

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.]

DEVOTIONAL

[Continued: From “**Der Lutherische Kirchenbote**” (The Lutheran Church Messenger) the official church paper of our former ELSA here in Australia, June, 7, 1917, Vol. 44, Number 12, Page 89, 90. Conclusion.]

Rich and Still Poor, Poor and Yet Rich

(by the late Dr Th Nickel¹)

For the 1st Sunday after Trinity.

“**And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried, by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died, and was buried.**” (Luke 16:22). **Luther** comments in an absolutely magnificent way on these words: “There poor Lazarus now lies before the rich man’s gate, and no one attends to him. But the beloved holy angels are sitting by and taking care of him because the rich man does not want to. Were I to change places, I would rather be poor Lazarus than the rich man, regardless of the fact that Lazarus lies before the gate of the rich man covered with sores, hungry, languishing, lonely, and without an attendant, while, on the other hand, the rich man has everything in abundance. For I would rather have an angel as guardian and keeper than a hundred Roman emperors with all their might. Now the text says that not one angel, but many angels waited on Lazarus until his soul left him. O how badly the man was treated on earth, having had no one to take care of him! But now he has many angels who tend to him and carry his soul into Abraham’s bosom.” (Taken from Luther’s House Postils², Vol. 2, pages 233-234. Edited and Translated by E Klug.)

Due Alone to Christ’s Work of Redemption In Death Lazarus Possesses Eternal Blessing and Glory

“**The beggar³ died,**” the Lord said, not Lazarus. Only his body died, his soul lives. Lazarus bore Christ’s yoke⁴, died, and yet lives. His grief, affliction and misery have come to a blessed end. What a difference! He from whom people had turned away in disgust because of his ulcerous sores is carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom⁵, that is, in heaven. As a son of Abraham, as a child of promise, he enjoyed with the

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 They are called “Postils” from the Latin words *post ille*, or “after this.” “This” was the Holy Gospel for the day. “After” the text came the sermon. These are sermons for the Church Year, each preached by Luther at his house where he would gather friends and family for services other than the main service at church Sunday morning.

³ German: “the poor man.”

⁴ The expression “**Christ’s yoke**” is taken from Mat.11:30. **Kretzmann** describes it as follows: “For it is *His yoke, the yoke of the cross*, which the Christians must bear in this world, as followers of Him that bore His cross for our sake. His example will be a steady reminder that we must learn in all things, *in the midst of the sorrows and tribulations of the world*, to follow His meekness and lowliness, which was not outward, assumed, but a meekness of the heart. . . . Far from separating us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, the tribulation of this present life, the cross which we bear for the sake of our Lord, binds us more closely to Him with bands of everlasting strength.” (NT Commentary, Vol. 1, page 65).

⁵ The German word as well as the Greek word refers to “lap.” Lazarus was sitting on Abraham’s lap. **Kretzmann** states: “He that had not had a friend in the wide world, whom people refused so much as to touch, now was **joyfully**

“father of the believers⁶” eternal blessedness. When also the smallest funeral for his body had occurred and he, without any show of sympathy on the part of people, was carried to the grave by the side of his fellow man, yet his soul partook of the highest honour, the angels of God carried it to Paradise. While he lived here in this world he lay on the street, but at death his soul was taken to heaven. Before he died, in this world, he was among the dogs, after death he was in heaven among the saints. On earth he had no one who would accept him for himself, in death the holy angels must serve him. In life he had to endure many hardships, long years of severe illness, now he had died he was in the place of eternal comfort. Hence Lazarus in the midst of all his poverty was still rich, immensely rich. **He was a child of God and therefore an heir of eternal life⁷**. Even though he was despised in this world, yet his name was known by God and he was looked upon with great esteem by all of God’s angels. In contrast, how poor was the rich man with all his earthly happiness and wealth!

Due to His Unbelief In Death the Rich Man Suffers Eternal Torment in Hell

“**The rich man also died, and was buried,**” (Luke 16:22(b)), the Lord said. The Lord expressly mentions that he was *buried* and by this wants to indicate that now all his worldly glory is past that his earthly happiness has ended, for he could not take anything with him in the grave. “**He was buried.**” Without question a magnificent funeral had been prepared for him. His charitable attitude, his generosity and his noble character were praised, and perhaps they erected a great memorial stone in his honour. But that too was all. From all that, he himself had benefitted nothing, nothing at all. In death, in these earthly things, he was no better than poor Lazarus. But what became of his soul?

The Bible states: “**In hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame’**” (Luke 16:23,24). What a difference! The soul of the rich man is taken to hell. While the soul of Lazarus when he died was taken by the angels to Abraham’s bosom, the soul of the rich man goes to the place of torment. Here we are quite clearly and plainly taught that there is a hell. Hell is the place of torment, the place of the damned. God is a consuming fire⁸ and His wrath upon those who despise His grace is a blazing fire in which they burn and yet they are not burnt up. The torment of hell is compared with a fire in order to describe the terrible, horrible pain which the damned experience. The rich man also experiences this torment. And the greater the earthly happiness was that he enjoyed here on earth, the more he now experiences the torments of hell. He lifts up his eyes and sees Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom. He recognises Lazarus and the sight causes him to experience his shame and his terrible misery still more. Lazarus, this once despised beggar, is in heaven, and he, the once highly respected, popular, well-to-do man on earth, finds himself in hell. He also knows that his fate is sealed⁹, that there is nothing that can save him from this damnation. He only yearns for relief from his terrible torments. “**Father Abraham,**” he says, “**have mercy on me,**” that is, feel sorry for me, “**and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger**

received into the eternal home and found a place of honour by the side of Abraham, leaning against his bosom, as the beloved disciple leaned against the bosom of Jesus.”

Luther: “We conclude that the bosom of Abraham signifies nothing else than the Word of God, where Christ was promised, Gen.22:18, to Abraham, namely: ‘In Thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.’ In these words Christ is promised to him, as the one through whom every person shall be blessed, that is, shall be delivered from sin, death, and hell.” (Luther’s Church Postil, Vol.4, p.26, Edited by Lenker).

Pastor Kleinig used to describe it as the most blessed, perfect, intimate communion and fellowship that the soul of the believer is enjoying in heaven with Christ and other children of God there.

⁶ Reference to Abraham. See Rom.4:11, “**He (Abraham, Ed.) received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed unto them also.**”

⁷ In spite of his poverty and misery here in this world, from the Law of God in the Old Testament Lazarus recognized and confessed his sins and God’s punishment that he deserved because of them. From the Gospel of the redeeming work of the coming Saviour, Jesus Christ, he had in faith received the forgiveness of all his sins and showed this by his love for God’s Word (cf. Luke 16:29). Hence the words of Gal.3:26 applied to him, “**For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.**”

⁸ Deut. 4:24; Heb.12:29.

⁹ There is no escape.

in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame” (Luke 16:24). As a descendant of Abraham he hoped this would guarantee the granting of his request. He desired only the smallest relief from his pain, a tiny droplet of water to quench his tormenting thirst. But his request is not granted.

Abraham said: **“Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented”** (Luke 16:25). Here on earth you had your good things, he means to say, now instead in hell you suffer torment and agony. You indeed have wanted to have it so¹⁰, therefore no injustice has been done to you. Money and earthly goods were your happiness on earth. During your time on earth you did not ask after God¹¹, hence you must now also be without God in eternity. You have only reaped what you have sown¹². Lazarus, on the other hand, on earth had to endure much suffering but he had placed his hope in God¹³, hence he now experiences that which he longed for on earth. He is now comforted after his long, severe suffering.

Even if Abraham had wanted to help, yet he could not. **“And beside all this,”** he said, **“ between us and you there is a great gulf¹⁴ fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence”**(Luke 16:26). That is a fearful truth! Between heaven and hell there is no bridge. Once a person is lost in hell, he remains lost there. Once a person is saved in heaven nothing more can tear him from the hand of God. Those who sleep in the Lord¹⁵, who rest from their labours, they are not touched by any evil. But those, who here in this world, lived in unbelief are eternally expelled from the presence of God. Since the rich man during his life on earth had practised no mercy¹⁶ to poor Lazarus, then now in eternity he had to expect no compassion. An unmerciful judgement will come upon all those who (since they did not have faith) showed no acts of mercy in this world.

