regarding the interpretation of Scripture with impunity and indeed by virtue of their authority....

"Another such interpretation of the Roman Church is the following: **'Here are two swords'** (Luke22:38), which means, the Roman pope has the administration of two swords, the **spiritual and the political**... Andradius is surprised that those who themselves do not possess the gift of interpretation could and would judge the (Roman) interpretations. Now, we indeed know that in the church there are degrees of insight and that not all have it; we know also that no one should be wiser than it behooves him to be. But it is well known how much judgment the fathers in their sermons, in which they interpreted Holy Scripture, ascribed to the people. **It is certainly the duty and business of an interpreter to demonstrate the reasons and grounds of his interpretation so clearly and definitely that others can understand and grasp them, even if they themselves do not possess the gift of interpretation.** In this way the eunuch recognised the truth of Philip's interpretation, according to Acts 8:34-38." (Examen Concil. Trid., De interpr. S.S., sess. 4, decret. 2, fol. 57 ff.

Translation taken from Walther TVC, 62-66. By Dr. J. T. Mueller).

Chemnitz thus acknowledges three things: **1. That the Scriptures are to be explained [expounded] by the Church.** In what way? Now the people who constitute the Church, the regenerate, who have the Holy Spirit, **only those are able to understand and to expound the Scriptures.** Outside the Church there is no understanding of the Scriptures and thus no exposition of the Scriptures. Naturally that is not the sense which the papists want to connect with their canon; **2. Certainly no-one may interpret Scripture according to his own ideas.** Every Christian indeed has the privilege of expounding Scripture, but no-one may interpret it according to his own ideas, but according to the sense which the Scriptures contain in their very own words; **3. Also we ourselves make use of the works of the church fathers in expounding the Scriptures; we read their Commentaries. We let them show us the sense of Scripture through their Commentaries,** or by them we let ourselves become still more certain of the already establish correct sense.

Then Chemnitz exposes the errors of the papists in regard to the following points: 1. That they bind the interpretation of Scripture to the Office of the Episcopate. Since 1870 it has bound the official interpretation of Scripture to the person of the pope, even when other 'Bishops' do not agree; 2. That the interpretation of the Episcopate is not to be proven according to Scripture as to its correctness; 3. That [in support of their errors] they use statements of the church fathers which are contrary to the meaning intended by the fathers; 4. That they do not consider themselves bound to the text and context of Scripture in their interpretation of Scripture. ----

Chemnitz gives an *example* of the papistical interpretation of Scripture as follows: In Luke 22:38 the disciples say: **"Here are two swords."** Bonifacius VIII himself appealed to this passage in the notorious

Bull **unam sanctum**⁵² in order to prove that the pope is the all supreme one, both in the church as well as in the state, that he has both the earthly [political] as well as the spiritual sword. Now Lutheran teachers have certainly referred to John 18:11 where the Lord said: “**Put your sword into your sheath.**” Against the statement of Andradius that Christians are not in a position to prove [examine, test] the interpretation of teachers who have the special gift of Scriptural exposition, Chemnitz explains: Every Christian can examine an interpretation of an interpreter of Scripture as long as these remain an expositor. **An expositor is a man who reveals the sense of Scripture to those who do not have the special gift of exposition.** Whoever cannot do that, is not an expositor of Scripture. Whoever merely interprets [Scripture] so that only he himself understands it, has failed his vocation [calling]. Also that is exactly one of the characteristics of a true expositor of Holy Scripture that he also shows to the simple [unlearned, plain] people who do not have the special gift of exposition that **his exposition is the exposition of Scripture.**

It is also a fact: although all Christians do not have the gift of exposition, **yet they can still check all interpretations whether they capture the sense of Scripture or not.** But the interpreters themselves are often to blame that interpretation is not recognised as the correct one. We are **not precise enough** in the expression or in the argumentation [we use], so that our hearers are not always able to understand clearly that our interpretation is the exposition of the *Scriptures*. But this defect then arises from this that we do not attend to [look after] our Office as expositors correctly and in every respect. **It is due to human weakness by which this creeps in.** Also Gerhard impresses this on us: Because the Christian Church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, that is, on the Holy Scriptures, then we accept the interpretation of the *fathers only then when it is proven to be the exposition of Scripture itself.*

Gerhard says: "We do not reject the practice of the church, the opinions of the fathers, or the decrees of the councils, **if they are drawn solely from Scripture**; for **our faith** in the end must not rest upon the judgment of either the fathers or the councils, **but upon Holy Scripture.** We indeed are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:20), and we recognise only Christ as the supreme and authentic Master of our faith (Matt. 23:8), who speaks to us in Scripture." (Loc. de interpr. S. S., par. 97).

[Delivered by F. Pieper on 13 December, 1889] (To be Continued.)

(Headings and bolded 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 43- 45)

The Lord’s Supper-Benefit.

44. Communion of the Sick. The pastor must remove all false ideas from the sick in regard to the Lord’s Supper⁵³:

(a) that the sick person does not regard the Lord Supper as bodily medicine⁵⁴.

⁵² On 18 November 1302, [Pope Boniface VIII](#) issued the [Papal bull *Unam sanctam*](#) which some historians consider one of the most extreme statements of [Papal spiritual supremacy](#) ever made. *Unam sanctam* means “**one holy**” referring to the false belief that the Roman Catholic Church is the one apostolic church outside of which there is no salvation. The main propositions of the Bull are the following: First, the unity of the Catholic Church and membership in is necessity for salvation. The pope then falsely affirmed that since he claimed to be Peter’s successors so he is the head of the church. All who wish to belong to the fold of Christ are placed under the dominion of the pope.

