



## Interviews with God

•**I ASK:** *'Who is a fool?'*

•**THUS SAITH THE LORD:**

'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.' Ps. 14:1.

'They are without excuse; because that when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.' Rom 1:20-22.

'Fools make a mock at sin.' Prov. 14:9.

•**TO WHICH I RESPOND:** 'Lord, grant me grace to realize that the height of wisdom is to know Thee as the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent, and that the depth of folly is to ignore Thee in my plans for life and for death. Implant in my heart that fear of Thee which is the beginning of wisdom. May I constantly grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.'



### *Instruction from Dr Luther*

*The Writings of Faithful Teachers of the church are Treasures from which We can Learn Much*

**OVERLOOK MINOR FAULTS  
BUT REMAIN UNITED IN THE PURE WORD.**

Prov. 10:12, 'Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.' True faith in Christ and love for the Saviour moves the Christian to follow God's Word to overlook non-Biblical faults, to cover our fellow-believer's disagreeable habits and to put out every fire of earthly problems as soon as possible. Luther pleads with Christians united in the pure Word:

Dr. Luther's Oral response was, 'Oh, my dear God, how the devil hates us! He even creates disunity among the servants of the Word, so that one hates another; he is constantly starting new fires of dissension. *Oh, let us put those fires out with prayer, reconciliation, and by overlooking minor faults, so that both parties put the best construction on things and get along with one another!* Let us recognize that we are not the same in our *life and conduct (Wandel)*; each of us has his own peculiarities and way of doing things; we simply have to overlook that (within limits, of course). You

cannot turn everyone into the same kind of peg and make them exactly alike, as far as customs and habits are concerned. It's enough if we are united in pure *doctrine*.' (XXII, 820 f.) (*Essays For the Church*, Vol 2, Walther, page 58.)

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## Reformation Day, 2014

This October 31 marks 497 years since Dr Martin Luther nailed to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg his 95 theses. The 95 Theses were a protest against the ungodly practice of selling the forgiveness of sins for money, called indulgences. This began the Reformation. Out of it grew a new church body, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, because the Roman Catholic Church refused to be reformed and clung to its old, erring ways and false doctrines. We are the heirs of that Reformation, and that is a very important heritage we have.

What does this heritage mean? Won for us through Martin Luther and the Reformation is the pure Word of God and the right administration of the Sacraments, giving a clear knowledge of the way of salvation to millions of people.

In this text the Holy Spirit, through the Apostle Paul, teaches us how the Kingdom of God is built: it must be built on the right foundation, with the right materials, and in the simplicity of faith.

### 1 Cor 3:10, 11: Building the Church

V. 10. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

V. 11. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

'Alone by the grace of God,' Paul declares, 'I have laid a foundation, and others build on it (other pastors and teachers).' Note that the grace of God is placed into the foreground; without it the work could neither have been attempted nor carried on. The grace of God is the real motive force in the work of the Church at all times.

On his foundation, the basis which he had laid, another would erect the building. This foundation was laid by God from eternity, when He destined His Son to be the corner-stone and foundation of the great Church, the spiritual temple dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and this foundation will remain as the only foundation, in spite of all the efforts of the enemies to overthrow it. Until the end of time Christian ministers, by the preaching of the Gospel, are building up the temple of God on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

The warning of Paul is always timely: But let each one take heed how he builds upon it, how he attempts to construct the temple of the Lord.

1. We must build on the right foundation, which is Christ.

So Jesus is the Church's one foundation. He is the foundation God Himself laid for the church by the preaching of the Gospel. There can be no other foundation, for there is no other Saviour.

He is the One sent from heaven to be the Saviour of sinners. Every single Christian in the world rests on Him. He is the foundation of the Church because He gave His life's blood as the price for our redemption. Jesus said (John 14:6): 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.' He is the Rock on which the Church is built. If you try to build on anything else, you build on sand, and in the storms such a building will come crashing down.

2. We must Build with the right material, the pure Word of God.

Let every church builder build with God's pure Word. It means teaching the doctrine the Bible actually teaches, teaching the Word of God in its Truth and purity.

This is the basis for the three great principles of the Reformation:

Sola Scriptura (Scripture alone);

Sola gratia (Grace alone);

Sola fide (Faith alone).