Rich Man Is Worried His Brothers Will Add to His punishment When They Arrive In Hell

In his great anguish the rich man thinks of his brothers. They are leading on earth the same kind of life as he did and therefore they are going to meet him in the same eternal perdition. He wants to rescue them, not because he has brotherly love towards them, which is not found in hell, but for this purpose so that his own damnation will not yet become greater, when they are also lost and reproach him. Therefore he says: **“I pray¹⁷ thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment”** (Luke 16:27,28). But even this request cannot be granted. Abraham spoke to him: **“They have Moses and the Prophets¹⁸; let them hear them”** (Luke 16:29). With these words Abraham refers those who are still living to the Word of Holy Scripture which was given to us for our salvation. Blessed are they that hear the Word

¹⁰ We would say, “This is the way you wanted it.”

¹¹ The rich man did not study the Word of God with the aim of finding Christ and the way to salvation.

¹² Gal.6:7.

¹³ As Luke 16:29,31 teaches, Lazarus was saved **not** because he was poor and suffered much here on earth. He was saved because through the Old Testament he confessed his sins to the Lord (Law) and believed in Jesus as his only Saviour (Gospel) and showed his faith by faithfully and patiently bearing his cross of suffering until the Lord called him home. The **only** way a person can be saved whether rich or poor, healthy or suffering great sickness is **not by works, but by grace through faith in the sacrificial atonement of Christ**, Ep.2:8,9; John 14:6. That is how Lazarus “had placed his hope in God.”

¹⁴ The German word “Kluft” means “abyss.” The Greek word is “**chasma**” which Thayer explains as an “abyss.” This deep chasm, an unbridgeable abyss, between the place of the blessed and that of the damned, is **firmly fixed**. Both the meaning of the verb, **firmly fixed**, and the use of the **perfect tense** shows the utter impossibility of anyone passing from hell to heaven and vice versa for all eternity. Once you are in hell you remain there for all eternity. Once you are in heaven you remain there for all eternity.

¹⁵ Die in the Lord.

¹⁶ While on earth, because the rich man did not believe in Christ, he showed no true works of love. This was also shown in the way in which he had completely despised and ignored poor Lazarus. This is really the sense in which Nickel means this.

¹⁷ The Greek means “to beg or to plead.”

¹⁸ This refers to the written Word of God, especially to the Old Testament Scriptures in so far as they are Law and Gospel.

of God and keep it¹⁹. Whoever wants to continue to be saved from damnation is to hear God's Word. But the rich man indeed also had Moses and the Prophets and still he came to be lost because he had not even listened to them, therefore he answers Abraham: "**Nay²⁰, Father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent**" (Luke 16:30). But Abraham said: "**If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead**" (Luke 16:31). Thus God's Word is the **only** means which can save us from damnation. God's Word alone works repentance and faith; it shows us God's wrath over sin and God's mercy²¹ toward the sinner. Whoever rejects this Word, he would not even let himself be called to repentance, even if someone rose from the dead and admonished him. How true that is we see from the leaders of the Jewish people, who not only did not want to believe in the Lord when He raised Lazarus²² from the dead, but rather sought to kill Christ on account of Lazarus²³.

God's Word Alone Is the Only Means that Can Save Us

God's Word is the only means which can save us from damnation, therefore we are to diligently hear it and read it. But we are also to take it to heart. The mere hearing of it is no benefit at all. "**But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves**" (James 1:22), admonishes the Apostle James. Whoever diligently hears and learns God's Word, it will prove to him to be a divine power which will save him and sanctify him.

With all his earthly wealth the rich man was poor, poor in time, endlessly poor in eternity. Who would like to go the same way he went? In this world Lazarus was poor and miserable, very poor, very miserable, but yet he was a rich man, rich in God, happy in spite of his pain, for he was a child of God and an heir of eternal life²⁴. Who would not like to end up as Lazarus did? Therefore seek Jesus and His Light; nothing else will benefit you.

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

DOCTRINAL

LECTURES ON THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH THE TRUE VISIBLE CHURCH OF GOD ON EARTH by Dr. F. Pieper.²⁵

SECOND LECTURE: The Universal Church Embraces All Those and Only Those who Believe in Jesus Christ as Their Saviour.

Before we give the proof that the Evangelical Lutheran Church is the orthodox church, I must in addition point out what we understand by the term "orthodox church" and what we do not. This term is of course frequently misinterpreted.

No Visible Church Body Is The Only Saving Church

¹⁹ Luke 11:28.

²⁰ The German word is "Nein," "No," but the Greek word is more emphatic, "By no means."

²¹ Only in Christ's work of redemption, Eph.1:7, "**In whom (Christ) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.**"

²² The brother of Mary and Martha.

²³ John 11:44,53.

²⁴ Gal.3:26, "**For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.**"

²⁵ Dr. F. Pieper 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.

When we confess that the Church of the Reformation, the Lutheran Church, is the orthodox church, then all the unionists among the sects and among those bearing the Lutheran name are seized with a real horror and what they in their horror hold against us chiefly is usually this: "Nevertheless you maintain that the Lutheran Church is the only saving church outside of which there is no salvation. By this you show that you still have not completely swept out the papistical leaven."

Only the Invisible Christian Church Is The Only Saving Church

But that is a misinterpretation of our proposition which has its basis either in ignorance or in malice. We do not hold the Lutheran Church to be the only saving church outside of which there is no salvation, but the only saving church outside of which there is no salvation is the one, holy, universal, Christian Church, the Church in the strict (proper, true, Ed.) sense of the word, the *Invisible* Church, which is the total number of all those who believe in Christ as their Saviour. Outside of *this* Church there certainly is no salvation, because only he who believes in Christ has salvation for eternal life. Therefore whoever does not from the heart believe in Christ, whoever is not born again, does not belong to this Church, does not belong to the fellowship of those who have inherited salvation, though he might find himself externally united with the orthodox church. Only he who from the heart believes in Christ is a member of the Christian Church wherever on earth and in which external church body he might find himself. But now we Lutherans not only acknowledge, but confess it with joy and thanks to God that there are still such people who from their hearts believe in Christ as their Saviour also inside heterodox church bodies. Therefore we confess it with a loud voice that the Christian Church reaches beyond the outward borders of the orthodox church and exists there everywhere where one can still come to faith in Christ, where also the essential points of the saving Gospel are still being proclaimed. Yes, wherever there is faith in Christ, there is forgiveness of sins and salvation. Whoever makes forgiveness of sins and salvation dependent still on something else than faith in Christ, for example, on the outward membership in the visible orthodox church, attacks the doctrine of justification²⁶.

Nevertheless some oppose us here: "If you acknowledge that there are believers also in heterodox church bodies and unbelievers or hypocrites also in the orthodox church, what kind of particular significance still has the orthodox church then?" We answer: A very important one. The orthodox church is the visible church body which God desires you to have. In the last lecture we have indicated on the basis of Holy Scripture that God wants to have only an orthodox church, that all heterodox church bodies are only *permitted* by God, in the way that He tolerates every other sin. Therefore also every Christian is bound to seek the fellowship of the orthodox church and that every Christian must have forgiveness of sins for remaining in a heterodox church body. Now therefore to be a member of the orthodox church is a matter of the greatest importance!

Believers in False Teaching Churches Are Saved Not Through The Errors Found There But Through The Portions of Truth Still Taught There

For the second point: of course there are such souls who come to faith and obtain salvation also in heterodox church bodies, but not through the false teachings which one finds there, but through the portions of truth which still exist there and which the heterodox still have in common with the orthodox. Error wherever it exists can only always bring about destruction. It can only always hinder those souls from coming to the faith and from remaining preserved in the faith; it is through the special faithfulness and grace of the Holy Spirit that the poison of error is rendered harmless to those souls who believe in Christ. On the other hand, the orthodox church is such a church body in which, as regards to the *doctrine*, souls are only truly cared for on the way of life and are not hindered. Thus membership in the orthodox church is a matter of the greatest importance.