⁵³ Der Lutheraner Vol. 6, p.158.

⁵⁴ **Walther (Standard Epistles**, German, p. 179; English, p.185) states: “He (Christ) speaks this way, ‘Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you; this is My blood which is shed for you.’ Christ says nary (not) a word that merely eating and drinking his body and blood works faith. **Christ’s body and blood is not like medicine which makes one well even if taken in one’s sleep.**”

(b) that he does not think: now he would soon die or now he would certainly go to heaven⁵⁵; ex opera operato⁵⁶.

Note: Certainly in communing the sick the celebration of the Lord's Supper can be under some circumstances shortened, so that, for example, the admonition is left out, but the prayer and the Words of Institution must never be omitted⁵⁷.

BENEFIT

45. False Ideas. Many (falsely) are of the opinion that the Lord's Supper, the Sacrament, has an effect which is different from the Word, and which surpasses the effect of the Word. Muenchmeyer⁵⁸, Delitzsch⁵⁹, Vilmar⁶⁰, Thomasius⁶¹.

Note (a): (False teachers err in saying the following:) The distinction between the effect of the Word and that of the Lord's Supper should be: the Word operates psychologically on the heart through the understanding and the will, the Lord's Supper operates in a drastic manner; the Word is for the soul; the Lord's Supper is for the body⁶².

Note (b): What the special effects of the Lord's Supper are, opinions differ about it. False ideas about the benefits of the Lord Supper are:

⁵⁵ Der Lutheraner Vol. 6, p.158.

⁵⁶ **ex opera operato**: in this context this Latin expression means that the communicant falsely thinks **that solely by the mere mechanical outward act or work of going to the Lord's Supper** he will automatically go to heaven whether he has repented or not, or whether he believes in the doctrine of the Real Presence or not.

⁵⁷ Walther **Pastorale**, page 291. See Drickamer's Translation page 212. See Fritx Pastoral Theology page 194.

⁵⁸ **August Friedrich Otto Münchmeyer** was a German neo-Lutheran theologian. He was born in Hanover on December 8, 1807 and he died in Buer (10 miles north Essen), Münster on November 7, 1882.

⁵⁹ **Franz Delitzsch** (Leipzig, February 23, 1813 – Leipzig, March 4, 1890) was a German Lutheran theologian and Hebraist. Born in Leipzig, he held the professorship of theology at the University of Rostock from 1846 to 1850, at the University of Erlangen until 1867, and after that at the University of Leipzig until his death. In the early part of his life he was closely associated with the founders of the old Missouri Synod. Later on he became influenced by modernistic "scientific" theology. He wrote many commentaries on books of the Bible, and translated the New Testament into Hebrew. In 1880 he established an institution in Leipzig for the training of missionary workers among Jews.

⁶⁰ **August Friedrich Christian Vilmar**, German Neo-Lutheran theologian; born at Solz November 21, 1800; died at Marburg July 30, 1868. In 1818-20 he studied theology at Marburg, only to learn doubt from rationalism, and from doubt to pass to unbelief. Between 1823 and 1829 he had a number of teaching positions. During these years he renounced rationalism, and for a year or two professed the opinion that the world is the feeling of God. He made further progress through reading first the Church Fathers, especially Tertullian and Irenaeus, and then Tholuck's Lehre von der Sünde, and arrived at unwavering faith in Christ by his fortieth year, realizing that all he sought was to be found in the Lutheran Church, a process begun by the careful study of the Augsburg Confession and its Apology.

⁶¹ **Gottfried Thomasius** (June 26, 1802 – January 24, 1875) was a German Lutheran theologian. He was born in Egenhausen (in present-day Middle Franconia) and he died in Erlangen. He studied philosophy and theology in Erlangen, Halle and Berlin, and as a student had rationalistic teachers that included Friedrich Schleiermacher, August Neander, G. W. F. Hegel, Philip Marheineke and Friedrich Tholuck. In 1829 he began serving as a pastor in Nuremberg, and in 1842 was appointed professor of dogmatics at the University of Erlangen. He erred especially in the area of Christ's State of Humiliation and the Two Natures of Christ.

⁶² This **false idea Walther** refutes when He (**Standard Epistles**, German, p. 179; English, p.185) states: "When the Saviour says: 'Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you; this is My blood which is shed for you,' He indicates that our body should take this heavenly food and drink, not to nourish our **body** but our **soul** by means of our **faith; our souls should be strengthened**. By receiving Christ's body and blood we share in His Spirit. Paul in the verses following our text writes that in the Holy Supper we 'have been all made to drink into one Spirit [the Holy Spirit].' (1 Cor.12:13)." Then **Walther** expounds the words "**for you**" and he states: "Whenever we celebrate the Holy Supper and hear Christ's word '**for you**,' He clearly invites us to appropriate to ourselves **His sacrificial death in firm faith**. That is why we read in the **Small Catechism**: 'It is not the eating and drinking indeed that does them, but the **words** here written, 'Given and shed for you for the remission of sins. For the words '**for you**' require all hearts to believe."

(a) The Lord's Supper brings about a **bodily union with Christ** whereby our flesh and blood are purified.

Note: Christ's body and blood do not pass over into our body⁶³.

(b) By partaking of the Lord's Supper a person becomes a **member of the body of Christ**.

Kahnis⁶⁴, Delitzsch, Kliefoth, Muenchmeyer.

Note (a): Therefore according to this, even, for example, the unbeliever, Wiscilenus, who denies the Trinity, should be a member of the body of Christ.