Orthodox Church: Where God's Word Is Taught Purely and the Sacraments Administered According To Christ's Institution

²⁶ Such erroneously base their hope of salvation on the work of joining a visible church body or being a member of it, rather than alone on the forgiveness of sins by Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross received by grace through faith and not in any way by man's works.

Therefore what do we wish to indicate by the term “orthodox church”? As has already been pointed out, by that term we do not wish to express that we hold the orthodox church to be the only saving church outside of which there is no salvation. But by that term we wish to say that the orthodox church is the church body whose external form has been ordained by God, in which the Word of God is being preached purely as God wants it to be and the Sacraments are being administered according to Christ's institution.

By this we wish to say that the Church of the Reformation, the Lutheran Church, *is no sect*. One calls such a church body a sect, namely, which in one or more points departs from the Truth which is revealed in the Scriptures and *on the basis of this error* or these errors separates itself from the orthodox church and keeps itself separate from the same. That is a sect. In the early church sects were the Nestorians²⁷ and Monophysitans²⁸ which on the basis of a false doctrine on the Person of Christ separated themselves from the church. The papal church is a sect because of the reason of the terrible false doctrine that all those who want to be saved must be subject to the Pope and on the basis of all the false doctrines which of necessity are connected with this, must adhere to it as a distinct churchly²⁹ organisation. The Reformed Church and all Reformed church bodies are sects. For they keep themselves separate from the orthodox church on the basis of a false doctrine concerning the means of grace, let alone other errors which they promote at the same time. Also in our time synergistic³⁰ synods have become sects. These synods, namely, have not only embraced a false doctrine of conversion and the election of grace³¹, but they also keep themselves separate from the orthodox church in this country on the basis of these false doctrines. But the Church of the Reformation, the Lutheran Church, is not a sect because it adheres to God's Word in all articles of doctrine.

True Christians Are Found In Heterodox Churches Where the Gospel Is Still Found

Dr. Walther says in his Essay on the Lutheran Church:

“The Evangelical Lutheran Church is not that one holy Christian Church outside of which there is no salvation, although it has never separated itself from it and professes no other.”
(Thesis 11)³².

Already in the Sixteenth Century when they declared themselves to be the orthodox church, the Lutheran Church was condemned as if by stating that, at the same time, the declaration is given that in all heterodox church bodies *only* the godless were to be found or that believers were to be found only inside the Lutheran Church. **The Formula of Concord** declares the exact opposite and does so specifically in *The Preface*. It is stated there:

“With reference to the *condemnations*... it is not our purpose and intention to mean thereby those persons who err innocently [ingenuously] and who do not blaspheme the truth of the divine Word, and far less do we mean entire churches inside and outside the Holy Empire of the German Nation... But we have no doubt at all that one can find many pious, innocent people even in those churches which have up to now admittedly not come to agreement with us. (Preface to the *Book of Concord*, p.11. J.T. Mueller translation; See Triglotta p.19.)”

Note this section from the Preface of the *Book of Concord* well. When it is held against you that the Lutheran Church teaches it is the only saving church outside of which there is no salvation, then refer to this section in our Confessions.

²⁷ These were the followers of the false teacher Nestorius who denied the doctrine of the 2 natures in the Person of Christ and the communication of the attributes. These errors were condemned by the early church at a Council in Ephesus in 431. They attacked the very heart of the Gospel.

²⁸ They falsely taught that after the incarnation of Christ there was still only one nature in the Person of Christ, the divine nature --- again a very serious false doctrine. This error was condemned by the church in 451.

²⁹ Ecclesiastical.

³⁰ Those who teach that works play some part in a person's salvation.

³¹ Predestination.

³² See Dr. Walther's book “The True Visible Church” pages 45-50.

As earnest as the Lutheran Church is with the condemnation of *all* error, all teaching which conflicts with the Word of God, so it on the other hand completely holds fast to the truth that inside church bodies which have false doctrine in its public confession there can be and actually are many souls who err in innocence, who although they do not have the right knowledge in many places, nevertheless hold fast from the bottom of their hearts to Christ as their only Saviour. For this reason these simple minded souls will be forgiven all such weaknesses in doctrine for the sake of Christ.

However, how does it occur that children of God are still also found in heterodox church bodies? Concerning this **Luther** answers in the following words:

“We must confess that the enthusiasts have Scripture and God's Word in other articles, and whoever among them hears and believes will be saved, though they (namely the stubborn seducers) are unholy heretics and blasphemers of Christ.” (*Letter Regarding Anabaptism* [1528], XVII, 2675; SL XVII, 2212)³³.

Thus in the Reformed church bodies the true doctrines of the Holy Communion and of Baptism are rejected, but at the same time for all that it is still being proclaimed that Christ is the Saviour of the world and that whoever believes in Christ shall be saved. That is divine Truth and wherever it is thus proclaimed it also operates on the heart, for the power of God's Word is not dependent on the person of him who proclaims the Word, but the Word is in itself powerful. Hence in the midst of heterodox church bodies souls can come not only to a knowledge of the misery of their sin, but also to a knowledge of Jesus Christ, their Saviour. Luther explains how even in the papacy, children of God are still found; indeed, that under the papacy there exists the “quintessence³⁴” of Christendom. By that he means: Those Christians who, in spite of the terrible false doctrines which are in vogue in the Papacy, have not been led astray, and who must be especially blessed by God. **Luther's** words read:

“I say that in the papacy there are true Christians, indeed the real quintessence of Christendom, and many great and pious saints.”³⁵

How then can souls in the Papacy still come to faith? Now the true Baptism still exists in the papacy. All little children³⁶ baptised in the papacy are believers and remain believers as long as they through the false doctrines which are in vogue are not led astray. However also in spite of the false doctrines which are in vogue, many souls still are preserved in the faith. In fact when the priest preaches about Mary as the real saviour of sinners, but at the same time the text of Holy Scripture is still being read and disseminated, through God's grace it can occur that a soul only holds on to that Word of God just mentioned and does not accept the main errors that are preached. **Luther** says:

“Accordingly I believe that there is one holy Christian church upon earth, namely, the congregation, sum total or communion of all Christians in the whole world. This Christendom is not only in the Roman Church, or the papacy, but throughout the world, just as the prophets predicted that the Gospel should be preached in the whole world (Ps. 2; 19:5). Hence Christendom is scattered outwardly under the pope, the Turks, the Persians, and everywhere else, but it is gathered spiritually by one Gospel and faith under one Head, namely, Jesus Christ.” (*Large Confession of the Lord's Supper* [1528], XX, 1381f.; SL XX,894ff. [cf. 1101].³⁷ (p.47)

We Lutherans believe that Christendom is scattered outwardly over the entire earth, but the Christians who are so outwardly scattered constitute for all that a *oneness*³⁸, such an intimate fellowship, as it is to be found

³³ Translation taken from “The True Visible Church” by Walther translated by Dr. J.T. Mueller, page 46.

³⁴ “Quintessence” refers to something in its purest form. What Luther means is that in spite of the terrible errors of the papacy God in His grace has preserved through the Gospel some of the most sincerest Christians who in their ignorance and innocence do not believe the soul-destroying errors that surround them.

³⁵ Translation taken from “The True Visible Church” by Walther translated by Dr. J.T. Mueller, page 46.

³⁶ E.g. babies.

³⁷ Translation taken from “The True Visible Church” by Walther translated by Dr. J.T. Mueller, page 47.

³⁸ Unity.

nowhere else on earth. Christians who are scattered over the entire earth are intimately *united* with each other as one's own brother and sister, as parents and children. Why? In the hearts of all Christians dwells, in spite of all outward differences, the one *Holy Ghost*, for only those in whom the Spirit of God lives are God's children. Christians, wherever they may also find themselves, are all people who have been born again through the one Holy Ghost.

Also they all have *one and the same faith*; all Christians whether they may be in Africa or Australia or in America, believe, in the first place: we are in ourselves before God damnable sinners. Secondly they believe: our sins are forgiven by God by grace for Christ's sake. *All* Christians believe that. This faith constitutes the essence of Christendom. Whoever does not have this faith is not a Christian. However, whoever has this faith is a Christian even if he at the same time also harbours many errors. All Christians also have exactly the same *hope*, namely, the hope that after this life they will enter into eternal Life. Just as they all have the same experiences on earth, namely, that they are poor sinners, and partake of grace for Christ's sake; just so they all will also have the same experiences one day in eternity, namely, they will see God face to face, and be forever in the company of the holy angels. Christendom is such an intimately unified fellowship although it is outwardly scattered over the entire earth. **Luther** also impresses this on us that one should not declare a visible church, also not even the Lutheran Church, to be the One universal Christian Church, or what is the same, he warns against the notion that the orthodox church embraces in itself the totality of believers.

“Wherever there are the Gospel and the Words of the Spirit of Christ, there, beyond all doubt, is the true Church of Christ, for the Spirit of Christ never speaks except in His Church. Therefore, because here (Ps. 19:4) the text speaks clearly that the doctrine [Gospel] of the apostles has gone out *through all the earth*, and there is no place where we read that it was disavowed, we must take care *that we do not glory in ourselves as being the only believers, as did the impious Donatists*³⁹, *no matter who they might be, whether the old or the new.* (Exposition of Psalm 19 [1521], IV, 1487f.; SL IV, 1136.)”⁴⁰

Luther therefore calls it a Donatistic error when a particular church body asserts it is *the* church, namely, the church body outside of which there are no believers. But how does it not stand with the errors of children of God in heterodox church bodies? God has nevertheless forbidden the departure from the Truth revealed in the Word. How can the faith still endure in the presence of these deviations forbidden by God? Luther then answers: Christians in heterodox church bodies err *from weakness*, their hearts nevertheless persist in trusting in Christ, the only basis of their salvation. **Luther** writes:

“No doubt *many pious Christians* with sincere faith in their hearts observe the Mass and *regard it as a sacrifice*. But because they do not put their trust in the Mass, but rather consider all they do as sin, clinging only to the pure mercy of God, they are kept from perishing by this error. However, when the priests, reading the Mass, uphold this error without such faith, elevate the host and positively make merchandize of it, they deserve that this error be laid *to their charge* and they perish eternally, since they also venerate the *saints*; for God regards, searches, and tries the *hearts* and reins (Ps. 7:9-11), that is, the inward inclinations. Hence God remits and forgives an error in one while He condemns it in another, for their hearts differ in faith and humility... But (because of this) you dare not say: 'I will err in a *Christian* way.' The error of a person who is a *Christian* stems from ignorance; and in Rom. 14:1 the apostle commands us to tolerate and bear such weakness. Therefore it does not become us to despise or condemn those who do not see and understand their error (while they trust in God's mercy) until the time when they recognise the error. But this we must do, namely, show up the error to everyone...' (Abuse of the Mass [1521], XIX, 1382f.; SL XIX 1131f.)”⁴¹

³⁹ Around the year 313 Donatus, a bishop in North Africa, together with a sizable number of followers, fanatically taught that they were the only-saving church and that God's Word and the Sacraments were not effective unless proclaimed and administered by true believers. They were very rigorous in discipline. They also refused to receive back into the church people who had denied the faith as a result of persecution, even though they had truly repented. They separated themselves from the rest of the church at the time. When persecuted their fanaticism even increased. By the Seventh Century the movement had died out.

⁴⁰ Translation taken from “The True Visible Church” by Walther translated by Dr. J.T. Mueller, pages 47, 48.

⁴¹ Translation taken from “The True Visible Church” by Walther translated by Dr. J.T. Mueller, page 48.

Luther here speaks about such simple Christians in the papacy who, on the question whether the Mass is a sacrifice, with the mouth certainly answer, 'Yes,' but in their hearts nevertheless put their trust in God's mercy in Christ and not on the sacrifice in the Mass. Obviously, if their hearts do not trust in Christ, then, by no means can they be members of the Christian Church. Also all those who are found inside the orthodox church do well to bear this in mind: membership depends on the disposition of the heart. If someone has also grown up inside the orthodox church and until his death remains inside the orthodox Church, even if he knows and confesses with the mouth all the doctrines of God's Word, but at the same time does not trust in his heart in Christ as his Saviour, if he has not become through the operation of the Holy Spirit a poor sinner and has not come to faith in Christ as his Saviour, then he does not belong to the Church, he will not be saved. He does not obtain the goal which many inside the heterodox church nevertheless obtain.

However should some now say: "If that is the case, that many inside the heterodox church will be saved, in spite of their errors, then I will also continue in some errors and will thereby be saved," **Luther** answers: "You dare not say, 'I will err as a Christian.'" Whoever **wants** to err, that person does not err as Christian, but in a *godless, heathenish way*; whoever from a clear, better knowledge remains inside a heterodox church body and consequently *wants* to err, that person undoubtedly falls from faith. Furthermore: as Luther urges us to bear with the weak, so he also emphasises our duty "to show everyone their error." So also when God brings Christians into contact with us, who are found inside a heterodox church body, we have the duty to instruct them.

Also the older Lutheran teachers have held to the truth that no particular church is *the Church*, namely, the Church in the sense that it is made up of *all* believers. They maintain and prove that the Lutheran Church in all its articles of faith is the true orthodox *visible* church. However, at the same time they confess that the Lutheran Church is in itself composed of only a part of the believers, not the totality of the believers.

So **Carpzov**⁴² writes:

"No special [particular] church dare glory in itself as being the one church; for it is one thing to be *the* one church and another to be *of* the church. The whole church is *the one*; *ours* is *of* the one... *We admit that our church is a particular church, but we do not say that it alone is the true church.* Though, so far as the *visible* communion is concerned, there may be no other church whose doctrine is as *pure* and free from blemishes as is the Lutheran Church, yet we do not deny that there are other particular churches in which there are sincere members, known only to God, who are hidden in such a visible communion even if it is impure; and of such the true church properly consists." (*Isagoge in libros ecclesiae Lutheranae symbolicos* [ed. 2, 1675], pp. 303,876.)⁴³

Let us also listen to **Bechmann**⁴⁴:

"The controverted question whether the church of the Lutherans is the true and pure church is being discussed especially by us [Lutherans] and the papists. But in order that the point of controversy might be rightly determined, it is necessary to state that the question concerns not the *universal* Church, as the papists foolishly demand of us, namely, that *we prove that the church of the Lutherans is the true Church [in the sense that it is the one universal Church]*. The question therefore concerns a particular church, that is, whether *the Lutheran Church among the many particular churches is a true and particular church.*" (*Theolo. polem.*, 1702, 4, p.781)⁴⁵

(Delivered on 8 November, 1889. Headings added. Translated BLW. Proofed KKM.)

⁴² Johann Carpzog the elder was born 1607 and died in 1657.

⁴³ Translation taken from "The True Visible Church" by Walther translated by Dr. J.T. Mueller, page 48.

⁴⁴ Fridemann Bechmann was born 1628 and died 1703.

⁴⁵ Translation taken from "The True Visible Church" by Walther translated by Dr. J.T. Mueller, page 50.

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 15-20.)

The Lord's Supper (Abendmahl) – Explanation of The Words of Institution.

7. Explanation of the Words.

(a) Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Note (a). **The One who instituted** the Lord's Supper is the almighty, all truthful Lord.

Note (b). The **motive** for doing so, *causa impulsiva*⁴⁶, is His love.

(b) In the night in which He was betrayed.

Note (a). The **time** of institution is **Maundy Thursday** evening, immediately before His death.

Note (b). Mourn⁴⁷, because Jesus as prescribed in Ex.12:8 and Num.9:11 consumed bitter herbs.⁴⁸

Note (c). This day has almost fallen into neglect; as often as it reoccurs we should examine ourselves as to how we stand⁴⁹ towards the Lord's Supper.

(c) **Took the bread.** Without a doubt unleavened bread as the Jews ate at the Passover.