Note (b): According to this viewpoint even the soldiers who came into contact with Christ and His blood at the crucifixion must have actually experienced a beneficial effect.

In Answer to this:

(1) In this way, Christ's merit (His work of redemption) (the Sola) is pushed aside and a grace by our own works is taught.

(2) The doctrine of the **spiritual** Kingdom of Christ is overthrown. If even all unbelievers who partake of the Lord's Supper belong to the Church, then the Church is visible, but then it can no longer be ruled alone through God's Word, but requires another kind of church government.

(c) Through the Lord's Supper the seed of the resurrection is planted in us like a noble bud in a wild grape vine⁶⁵.

Note: In this way they appeal to the fathers. But, these false teachers call the Lord's Supper only a symbol of the resurrection.

In Answer to this:

(1) Since the **children** of Christians do not attend the Lord's Supper, then they would not partake of "the seed of the resurrection" and all those who partake of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner would carry it in themselves.

(2) In this way the resurrection of the body is denied. The body which rises from the dead is then not the same body that died⁶⁶.

(d) (Another error is taught): The Lord's Supper has a **physical effect on the body** bring about bodily healing to the sick.

Note (a): The cases of sickness mentioned in 1 Cor.11:30⁶⁷ as God's punishment are **natural**⁶⁸ consequences of partaking of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner.

⁶³ **Walther (Standard Epistles**, German, p. 179; English, p.185) states: "It is **not** as many today dream that Christ's body and blood **mixes with our body and soul** and sanctifies them like a cultivated graft ennobles a wild tree, **plants in us the seed of resurrection, and makes us immortal by itself.**"

⁶⁴ Kahnis (1814-1888) began as a defender of confessional Lutheranism and later in his life became a modern rationalistic theologian who denied the following doctrines: the Trinity, the Inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures, the Person of Christ and the Lord's Supper.

⁶⁵ See Footnote 63: **Walther (Standard Epistles**, German, p. 179; English, p.185).

⁶⁶ In the explanation of the **Small Catechism** by Dr. Drewes, based on Job 19:25-27, he states: "The word *resurrection* teaches that the *same* body that has died will rise again." An accurate, expanded translation of Job 19:25-27 reads: "25. *I know with certainty that my Redeemer lives and that He shall come as Judge on the last day of this earth,* 26. *and, even though, at death my body decays in the grave, yet from within my body I shall see God.* 27. *I shall see God myself, my very own eyes shall see Him. There will not be someone else standing in my place. I look forward with fervent longing for that.*"

⁶⁷ 1 Cor.11:30 reads: "**For this cause many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep.**"

Kretzmann correctly states on this: "Practically all commentators agree in understanding v. 30 of physical afflictions and infirmities, of debility and ill health.... Others have suggested that such extraordinary and direct visitations and bodily punishments for spiritual shortcomings were a feature of the apostolic age. **But the text itself suggests nothing of the kind**, and the idea of believing some of the Corinthian Christians sleeping in physical death agrees neither with the usage of the word nor with the doctrine of Scriptures on this point. The meaning of the apostle

Note (b): If the unworthy partaking involves bodily punishments, 1 Cor.11, then worthy partaking involves bodily benefits. Thomasius.

Note (c): Then these things can be understood if a person allows everyone to go to the Lord's Supper who desires it.

MEANS OF GRACE

46. Means of Grace. The Lord's Supper is a Means of Grace, a means whereby God imparts to us His grace which Christ has obtained for everyone⁶⁹.

is plain: **Many of the members in their own midst were weak, they were lacking in spiritual strength**, Matt. 26, 41; Rom. 14, 1. 2; 1 Cor. 1,27; 9, 22; **others were seriously ill in spirit, lacking the strength and vigor of the ideal Christian**, Matt. 9, 12; Luke 5, 31; and **still others were dozing in spiritual sleep**, Eph. 5, 14; 1 Thess. 5, 6, and therefore **lacked the watchfulness, the spiritual vigilance, which should mark the Christian at all times**, lest he fall into the snares of the devil, 1 Pet. 5, 8. In other words, **many of the Corinthian Christians, though still nominally believers and looked upon as members of the congregation in good standing, were actually in a spiritual state, which showed that energetic measures were needed to bring them back to true faith and the active life in Christ**. Then, as now, this condition was **the result of misusing the Sacrament**, of eating and drinking unworthily, of not making the proper discrimination between the Lord's Supper and all other eating and drinking."

⁶⁸ "Natural" here has the meaning more of "**entirely to be expected**," not of physical consequences.

⁶⁹ **Walther (Standard Epistles**, German, p. 172; English, p. 178). The same sermon is found in "**Brosamen**" (German, p.110; English Translation by Pastor Baseley, pages 57,58) from which we will take the appropriate quote:

"For certainly it is true: The institution of the holy Lord's Supper does not belong to the great deeds of God for the redemption of the sinful world, as is celebrated at Christmas, the birth of Christ, His suffering and death on Good Friday, and his resurrection on Easter Sunday. **Only that is why the institution of the holy Lord's Supper, nevertheless, is so important**. For, you tell me yourself, **what good would it have done us that Christ had won God's grace for the whole sinful world by his life, suffering, death and resurrection, if there were no means of grace, by which this grace of God He won for us would be declared, wrapped up, distributed and sealed?** What good would it do us to have a Saviour who has gone up into heaven and sits at the right hand of God if there were nothing by which, as from His own hand, His riches of grace were now extended to us from heaven above to earth? **Without the divine means of giving and bestowing them how could a single person in the world ever become sure that Christ's universal reconciliation and redemption were his?** How could a single person in the world ever triumphantly cry out with that pious poet in divine surety:

'Assurance, assurance will never give way
So surely God's hands preserve us alway,
As sure as God's sun still shines in the skies,
So surely forgiveness of sins is my prize.'

"You might say: But couldn't a person become just as sure of this merely by his prayer through the Holy Ghost? I answer: No! For then wouldn't he always have to be afraid of fooling himself, of imagining that the deceptive feelings in his heart were the witness of the Holy Ghost? Or, whenever he stopped feeling grace in his heart, must he not then believe he had lost God's grace again?

"So how blessed we are! Christ has not only won God's grace for the whole world but **has also instituted three precious means of grace, by which He declares, bestows, wraps up and seals to people this grace He won**. And **these three means of grace are: the Word of the Gospel, holy Baptism, and the most precious Lord's Supper**. They are the **three treasure chests** upon earth where Christ has buried all the treasures of His grace. They are the **three rungs on the heavenly ladder** by which this grace descends to us. They are the **three common wells** that Christ has dug upon earth and filled to overflowing with grace, from which all who are thirsty draw and can and must quench the thirst of their souls. They are the **three hands of the Triune God by which He Himself extends to us from above the precious grace He purchased**. They are the **three divine witnesses upon earth** which audibly and visibly give witness here below to what the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost inaudibly and invisibly witness in heaven above of the salvation of sinners. They are the **three golden keys of heaven** that throw open to us the heaven of eternal blessedness and glory, prepared for us by Christ. **They are the way and the path upon which grace comes to people and people to grace**. The Word is the divine letter of grace, Baptism and holy Communion His inviolable, eternally **valid divine seal**. By rights we have, therefore, sung as much:

'Your Word, the Water and your Meal

Note: It is not an empty sound, an empty proclamation, but a means of grace.

FORGIVENES OF SINS.

47. Forgiveness of Sins. The benefit which the Lord's Supper brings is therefore the forgiveness of sins. What a great precious treasure! Shed for the forgiveness of sins.

Note (a): Here is forgiveness for **all** your sins. If **one** sin has been forgiven, then they are all forgiven.

Note (b): Where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also salvation.

Note (c): Shed for **many** for the forgiveness of sins. Mat. 26:28, "**This is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins**"⁷⁰: **shed for many**: shed for all.

Note (d): "**For you.**" Glorious words! If a poor man is given a large amount of money without any words, then he could doubt whether it belongs to him. The words: "**For you**" remove all doubt from him⁷¹.

My comfort in this world of weal,
There lay my buried treasure.'

"Yes, yes, my friends, there lay our buried treasure. So? Isn't today a blessed day, when one of these means of grace, the holy LORD's Supper, was instituted? Yes, truly, this day is also a day the LORD has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!"

⁷⁰ The expression "**many**" here refers to "**all people.**"

Kretzmann explains this verse: "For the wine which the cup contained was His blood of the New Covenant, of the new time of grace and peace with God through the efficacy of this blood, **for it is shed for the forgiveness of sins unto all, and actually is given to many that receive it by faith.**"

Dr. Ylvisaker in **The Gospels** (page 667): "The blood of the New Testament is shed; and it is shed for whom? 'For many,' that is, for all men."

Adam Fahling in **The Life of Christ** (page 602): "The expression *for many* is not to be understood as if the Lord desired to say that He would not die for all; He merely emphasizes that **His work is not done for a few, but for many, all mankind constituting a mighty host.**"

The Lutheran Study Bible: Hebrew expression for 'all people.'"

In Rom 5:15 the expression **hoi polloi**, "the many," means the same as "all men." In Is 53:11 it states concerning Christ's work of redemption, "**He shall see the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied, feel satisfaction and true refreshment; by His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many** (Greek: polloi), **for He shall bear their iniquities.**"

The Lutheran Study Bible comments on Is 53:11 as follows: "In this case, 'many' is the opposite of 'none'; best understood as 'all' in this context. The 'many' is a theme of Jesus (cf. Mat.26:28; Mark 10:45). In these cases, 'many' also refers to all, for 'in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself' (2 Cor.5:19; cf. 1 John 2:2)."

⁷¹ **Walther (Standard Epistles**, German, p. 180; English, p. 186):

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

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

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

Note (e): This is the chief fruit of the Sacrament.

Antithesis (What Opponents of the Scriptures say and what we reject):

- (a) Catholics. The chief fruit of the Mass is not forgiveness, but other graces (virtues).
- (b) Modernistic Theologians. The chief fruit of the Lord's Supper is the (physical) union with Christ and the communication to the communicant of the powers of Sanctification.

In Answer to this:

- (a) That is putting the cart before the horse. They speak of Sanctification without Justification, of the fruit without the tree.
- (b) We are only there united with Christ where there is forgiveness of sins.

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



Walther⁷² Pastorale – A Valid and Legitimate Divine Call. (Pastorale, Note 4, pages 41-45).

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 4⁷³.