(d) **Gave thanks.**

(e) **Break it.**

(f) **Gave it to His disciples.**

(g) **Take and eat.**

(h) **This** (which I here give to you) **is My body.**

Note. A customary manner of speaking. *Synechdoche*⁵⁰. One can say about a purse which is given to you: "Take, this is money." John had been able to say about the dove: "This is the holy Spirit."⁵¹

(i) **Which is given for you.**

Note. Present tense. Now, here in the Lord's Supper is Christ's body which is given for us.⁵²

(j) **This do.**

⁴⁶ Latin for "impelling motive."

⁴⁷ The Thursday before Easter was often called "green Thursday" ("Gruendonnerstag" or Holy Thursday in English). The syllable "grün" does not mean "green" in this instance, but comes from the word "greinen" an old word meaning "weinen" or "to cry lament, mourn." It used to be the custom that sinners and penitents were accepted back into the church and cried tears of joy and remorse. They would wear fresh, green leaves to show that they were once again growing with the church. It has long been tradition to pick green herbs on "Gruendonnerstag" and make a meal with them. This comes partly from the Jewish Passover meal, also Jesus' last Supper.

⁴⁸ German has the word "green," but the texts use the word "bitter" and it suits the context better. Nebe made them a type of the sufferings of Christ.

⁴⁹ What is our attitude toward it; how important do we regard it.

⁵⁰ A *synecdoche* is a figure of speech where a part of something stands for the whole, e.g. when a person says, "Here comes the Law," he really means, "Here comes the police who will enforce the Law." When a person who hands to you a purse filled with money, says, "Take, this is money," he is not only referring to the valueless purse, but more importantly he is telling you that you are at the same time receiving a large sum of money.

⁵¹ John 1:32.

⁵² German has "gebrochen," which means "broken" – a reference to 1 Cor.11:24. The word "broken" does not refer to Christ's body being broken in pieces or bones of his body broken (because not one bone of His body was broken, John 19:33-36), but refers to His terrible scourging, crucifixion and suffering which resulted in His death for the sins of the world.

Note. The Lord's Supper is to be celebrated until Christ comes on the last day. It is instituted for **all**⁵³ Christians.

Antithesis: It had been merely a farewell meal for His disciples.⁵⁴

(k) in remembrance of Me.

Note (a). The Lord's Supper itself reminds us of Christ⁵⁵.

Note (b). We are to think of Christ when we go to the Lord's Supper. Christ, the reason and fruit of His death, should be the centre of our thoughts; we are to enjoy partaking of Him spiritually by faith⁵⁶.

Note (c). For this reason Christ needs to be present.

Note (d). How can a person think of Christ who knows nothing about Him.

(l) Cup. This cup which was used at the Passover was filled with wine. Mat. 26:29.⁵⁷

(m) After the supper. After the Passover Meal was over.

(n) This is the New Testament in My blood. The Lord's Supper is a Testament of the Lord.

Note. The Old Covenant had been instituted with the blood of a lamb, the New Covenant was instituted with the blood of Christ.⁵⁸

(o) Which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.⁵⁹

8. The Reformed and the words of institution.

(a) The Reformed readily depart from the words of institution.

(b) They do not want to remain with the bare words of Scripture.

(c) They want to interpret them according to human reason.

(d) They have already repeatedly falsified them in the Bible.

(e) They say these words hinder the spiritual understanding, and Christ who was overcome with much too great a sorrow had not known which words He should make use of.

The Words of Institution are Not to be taken Figuratively.

9. Figurative language occurs in Scripture, e.g., grape vine, John 15:5; door, John 10:7; fox, Luke 13:32; cross, 1 Cor.1:18; Elias, Mat. 11:14; shepherd, John 10:12; flesh and blood, John 6; the seed is the Word (Luke 8:11); the rich and large numbers of figures of speech, especially metaphors in the language of the prophets of the Old Testament; the Revelation of John.

Note (a). Such figures of speech are used

(1) To adorn the discourse.⁶⁰

(2) Because of the poverty⁶¹ of the language which does not have a particular word for every concept.

⁵³ The Lord's Supper is not to be given to Christians who (a) are not baptized; (b) are not of an age, mental alertness and maturity that they can examine themselves; (c) are not properly instructed in the Lord's Supper and the doctrines of the Christian faith; (d) are not united with us in the pure doctrine; (e) are members of any secret, sinful society; (f) have given offence and not removed it; (g) are living in wilful manifest sin.

⁵⁴ This is a false Reformed idea denying the doctrine of the Real Presence.

⁵⁵ As we partake of that same body which was given into death for us and receive that same blood which was shed for us on the cross when we eat the bread and drink the wine in the Sacrament, as Jesus Himself teaches.

⁵⁶ Also we are to enjoy partaking of Christ's true body and blood Sacramentally.

⁵⁷ From Matt. 26: 29, Mark 14: 25 and Luke 22:18 we learn that the cup contained "the fruit of the vine." This was not "must", the unfermented juice of the grape. For as it was in the days of Jesus, and is to this day, a matter of course in Palestine, as in other Oriental countries, to use **wine**, not "must", as a beverage on festive occasions, and at no time was "must" used by the Jews at the Passover. Thus, also, we learn from 1 Cor. 11 that the wine used in the Apostolic Church was **fermented wine**, which, if taken to excess, would intoxicate a person.

⁵⁸ If what Jesus gave in the Sacrament was the blood of the New Covenant, it could not be a symbol of that blood.

⁵⁹ By adding these words Christ describes what He gives as His real blood, the blood which flowed in His veins which were about to be opened by the scourge and the thorns and the nails and the spear.

⁶⁰ So that the truths presented would be made more clear, vivid and remembered longer.

Note (b). One may only depart from the literal meaning and adopt a figurative meaning when
(1) **Scripture itself indicates it**, e.g, leaven, Mat.16:6 compared with verse 12⁶². Temple, John 2:19 compared with verse 21. God's Finger, Luke 11: 20 compared with Mat.12:28⁶³.

(2) **Scripture compels us to do it**, e.g.: "As often as you drink of this **cup**."

Note (a). To what extent the fathers⁶⁴ have adhered to the bare (the literal sense of the) Word of God we see when God commanded Abraham: "Abraham, sacrifice your son."

Note (b). When people depart from the bare (the literal sense of the) Word⁶⁵, the devil has brought every misery into the world.

10. The Reformed interpret the words of institution figuratively.

Note. In doing this they themselves are not in agreement. They do not allow any word of institution to remain unattacked.

A. This. There are those who say when He used the word "this" Christ pointed to his body. Carlstadt.

Note (a). That has never been accepted by anyone any more⁶⁶.

Note (b). Where would Christ have pointed to when He said the words, "This is My blood?"

B. Symbol of Christ's Body. (Figura corporis). Others say that the bread is a symbol, a picture of Christ's body. A metonymy (signi pro signato) or metaphor. Calvin, Zwingli, Oecolompadius.

Note (a): Other things should be regarded as such metonymies: Baptism is the bath of regeneration⁶⁷; the dove -- for the Holy Spirit⁶⁸.

Note (b). This interpretation⁶⁹ because of difficulty in clarity has never been truly at home in the Reformed Church.

Note (c). It is being advocated by more recent theologians: Nebe, Kahnis.

In opposition to this the Bible teaches the following.

(a) Such a manner of speaking does not occur. A thing is never directly called something by a person and is then understood merely as a symbol, e.g., the sceptre is the kingly power.

(b) Christ adds⁷⁰: "Which is shed for you." If the wine is merely a symbol of Christ's blood, then figurative blood cannot be shed.⁷¹

⁶¹ The inability of the language to be able to express the truth literally due to lack of the specific words. For example, in Rom.16:18 the Greek word translated "belly" is a figure of speech for "inner sinful desires."

⁶² In Mat. 16:12 Jesus explains what He means by "beware of the **leaven** of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (Mat.16:6). Just as leaven or yeast which is added to the dough in making bread spreads throughout the whole dough, even though the leaven may be only small in amount, so it is with false doctrine. In Mat.16:12 Jesus warns His disciples against the **false doctrine and hypocrisy** of the Pharisees and Sadducees which, if not avoided in true faith, would spread and undermine and destroy their faith and that of others.