Especially here in America the custom prevails in many congregations that preachers are called only for a certain time (**temporally**), namely, either with the proviso to dismiss them again at any time they choose or that they call them only for a certain length of time, for instance, a year or several years, or on previous notice, so that they are obliged to retire from the previous day of notice from the Office after the fixed date is up, with the possibility of a re-election for a new specified term. But a congregation has no right to give such a call, and a preacher is not justified in accepting it. **Such a call is not valid before God nor is it a legitimate one.** It is a grievous disorder. **First of all, it is contrary to the divine source of the call to the ministry** as the Word of God clearly testifies. (Acts 20:28; Eph.4:11; 1 Cor.12:28; Ps.68:12; Is.41:27). For it is **God Himself who calls the preachers, the congregations are only the instrument** to separate the persons for the work to which the Lord has called them. (Acts 13:2). This having been done, the preacher is henceforth in God's service and office, and no creature can depose or dismiss God's servant from his Office until God Himself has deposed or dismissed him (Jer.15:19; cf. Hos.4:6), in which case the congregation does not really depose and dismiss the minister, but only carries out God's obvious deposition and dismissal. If nevertheless the congregation does it, it makes itself mistress of the Office of the Ministry (Matt.23:8; cf. 2 Tim.4:2,3), and encroaches upon God's government and household, whether it has before the call or with the call made arbitrary conditions, or subsequently attempts to make such. But the minister who gives a congregation a right to call him and dismiss him at will, **makes himself a hireling, a servant of men.** Such a call is not at all the one which God has ordered in regard to the Ministerial Office, but quite another subject which has nothing to do with it. It is not a mediate call of God through the church, but a **human contract**; it is no life-call, but a transient function outside the divine order; it is a church arrangement, contrary to God's order, made by men, and therefore a heinous disorder. It is, therefore, as we

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

⁷² 1811-1887.

⁷³ See **Der Lutheraner** Vol.1, No.17, pages 65,66. Pastor Baseley's Translation.

have said, **null and void**, and one thus called is not to be respected as a servant of Christ and the Church. Such a call conflicts, in the second place, with the relation in which the pastor and the congregation should stand to each other, according to the Word of God.

In the first place, it is **necessary to the honour and obedience, which the hearers according to God's Word owe to the stewards of the divine Office of the Ministry** (Luke 10:16; 1 Tim.5:17; 1 Thess.5:12,13; 1 Cor.16:15,16; Heb.14:17); for if the hearers really have that pretended power, it would be in their full power also to withdraw themselves from the duty of showing that honour and obedience which God requires. But none the less **every temporary call is contrary to the fidelity⁷⁴ and steadfastness unto death which God requires from preachers** (1 Peter 5:1-4; 1Tim.4:16; 1Cor.4:1.ff), and contrary to the account which the preachers, as watchmen of souls, must once render of those entrusted to their care (Heb.13:17). Finally, a temporary call is **contrary to the commanded and observed practice of the Apostles**, committed to them by the Lord, according to which they, namely, the Holy Spirit through them, did not leave it to, the hearers to determine how long they should remain with a congregation (Luke 9:4,5), as it is also **contrary to the practice of the Church** in those times, in which the corruption in doctrine, life, order, and discipline had not as yet crept in. It, moreover, needs no argument to show that so long as such a call prevails, the Church never is rightly cared for, governed, exercised in good discipline, rooted and grounded in faith and godliness propagated; such a call opens the door and floodgates to all disorder, confusion and mischief through gainsayers and men-pleasing and men-fearing belly slaves⁷⁵.

Let us now hear the opinions of some of our Church fathers. In the first place, thus writes **Luther** in a letter, addressed to Valentine Hausmann in the year 1522, as the inhabitants of Zwickau had dismissed their pastor, Conrad Cordatus, on account of his severe measures, by instigation of Burgess Muhlport: "That you may yourselves well consider, that, where a well-meaning fellow studies his life-time, wastes (devours) his father's substance and has experienced all kinds of misfortunes, should be pastor at Zwickau, as they have been reported, that they should be the lords and the pastor the servant who sits every day upon the swing; if Muhlport says so he might remain, if not, he must go; no, no, my dear sir, to that you shall not come, or you will not keep a pastor. We will not do it, nor permit it unless they acknowledge that they will not be Christians. We will allow and permit it unto heathens, but **in Christians Christ Himself will not suffer it**. If those at Zwickau or you, yourselves, my dear sirs and friends, will not support your brother, that you may well leave. Christ is somewhat richer than the world, though He feigns poverty. It is said: *Esurientes implevit* (He hath filled the hungry with good things, see Luke 1:51); thereby let it remain as it is, and let those at Zwickau press on." (Walch XXI,337; Erl. LIV,219).

Thus writes **Hieronymous Kromayer**, Professor at Leipzig, died 1670: "The Office of the Ministry cannot be conferred by a call which after the manner of a contract is limited to a certain time, of certain years or with the reverse of the liberty to dismiss the person publicly called, because God has not given to the one, who calls, anywhere the authority to make such a contract, nor does He give and permit it, and therefore neither the one who is called nor those calling can consider such a vocation or dismissal to be divine." (Theol. positiv. P. II, p. 530).

Finally, **Ludwig Hartmann** writes: "To this subject belongs also that much disputed question if a minister can offer his services or his official labours to the Church for certain specified years. We say, No: 1. Because **such a call prescribes to God**, who calls, a term, in a foolhardy manner, after which expiration he may retire from the church, however it may conduct itself; as **it is not the business of the legate to prescribe to his Lord how long he shall represent Him**. 2. Because **fleshly considerations** underlie the question which ought to be far removed; for such a one thinks, if matters do not go according to one's heart's desire, nor riches are to be gathered or many reverses are to be borne, then he can easily extricate himself from these labyrinths. 3. **For the sake of many disadvantages**; for, if the faithfulness of a pastor would be agreeable to the congregation, it would

⁷⁴ Faithfulness.