⁶³ God's Finger is called the Spirit of God.

⁶⁴ Here referring to the Old Testament when God spoke directly at times to them. We are bound to the entire written Word of God, John 8:31,32.

⁶⁵ Unless Scripture itself compels them to do so.

⁶⁶ This false view of Carlstadt's was regarded as so clearly wrong that it has never been taught in the church since.

⁶⁷ This is a reference to Titus 3:5, "According to His mercy He (Christ) saved us, by the washing of regeneration...." Holy Baptism is described as the means by which the new birth is brought about in the heart of a person.

⁶⁸ In John 1:32 at the Baptism of Christ the dove was not merely a symbol or a picture for the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit actually came upon Christ in the form of a dove. The point in this note is that if the words of institution are to be taken figuratively then to be consistent these errorists must take many other statements of the Bible falsely and without valid reason in a figurative manner.

⁶⁹ That the bread and wine are symbols of Christ's body and blood. There are many different explanations among the Reformed for Christ's words of Institution in the Sacrament.

⁷⁰ After He says, "This cup is the New Testament in My blood."

⁷¹ **Walther** 'Gospel Sermons' (German, page 148; English, page 144): "But where does Christ say, that with the body and blood of which He speaks He means only a spiritual, figurative body and only a spiritual, figurative blood, or only

(c) Also a metaphor is not acceptable. Christ would then have had to say: This is the (actual) **bread**. My flesh is the true food.

(d) In a metaphorical comparison a similarity always exists between the figure of speech and the matter itself, tertium comparationis,⁷² e.g. youth and spring. But what kind of similarity has the bread with Christ's body? Then it would have been better to let the Passover Lamb stand for Christ.

(e) If a person takes as a point of comparison: "His body is the Bread of Life," then he can answer that according to Reformed doctrine Christ's **body** is certainly not even any food either for our body or for our soul. They must also substitute the **whole** Christ, the God Man, for the word "body."

(f) If they have shown a similar such figure of speech in other texts, then they must still prove that it must be understood in the same way **here**.

(g) Of course a person can say pointing to a statue: "This is Paul." But that means: a Paul made of stone. The Reformed in a similar way understanding the words, "This is My body" must then mean: a body (made) of bread.

C. Signifies. Is --- Signifies.

Note (a). This "wisdom" Zwingli obtained in a dream⁷³.

Note (b). Zwingli appealed to Ex.12:11, "It is the Lord's Passover."⁷⁴ – But this means: it is the Passover festival.

Note (c). Furthermore He appealed to Gen. 41:26, "The seven good cattle **are** seven years." The word "are" does not even exist in the original text of the Bible.

Note (d). Even recent theologians walk in Zwingli's steps, Meyer, Kahnis, Neander, etc.

In opposition to this the Bible teaches the following:

(a) The copula (verb "to be") always keeps⁷⁵ its literal meaning. "Is" never means "signifies."

(b) When a figurative way of speaking is used by Christ in Scripture, Christ does not signify (represent) a grape vine, the way, etc., but **is** a grape vine in a figurative sense. The seed **is** the Word (Luke 8:11).

Note. We willingly (gladly) then use the words: true, new, other; e.g., a true grape vine, the true bread, a new Elias, the second Adam.

(c) If a person could also bring texts where "is" means "signifies," then he must still prove that it is used (understood) in the same way **here**⁷⁶.

(d) If it is permitted to do this here in the words of Institution, then where else is it permitted: One could then say that Christ only signifies (represents) the Lamb of God. Baptism only signifies (represents) the "washing of regeneration."

D. Summary. All Reformed interpretations of the words of Institution agree in their denial of the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper.

a sign of His body and blood? He says the very opposite by adding to the word "body," "which is broken for you," and to the word "blood," "which is shed for you." Hence, not Christ's spiritual, figurative body or a sign of it, but His real, true body is given for us, and not His spiritual, figurative blood or a sign of it, but his real, true blood is shed for us!"

⁷² Point of comparison.

⁷³ In **Der Lutheraner** (Vol.1, p.51) it is clearly proven that from 1517 until 1524 "Luther and Zwingli were completely united in doctrine," even in the doctrine of the Lord Supper. In late 1524 as a result of a **dream** Zwingli had come to the opinion that the words: "This is My body," meant no more than: "This signifies My body" Zwingli himself relates that in this dream a "Counselor appeared to me (whether he had been wearing black or white I cannot recall, for **I am relating a dream**." As a result of this dream Zwingli himself tells us that in the Lord's Supper Christ "was only speaking in parables, thereby (that is, 'is' was taken as 'signifies')." The writer in **Der Lutheraner** then comments: "**So that means Zwingli's doctrine is based on a dream.**"

⁷⁴ In this same dream Zwingli relates that this counsellor admonished him to reply to an opponent on the Lord's Supper: "He said: You shrinking violet, why don't you answer him with what is written in Exodus 12: 'It is the Passover' which signifies the exodus of the Lord.?" [**Der Lutheraner** (Vol.1, p.51)].

⁷⁵ Is always understood and used literally, i.e., "is" always means "is" and never means "represents," or "signifies."

⁷⁶ In the words of institution of the Lord's Supper.

Note (a). If they would accept the words just as they read, then it would be with them outside of their own work and merit.

Note (b). Since in their doctrine of the Lord's Supper they have departed from the literal meaning of the words, they have attempted to do the same afterwards in other doctrines.

Note (c). With the United, the Herrnhuters⁷⁷, etc. everyone can understand the words of Institution just as he wants.

11. Why must the words of Institution be taken in the literal sense?

(a) **Because no grounds** exist to depart from the literal meaning.

1. Scripture does not even hint at it with one syllable that these words must be taken figuratively.
2. All four accounts of the Apostles and Evangelists agree in this point.
3. The literal sense does not violate the Analogy of Faith⁷⁸. No article of faith is thereby abolished.

(b) **Because there are many reasons against** departing from the literal meaning. They are words of

1. a divine **command**. Like the patriarchs had literally obeyed God's command. See **Section 9**.
2. a divine **Testament**. All ambiguous expressions are to be avoided in the drawing up of a Testament (will) and one must not depart from the words of the text in the exposition of the same. Gal.3:15-17.

Note (a) What kind of Testament (will) would that be where nothing would be apportioned out and no inheritance would be in existence.

Note (b). Christ instituted a New Covenant not by a symbol of His blood.

Note (c). Even in the Old Testament the words of a Testament were taken literally: Ex.24:8, "This is the blood of the Covenant."⁷⁹ This was done by the sprinkling of real blood.

Note (d). When the dead person lies in the grave, his testament (will) is valid; Christ lives and rules and His Testament is being contradicted.⁸⁰

3. an **article of faith**. Every article of faith must at least be laid down in a clear text. If these words⁸¹ are not to be taken literally, then we have no doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

4. a **Covenant involving mysteries**. To these mysteries belong the Sacrament. If we are to know exactly what we are to understand of the Sacrament, then the words of Institution must be clearly revealed.⁸²

5. The literal meaning of these words is **confirmed** by other Bible texts: 1 Cor.10:16, "*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*" 1 Cor.11:27-29, "*Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*"

Note. Life or damnation depends on the correct or incorrect use of the Lord's Supper. 1 Cor.11:29⁸³; and should Christ have here spoken figuratively?

⁷⁷ They are also called the Moravian (Unity of the) Brethren. About 1457 the followers of John Hus, who was burnt at the stake in 1415 by the Catholics for the sake of the Gospel, formally organised as the Bohemian Brethren. As a result of fierce persecution from the Catholics a small group of them settled in Saxony in 1722 on a portion of land owned by Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf and they established a new village called Herrnhut. A prayer meeting began among them and was soon organized into a twenty four hour a day unceasing prayer watch. The name of the place became known as Herrnhut, literally meaning "Watch of the Lord."