⁷⁵ Rom.16:17,18.

be then unexpectedly deprived of it; and because by the many changes as it is well known the congregational incomes and possessions depreciate in value. If we, moreover, inquire if it be allowable to call a servant of the Word under certain conditions of time, so that, whenever the patron no longer desires to hear and suffer the pastor, he must then go and take up his abode at some other place? Then I answer: **We are servants of God and this is God's Office to which we have been called, through men indeed, yet by God Himself; this holy work must accordingly be treated in a holy manner and not according to men's whims.** A shepherd or cowherd may be hired by men for a certain time; and when the time specified is up (yet not whenever you please) if they have not given satisfaction they may be dismissed; but **it is in no man's power to do so with a shepherd of souls.** And a servant of the Word himself dare not accept the holy Office in that way, unless he is willing to be a hireling. Those who are called after that manner **certainly will not administer the Office industriously and faithfully**, but will be flatterers, saying what the people like to hear; or if they be true to their Office, they will be in constant dread that they will be dismissed." (Pastorale evang., pag. 104). [Compare Brochmandi System. univers. th. Loc.31. c. 3, cas. 7. Part. II, fol.372.]

Finally thus writes the **Theological Faculty at Wittenberg** as a school-cantor⁷⁶ was to be unceremoniously discharged, in the year 1638: "The vocations (calls) to congregational and school service where one gives the other a quarter of a year notice to quit without any very serious reasons, cannot be tolerated in our Lutheran churches." (Consil. theol. Witebergensia. III, 55. a.) (*).

[Walther's Footnote (): Those preachers are by no means guilty of conducting the Office on a temporary basis who, without giving up the Office to which they have a regular, legitimate call, and with the approval of their congregation, serve another one for a time on a loan basis. Concerning this case Chr. H. Zeibich published his own writing under the title "Schediasma de theologis ad tempus commodatis" (Leipzig. 1709. 4). In a revision of this writing Loescher writes: "He (Zeibich) shows (section 6) which Theologos he considers sub commodatis ad tempus, namely, those who leave their congregation with the intention of returning and were lent for a certain time to another church which they can before others perform good services, so that they can well establish for the church the correct foundation of the church. Annexed section 7 refers to the sacred examples of Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, of the Saviour Himself and His Apostles Peter, Paul and Barnabas. After their times and at the time of the Reformation are the examples of Luther, N. Amsdorf, Ph. Melancthon, Justus Jonas, Casper Cruciger, Bugenhagen who, at the very beginning of the Gospel, were lent out from Wittenberg to Braunschweig (Brunswich) for a year," etc. But Zeibich states explicitly that he is not talking about those, who let themselves be hired for a certain time for church work, so to speak, who are a type of hireling" (Unschuld. Nachrr. Jahrg. 1709, p.412. ff.).]*

But as little as a conscientious preacher can accept a temporary call, so little can he let himself be bound to remain with one congregation, under all circumstances, until his death. On this point **Dr. Joh. Nikolaus Misler**, professor at Giessen (died 1683), writes: "To sell himself to one local congregation for his whole life overthrows the whole doctrine of the Gospel about the legitimate calling of preachers and denies God the authority to transfer His ministers, as seems good to Him, to work elsewhere in His vineyard. This undertaking lacks any basis in God's Word and His Christian Church. At the same time it takes away from a preacher all authority to get out of an ungodly yoke, even for the most important and righteous reasons or even for the sake of conscience, so that the preacher would retain no freedom to contradict or, with Lot, to leave Sodom at God's command, even if the civil authority at the place would be overthrown or would degenerate into a godless and tyrannical one, or if atrocious abuses, heresies, and idolatries would be commanded. But one can promise to serve a congregation as long as one can remain with it in good conscience and to administer his Office according to the proper freedom of the Holy Spirit. Many, however, pretend to do this with the good and devout intention, in order that frequent and inconsiderate changes of places might be avoided, but this pretense is an empty one and the matter is against God's Word." (Opus novum quastt. practico-theol., fol. 491).

⁷⁶ A pastor who is called to help in a large congregation to assist their pastor lead in worship, to officiate on special occasions, to teach adults and children and give pastoral care together with the senior pastor.

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

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 Bethany⁷⁷, South Australia. (Taken from KB Jan. 1888 pages 5,6) [Continued from last issue of **Morsels**].

Thesis II.

“The Symbols⁷⁸, that is the publicly recognised Confession of Faith, as well as the private writings of the old and recent teachers are not to be regarded as equal to Holy Scripture, but are to be accepted as witnesses as to what manner and as to what places such doctrines of the Prophets and Apostles have been accepted.” – Accepted.

Thesis III.

“The writings referred to are not to act as a judge like the Holy Scriptures, but are only a witness⁷⁹ to and an explanation of the Faith as a short and a plain confession produced for the unanimous, universal Christian Faith and Confession of the Orthodox and faithful Church.”

Also this thesis was accepted.

Thesis IV.

⁷⁷ 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.

⁷⁸ **Dr. F. Bente** explains why the Book of Concord is referred to as the “**Symbols**” of the orthodox Lutheran Church as follows: “*Book of Concord*, or *Concordia*, is the title of the Lutheran *corpus doctrinae* (body of doctrine, Ed.), i. e., of the **symbols** recognized and published under that name by the Lutheran Church. The word symbol, *sumbolon*, is derived from the verb *sumballein*, to compare two things for the purpose of perceiving their relation and association. *Sumbolon* thus developed the meaning of tessera, or sign, ... badge, banner, watchword, ... confession, creed. A **Christian symbol**, therefore, is a **mark by which Christians are known**. And since Christianity is essentially the belief in the truths of the Gospel, its symbol is of necessity a confession of Christian doctrine. The Church, accordingly, has from the beginning defined and regarded its symbols as a rule of faith or a rule of truth. Says Augustine: "... A symbol is a rule of faith, both brief and grand: brief, as to the number of words; grand, as to the weight of its thoughts." [Historical Introduction to the Book of Concord].

⁷⁹ See Pieper **Dogmatics** I, 204: “With respect to the testimony of the Church two extremes must be avoided. First, **Christians and Christian theologians do not despise this testimony, but take note of it, rejoice over it, and are confirmed in their faith** when they see that God also in former ages raised up **witnesses of the truth** revealed in Scripture.”

In a footnote **Pieper** says: “Thus the Augustana repeatedly pleads that it teaches no novelties but is professing only such doctrines as have had the testimony of the ancient Church (*Trigl.*, pp. 51, 59, 61, 93). Likewise the Formula of Concord. (*Trigl.* 1037, 64; cf. the *Catalogus Testimoniorum*, p. 1107 ff.) — Chemnitz says in his *Examen Concilii Tridentini*, Geneva, 1667, p. 71, in the chapter De Traditionibus: “...However, with a good conscience we can affirm that after the study of Holy Scripture we have in our inquiry and investigation of the consensus of the true and purer antiquity stood for as much as agreed with the grace of God and do stand for that today. **For we give to the writings of the Fathers their proper and honorable place, which is due them, as men who have explained many passages of Scripture very clearly and defended the ancient doctrines of the Church against the new corruptions of the heretics, and that from Scripture, explaining many doctrinal passages correctly.**” Chemnitz then demonstrates this by particular instances.”

Dr. F. Bente states: “The Lutheran symbols, therefore, are **not intended to supplant the Scriptures, nor do they do so**. They do, however, **set forth what has been at all times the unanimous understanding of the pure Christian doctrine adhered to by sincere and loyal Lutherans everywhere**; and, at the same time, they **show convincingly from the Scriptures that our forefathers did indeed manfully confess nothing but God's eternal truth, which every Christian is in duty bound to, and consistently always will, believe, teach, and confess.**” [Historical Introduction to the Book of Concord.].

“The Christian Book of Concord of the year 1580 is the united confession of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as the orthodox Church since the Reformation.”

In this connection, among other things, it was discussed that it was due only to local reasons that the Scandinavian churches have not elevated a part of the Book of Concord to their church confession, but by no means for this reason as if they opposed doctrines contained in it⁸⁰.

This thesis was also accepted.

Thesis V.

“We confess our allegiance to the Book of Concord of 1580 so that we maintain its acceptance not only for the time when it was drawn up, but also for the present time and for the future.”

In discussing this thesis special attention was chiefly paid to the fact that we completely reject a so-called merely historical view of the Symbolical Books and rather recognize and adhere to the historical-dogmatical viewpoint as the correct one. – Accepted.

Thesis VI.

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

In the course of the debate Thesis VII was connected with Thesis VI.

Thesis VII.

“We confess our allegiance to the Book of Concord in this manner that we regard as binding not only the doctrinal content which is given in it, but also the phrases which are used in it by which the doctrine is expressed⁸¹.”

In the morning session both these theses were discussed only in an introductory way, namely, the opinion was rejected as if by the word “**because**” so much is to be meant that the Symbols are to agree “word for word” with the Bible [see **Church Messenger** (Kirchenbote) in regard to this position], which could easily be connected to the sense, as if the Book of Concord is a perfect book inspired by the Holy Spirit. Rather by the word “**because**” only so much is meant that every doctrine contained in the Book of Concord is to be regarded as binding on us Lutherans since it agrees with God’s Word.

(To be continued)

THE PSALMS (Johann George Starke)

⁸⁰ I don’t know whether the following was what they were referring to but **church history** records this discussion that **Dr. Walther** had at a convention: “In fact, the question of the lack of a full commitment to the Book of Concord in the Norwegian Synod constitution came up at the 1863 meeting of the Missouri Synod. The question was asked: ‘If, then, we require that our congregations acknowledge *all symbols* (at least *indirectly*), when the servants of the Church are pledged to all symbols, do we thereby regard it as necessary that the same pledge must be made also in other churches, e.g., in the Norwegian, if they wish to be recognized as truly Lutheran churches?’ To that a speaker (which Meyer assumes was Walther) answered: ‘If the **Danish-Norwegian Church** had wished to introduce this confession [the Formula of Concord], **it would have run the risk of evoking the gravest controversies and unrest**. This, too, is also the reason why this confession was not accepted officially in that church. **It is false and erroneous, as one so often reads, that the Norwegian Church is not confessionally constituted as is the German; for, even if the Symbols have not all been accepted officially there**, the theologians such as Brockmann [sic] (Brochmand), Lassenius, et al., prove, nevertheless, that **the Book of Concord has always been regarded as the book of Lutheran faith and confession**. Besides that, not only are the present faithful Norwegians trying to have the complete Book of Concord accepted, but it is also being translated in Norway into the vernacular itself. [Missouri Synod, *Proceedings*, 1863, 42, italics in the original. Cited in Meyer, 44,45.] (“**The Book of Concord and Confessional Subscription Among Norwegian Lutherans—Norway and America**” Sixth Annual Pieper Lectures Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri October 19, 2001 Erling T. Teigen).

⁸¹ This is also stated by our faithful orthodox Lutheran fathers in the **Introduction to the Book of Concord of 1580** where they state (and may we hold steadfastly to the same): “Therefore we also have **determined not to depart even a finger’s breadth** either from the **subjects** themselves nor from the **phrases which are found in them**, but, the Spirit of God aiding us, to persevere constantly, with the greatest harmony, in this godly agreement, and we intend to examine all controversies according to this true norm and declaration of pure doctrine.” (Triglotta, p. 23).