⁷⁸ **The Analogy of Faith** or "*the form of sound words*" (2 Tim. 1:13) is the entire sum of the Biblical doctrines which we must believe, or of the articles of faith that are taken from such passages in which the Holy Spirit treats them expressly in plain, simple, and clear words which are beyond all objection. **Any interpretation that does not agree with the Analogy of Faith (the Bible passages which constitute the other doctrines of Scripture) is certainly false.** This is taught in Rom. 12:6 where Paul by the Holy Spirit demands that prophecy, or the explanation of God's Word, should be in agreement with the faith, that is, the other doctrines clearly taught in Scripture." For further reading see Walther, *The True Visible Church*, p.88 ff.

⁷⁹ The King James Version reads: "Behold the blood of the Covenant."

⁸⁰ Opposed.

⁸¹ Words of institution.

⁸² German lit: "If we are to know exactly what we are to make of the same, then they must be clearly revealed."

6. The all-knowing Christ had foreseen this controversy which has shaken millions of souls. If He knew that He could have prevented it by one word, "Signifies," wouldn't He have done it?

7. If these words must be taken figuratively, then

(a) **the distinction between the Old and New Testaments would be abolished**⁸⁴ (shadow – body, Col.2:17; Heb.10:1; 8:5), a pattern would be removed and another put in its place.

(b) Christ would have (i) expressed Himself ambiguously and obscurely, or (ii) **deceived** us.⁸⁵

(c) All **certainty of Scripture** ceases. If the literal sense of a word is no longer valid, why, then certainly everything falls down⁸⁶.

Note. Then one can prove anything from the Bible, e.g. the great light, the sun⁸⁷ --- the papacy; the smaller light --- the emperor. Or: Elias (Elijah) --- monks; the ravens --- the lay people; the flesh (meat) --- everything which the monks require. Or: In the beginning the cuckoo ate the hedge sparrow. Luther.

Summary⁸⁸: Therefore we must take the words just as they read. "Thus I have remained with Thy text." "On that on which the adversary stands, I cannot base my conscience." Luther.

(to be continued)

Walther Pastorale – Divine Call.

(Continuation of Thesis 4 Note1)

Luther writes further: "Now, it is highly necessary that one well know this article, how each one needs to be certain of his call, on account of the pernicious and devilish spirits who constantly boast above measure **how they have been called by heaven and compelled by the Spirit**, but who deceive many people with such rhapsodies, which are stinking lies. Therefore we well need to be sure of our call, so that everyone may boast and say openly with John the Baptist, Luke 3:2, *'The word of the Lord is come upon me.'* Therefore when I preach, baptize, or administer the Sacrament, I do so as one who has a command and a call to do so. For the voice of the Lord has come to me, not in some dark corner, as the sectarians boast, but through the mouth of a man who is carrying out his lawful right⁸⁹

"The call, therefore, is not to be despised. For it is not sufficient if a man has the pure and unalloyed Word and the upright **doctrine**. Rather he must also have the assurance of his **call** that it is correct, and whoever enters without this assurance of a correct call, on his own, certainly enters only in order to kill and destroy (John 10:10). For our Lord God never gives His blessing, nor does He give success nor does He prosper the work of those teachers since they come there, of themselves, without an orderly call and command. Even if they teach something good and useful, it does not bring any benefit nor does it edify. Thus in our time the sectarians have the vocabulary of faith in their mouths, but they do not produce any fruit. For all their effort, work, trouble and diligence then is chiefly aimed at attracting men to their false **opinions**⁹⁰.

⁸³ "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh **damnation** to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

⁸⁴ **Walther** "Epistle Sermons (German, page 181; English, page 187).

⁸⁵ **Walther** "Gospel Sermons" (German, page 148; English page, 144).

⁸⁶ **Walther** "Year of Grace" (German pages 213,214; English, p.130): "But, my friends, the question concerns not only this one truth; the certainty of all of God's Word is at stake; this we would immediately have to give up the moment we surrender the belief that the body and blood of Jesus Christ are truly and essentially present in the Lord's Supper; that is the second reason: Without this belief all of God's Word must become uncertain."

Also see **Walther** "Gospel Sermons" (German page, 149; English pages 144-145).

⁸⁷ Gen.1:16.

⁸⁸ Triglotta, pages 985,987, 989, 991, 809,

⁸⁹ Luther here speaks of those who call as those who occupy a lawful office (in einem ordentlichen Amte sind), clearly not in contradistinction to the whole congregation, but to private individuals. For he writes on Matt. 9:35-38, "The other kind (of call) takes place mediately through men, who have high rank, or hold an official office and authority, just as the apostles called their successors and as they still afterwards are called by human authorities and rulers or congregations." Walch, VII, 116.

⁹⁰ An evidence of this is found in the sectarian preachers of our time who strive for conversions, who compass sea and land to make proselytes for their particular sect out of souls who have been brought to the knowledge of Christ by the ministry of others. Even though a soul here or there is awakened from his carnal security, how great is the confusion

"Now even those who have a correct, sure, divine, and holy call must also in addition have the certain, correct and pure doctrine; they must often endure many severe conflicts; and they can still barely stand against so much and so constantly the many crafty attacks of the devil and the tyranny of the world. In these conflicts what is one to do who is not at all certain of his call and whose doctrine is also false and impure!

"Therefore this is our comfort that we are now in the Pastoral Office, that we indeed have a heavenly and holy office, that we have been called to it in a correct and orderly way, of which we can also truly boast against the gates of hell (Mat. 16:18). *On the other hand, it is truly a very horrible and dreadful thing when the conscience says: 'Oh, Lord God, what have you done? You have done this and that without a call and command!' Here such a horror and sorrow of heart then begins in the conscience that such a preacher who does not have a call could easily wish that he had never in his life heard and read what he had taught. For by his disobedience he makes all his works evil, no matter how good they may otherwise be in themselves, so that even his greatest and best works become his greatest and worst sins.*

"Thus you can now well see how useful and highly necessary this boast of our Office is. When in the past I was only a young theologian and a new doctor, I thought it was imprudent of St. Paul in all his epistles to make such a boast and noise about his call so often. But I did not understand what a special meaning and purpose he had for this.... For at that time I also did not yet know what an important thing the Pastoral Office was. At that time I also did not yet know anything about the doctrine of faith or what a true conscience would be. For at that time neither in the schools nor in the churches was any certainty of the divine call being taught, but everywhere one heard nothing else than only being filled with the futile, useless inventions of the sophistic trifles, dreams, and nursery rhymes of the canonists and commentators on the Master of Sentences [Peter Lombard]. Therefore it was not possible that anyone could understand how forceful and powerful is this holy and spiritual boasting about a call, which is to serve first for the honour of God, secondly for the glory of our Office of the Ministry, and after that also for our own benefit and certainty." [1535 *Commentary on the Letter to the Galatians*, on Gal. 1:1-2; Walch, Tom VIII, 1578-82; American Edition, XXVI, 18-20; additions based on the original German text].

In the same book **Luther** writes: "One must always pay good, diligent attention to and watch out for such fanatics and sectarians, who are so adept that they think that if they have heard one or two sermons or they have read one or two little books, then they have already become teachers above all teachers and students, even though no one has ordered, called, or sent them to do that work. **And such unlearned manual workers may also well be so foolhardy as to frivolously take on and assume such a great, high, difficult, and dangerous Office, without considering the fact that they have never yet in their whole lives endured a real spiritual trial, nor yet seriously felt terror in their hearts before God's wrath and judgment, but much less tasted His grace.**" (On Gal. 1:6; VIII, 1637; additions based on the original German text.)

Luther writes further: "It will also not help for them to say that all Christians are priests. **It is true, all Christians are priests, but they are not all pastors. In addition to being a priest, a pastor must be in the Office of the Ministry and must have a parish. The call and the command makes pastors and preachers.** A burgher or layman may well be a learned man; but this does not make him a Doctor and entitle him to teach publicly in the schools or to assume the teaching office, unless he is **called** to it. I have had to say these things about the sneaks and false preachers--of whom there are now all too many--in order to warn both pastors and rulers. They should diligently exhort and command their people to be on their guard against these vagabonds and knaves and to avoid them **as sure emissaries of the devil**, unless they bring good evidence that they are called and commanded by God to do this work in that parish. Otherwise no one should let them in nor listen to them, **even if they were at the same time to preach the pure Gospel, indeed, even if they were at the same time angels from heaven and all Gabriels at that!** For it is God's will that nothing be done as a result of one's own choice or decision, but everything has to be done

of souls that they bring about, and how ruinous is the offense they give to the blind world, which on their account considers all of Christendom to be senseless and hypocritical enthusiasm! It is true that many well-meaning people will not, when they observe the good these un-called people achieve, call them messengers of the devil, but they do not consider that Satan will be richly compensated for the thousands of injuries they do him.

as a result of a command or a call. That is especially true of the Pastoral Office, as St. Peter says (2 Peter 1:20,21): **‘Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scriptures is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.’** Therefore Christ, too (Luke 4:34,35,41; Mark 1:24,25), would not let the devils speak when they cried out that He was the Son of God and told the truth; for He did not want to permit such an example of preaching without a call. Let everyone, then, remember this: If he wants to preach or teach, let him give proof of the **call and command** which drives and compels him to it, or else let him be silent.... But perhaps you will say to me, ‘Why do you, by your **books**, teach throughout the world, when you are only a preacher in Wittenberg?’ I answer: I have never wanted to do it and do not want to do it now. But I was forced and driven into this Office in the first place, when I had to become Doctor of Holy Scripture against my will. Then, at the time, as a Doctor in a general free university, I began, at the command of pope and emperor, to do what such a Doctor is sworn to do according to his Office, expounding the Scriptures for all the world and teaching everybody. Once in this position, I have had to stay in it, and I cannot give it up or leave it yet with a good conscience, even though both pope and emperor were to put me under the ban for not doing so. For what I began as a Doctor, made and called at their command, I must truly confess to the end of my life. I cannot keep silent or cease to teach, though I would like to do so and am weary and unhappy because of the great and unendurable ingratitude of the people. **And even if I were not already a Doctor, I am, nevertheless, a regularly called preacher and may teach my own people with writings.** Now if others have desired these writings of mine and have asked for them, it is my duty to accede to their request. For I have never pushed myself in or desired or asked that anyone should read these writings, but have acted just like other pious pastors and preachers. They write books and neither prevent people from reading them nor drive them to do so; thus they teach and run throughout the world. They do not run and sneak like these worthless, uncalled knaves into the Offices of others without the knowledge and consent of the pastors; but they have a definite Office and command by which they are driven and compelled.” (On Psalm 82:4. Tom V, 1061-63. Additions based on the original German text.)

Luther also writes: "Now, if you find yourself doing a work which God is not working in you, then go and beg God to bring all those works of yours to shame that He Himself has not worked. **And even if you could save the whole world with one sermon, but do not have the command to do so, let it go, for then you would be breaking the true Sabbath and would not please God.**" (On Exod. 20:8-11. Walch III, 1629. Additions based on the original German text.)

He writes further: "No one should force himself into the public Pastoral Office without God's call. As for the new, unstable spirits, who force themselves and creep into the Pastoral office, you should know that God has not called or sent them. They want to be preachers and teach the people without any command or call, Jer. 23:21, **'I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.'** It is not enough to boast that one has the **Spirit**. God does not want anyone to believe those who stand up and say, 'Believe my Spirit,' or those who say, 'The Spirit led me, the Spirit told me.' For then we would all be in the same fix, and no one would listen to the other. But where God calls and impels to the Pastoral Office, the work succeeds and breaks through." (On Exod. 3:1. Walch III, 1074,5. Additions based on the original German text.)

Finally **Luther** writes: "If then the teachers whom God Himself has called, ordered, and consecrated can be deceived by the devil so that they teach falsely and persecute the truth, how shall he then through those teachers whom he himself (the devil), without and against God's command, drives and has consecrated, teach anything good and not much rather bring forth more pure devilish lies? I have often said and still say, I would not exchange my doctor's degree for all the world's goods. For I would surely finally lose heart and fall into despair in these great and serious matters that lie upon me, if I had begun it as a sneak without a call and command. But now God and the whole world must bear me witness that I entered into this work publicly in my Office as Doctor and Pastor, and have brought it so far by the grace and help of God. Undoubtedly some maintain that in 1 Cor. 14 St. Paul gave everyone liberty to preach in the congregation, even to bark against the established preacher. For he says, **'If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.'**(KJV) [**Luther:** 'If a revelation is made to another sitting by, let the first be silent.'] [1 Cor. 14:30]. So the sneaks take this to mean that to whatever church they come they have the right and power to judge the preacher and to preach otherwise. But that is a big, big error. The sneaks do not

view the text correctly, and take out of it, indeed brew into it, what they want. In this passage Paul is speaking of the prophets, who are to teach there, and not of the people who are to listen there. But prophets are teachers who have the Pastoral Office in the church. Why else would one be called a prophet? So let the sneak now first prove that he is a prophet or a teacher in the church to which he comes and who has **commanded** him to such an Office there; then one should hear him according to St. Paul's doctrine. If he does not prove it, then let him run away to the devil who sent and commanded him to steal another's Pastoral Office in a church to which he does not even belong either as a listener nor a pupil, much less as a prophet and teacher." (Letter to Eberh. von der Tannen, "Infiltrating and Clandestine Preachers," from the year 1531. Walch XX, 2080 f., *American Edition*, XL, 387f. Read this entire magnificent letter. Additions based on the original German text.)

Besides Martin Luther we shall let **Martin Chemnitz** also speak here. He writes: "But it is worthwhile to ponder for what reasons it is so important that a minister of the church have a lawful call. Now, we must not think that this takes place out of some human arrangement or only for the sake of order, but the reasons are very weighty [and] consideration of them brings many things to mind:

1. Because the ministry of the Word is that of God Himself, which He Himself wants to carry out through ordained means and instruments in His church, Luke 1:70; Heb 1:1,2; 2 Cor. 5:20, '**Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God**' (who is not far away from His ambassadors as King or Ruler) '**did beseech you by us.**' Therefore it is absolutely necessary, if you want to be a faithful pastor of the church, **that you be certain that God wants to use your labours and that you are such an instrument of His.** For in this way you can apply also to yourself these statements of Scripture: such as Is. 59:21; 2 Cor. 13:3; Luke 10:16. And as John the Baptizer says in John 1:23, '**I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness,**' which Luther renders thus: Ich bin eine Stimme eines Rufers (I am a voice of a crier), in order to indicate that it is another who is crying through John.

2. Very many **spiritual gifts**, but particularly **divine governance and protection**, are required so that the ministry may be carried out rightly and for the edification of the church. And one who has a lawful call can call upon God with a serene conscience and expect a certain hearing in keeping with those promises. Through our ministry God wants to inscribe His Law in the hearts of the hearers, 2 Cor. 3:2. But who is fit for these things? [2 Cor.2:16]. See 2 Cor.3:4-6; 1 Tim. 4:14; Is.49:2.

3. The real heart of the ministry is **that God by His Spirit and His grace wants to be present with the ministry and through it work efficaciously.** And one who is lawfully called to the ministry and carries it out correctly, that man can certainly believe that these promises apply also to him: Is. 49:2 and 51:16; Luke 1:76; 1 Tim. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:58; 1 Cor. 16:9 and 2 Cor. 2:12, "a door was opened for me." Why? Because the doorkeeper, the Holy Spirit opened [it], John 10:3 through a lawful call.

4. The certainty of the divine call in the ministry is profitable also for this, that ministers with greater **care, faithfulness, and readiness**, in the fear of God may administer their Office and not be easily deterred. In fact, this doctrine of the call also stirs up in the hearers true reverence and obedience toward the ministry." (*Loci Theologici*, Part III, On the Church. Transl. by J.A.O. Preus, Vol. II, p. 699. Thanks is due to the late Pastor K. K. Miller for his help.)

(All the emphasis is Dr. Walther's. To be continued.)

[Responsibility for all translation is taken by Pastor B. L. Winter of the ELCR.]