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.

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

(b) the fruitfulness.

“that bringeth forth his fruit in his season.”

that bringeth forth⁸² his fruit: that is to say, he will produce good works as fruits of the true faith⁸³, James 2:18⁸⁴; the fruits of the Spirit, Gal.5:22⁸⁵; Eph. 5:9⁸⁶; also fruitful edification through words and examples, Titus 2:7⁸⁷ to other souls.

⁸² פִּיּוּץ to yield, produce. The verb stresses constant action, something that is a way of life with the Christian. 1 Thes. 2:13, “**For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.**”

⁸³ **Dr. Stoeckhardt** (Comments on the Psalms): “The righteous always remains fresh in his spiritual life and always remains productive as a tree of the Lord. He never ceases to bear the fruit of good works. A believer’s strength never abates, but keeps on performing good works, because he thrives and draws his strength and life from the Word.”

Dr. Luther: “To bring forth fruit indicates that this blessed man, through love (which we have seen is commanded in every Law of the Lord), serves not himself but his neighbors. It is not a tree which bears fruit for itself, but it brings its fruit for others.” (AM.Ed. Vol.14, p. 300).

⁸⁴ James 2:18, “**Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.**”

An expanded translation of this verse which correctly brings out the original text reads as follows: “**But someone will say to you then, ‘As for you, you say that you have faith, and that I have good works. Now you show me your alleged faith (which you claim to possess) that does not show itself in any good works [if you can], and I myself will show you my actual faith by the [good] works which flow from it.”**

Kretzmann: “This is a very vivid presentation, in the form of a dialog. Some one might raise the objection: Do you claim to have faith? thus apparently making the matter doubtful. But the writer would be ready with his rejoinder: I certainly do, and what is more, I have works to show for it. He might very well challenge the objector to give evidence of his faith without works, and then he, the author, would soon furnish convincing proof of the existence of real faith in his heart, namely, the good works which are the fruit of faith.”

in his season: In the time of grace, because you can still bring forth fruit, John 9:4⁸⁸, especially at the most convenient hours because you can contribute something beneficial to the glory of God and to the next best thing, even to your own welfare.

Comments on this part of Verse 3

רָצָה (**that**): does not refer to the tree to which the believers are compared, but to the believers themselves, thus they are similar to it. This shows the stronger distinctive accent (**merka maachatus**⁸⁹) which separates the preceding words from the רָצָה (**that**). Believers are indeed all trees of righteousness and must bring forth fruit according to their nature and circumstances. Meanwhile one does not yet sharply argue against this that not everyone can according to the particular proportion of grace imparted to him perhaps put to use his own pound⁹⁰ and bring forth his fruits with good intention.

(to be continued)

VITAL DIFFERENCE: JUSTIFICATION: NEVER INCLUDES WORKS; SANCTIFICATION: FAITH PRODUCES AND SHOW ITSELF IN WORKS OF LOVE.⁹¹

Faith In Christ	equals	JUSTIFICATION
Faith In Christ + Works	does not equal	JUSTIFICATION.
Faith In Christ Produces Works of Love	equals	SANCTIFICATION

⁸⁵ Gal.5:22, 23(a):“**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.**”

⁸⁶ Eph. 5:9, “**For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.**”

⁸⁷ Titus 2:7,8 (a): “**In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness (what is unadulterated with error), gravity (characteristic of a person that moves others to show them respect and dignity), sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned (censured).**”

⁸⁸ John 9:4, “**I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.**”

Kretzmann explains: “**The present time is the day of Christ; now is the time of grace; now He must be about His own and His Father's business. That same spirit must live in the followers of Christ, that must characterize all their efforts for the spread of the Kingdom and all their work in the interest of the kingdom of God. Every bit of time, every ounce of strength should be thrown into this most important work.** For soon the night of death will come, and that will definitely put a stop to all work with and for the Lord.”

⁸⁹ **merka maachatus:** This refers to two strong “**Conjunctive Accents**” in the Hebrew text of the Psalms. It is used to show a distinctive connection in thought in the verse. The one accent is under the Hebrew word for “water”, showing a short pause and involving a complete thought, namely, “**he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water.**” Then there is another type of accent under the Hebrew word for “that” showing that the previous thought is connected with “**that bringeth forth his fruit in his season.**” This is particularly significant because “**he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,**” deals with conversion, faith in Christ produced solely by the Holy Spirit through the Means of Grace. Conversion does not depend on works, hence the pause. But the words, “**that bringeth forth his fruit in his season,**” are connected in so far as faith in Christ produces works of love purely as a fruit of faith.”

“For accuracy and faithfulness to the text it is very important that the translator and interpreter understand the major accents and that their translation and interpretation reflects the divisions of the text which the accents signal.” (See **The Masoretic Hebrew Accents in Translation and Interpretation** by William D. Barrick, Th.D.).

⁹⁰ This is a reference to the Lord’s parable in Luke 19:11-27. The Greek word for pound is “*mina*” and in the New Testament it was a weight and sum of money equal to **100 drachmae**. The Roman government officially reckoned the value of the drachma at **three fourths of a denarius**. A denarius was the normal day’s wage for the worker. The drachma was a **silver coin of about 3.4 g** and was still in use in the first century AD. The present price of silver is 69 cents per gram. At this value a drachma was equal to \$2.35. 100 drachmae are equal to \$235. The Jews paid an annual temple tax of two drachmas (a didrachma). Matthew 17:24.

⁹¹ Diagram by BLW.