Before the Reformation, under the scourge of the Papacy, souls were under the slavery of the law, the laws of men. Through Luther, the Holy Spirit restored the authority of the Bible as the only standard and guide in regard to matters of salvation. The Bible alone reveals how anyone can be

saved, alone by believing in Jesus. Salvation is alone by grace, 'for God so loved the world....,' we read in John 3:16. This grace is not mixed with works, as if men must earn, at least in part, the salvation Christ has won for them, but (Ephesians 2:8, 9): For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; v.9. not of works, lest any man should boast.

See what the workers of God have built on the foundation of Jesus Christ! With the precious Truth of God's Word they have composed sound and glorious confessions that have stood the test of time and endured against the fiercest attacks of the devil, one of the most precious being Luther's Small Catechism. They have composed sweet and pure Scriptural hymns, full of truth, comfort, and joy. Scriptural worship has been established and books upon books written that reflect the glory of the Gospel. Millions have known the way of salvation and been saved through faith in Christ.

3. The Church must be built in the simplicity of faith. 'Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise.' (1 Corinthians 3:18). Much of the false teaching in the church has as its source the fact that men want to be wise in this world, or think they are. Entire church bodies have fallen because they wanted to be recognized by the world as wise men and so they have compromised the Truth of the Bible and joined with the world. In the orthodox Lutheran Church we teach everything with a view to the salvation of souls, and the Gospel is kept plain, clear and simple, not hidden among the doctrines of men.

In Corinth they were impressed with their own wisdom. We are still impressed with our own wisdom today, but we must become fools if we want to be saved, fools by the world's standard, because we trust the Word of God and that is not foolish.

As Christians we are lords over the whole creation, life, death, the future, everything. The simplest, least educated Christian among us is a greater ruler than the President or the Pope, the lowliest child is a king or a queen in God's kingdom. What does it matter if we do not have celebrities amongst us, the great, popular and powerful of this world? We have the humble, even little children, whom our Lord teaches will one day inherit the earth. If we are Christ's, what more do we need? If we belong to Him through faith, if He has washed us with water by His Word, then we do not need to impress the sophisticated world and show them how smart we are. We need only Christ and His righteousness.

Without this simple faith in Him, we cannot build the Church at all. Our foundation is Christ and with His Word alone, by grace through faith alone, in simple, childlike trust in Him and His promises, can we build His Kingdom.

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## A Brief History of the Church

### Life and Deeds of Dr Martin Luther

[Since what the late Professor Koch teaches is so true, 'History is a great teacher', let us take note of the following lessons of History and value God's grace in preserving His Word with us.]

#### CHAPTER III. – LUTHER AT SCHOOL IN MAGDEBURG



At that time the Latin schools in Saxony were in a tolerably good condition. When, therefore, Martin had reached his fourteenth year, he was, in 1497, sent to the Latin school of the Franciscans at Magdeburg, in company with John Reineck, who ever afterwards remained his good friend. There, like the son of many an honest and wealthy man, he sought his bread by singing at the doors of citizens. What is to become great must begin small, and when children are trained to effeminacy and sumptuousness they suffer for it all their lives.

While there, he was taken with a violent fever, which caused him great distress. Water having been denied him, he suffered much from thirst; and once, on a Friday, when all had gone to Church and left him alone in the house, he crept upon his hands and knees into the kitchen, seized a vessel

containing fresh water, drank it with great relish, and returned, in the same way, to his chamber, which, in his feebleness, he could scarcely reach before the members of the household returned. Upon this draught he fell into a profound sleep, and the fever left him. At a later period he observed, with reference to this, that he had been informed by several learned physicians that in such burning fevers a copious draught of cold water diminishes the internal heat, as fire is quenched by water.



Luther relates an example of monastic sanctity, occurring at this period, which made a deep impression upon him. 'In my fourteenth year, when I was attending school at Magdeburg, I saw with these eyes a prince of Anhalt, the brother of the provost Adolph, afterwards Bishop of Merseburg, in a monk's cowl begging bread through the wide streets, and bending under the sack, like an ass; but his brother went without a burden, by his side, that the pious prince might alone present to the world the highest example of grey, tonsured sanctity. They had so beguiled him that

he also performed every other work of the monastery, like the rest of the monks; and, he had, by

Magdeburg



fasting, watching and mortification, become so reduced that he looked like a skeleton, nothing but skin and bone. He died soon afterward, for he was unable to endure such a rigorous life. In fine, whoever saw him, melted with devotion, and had to be ashamed of his secular calling. I think there are still many in Magdeburg who saw it.'

Efforts were made also to represent by pictures, this great priestly sanctity to the people. Luther describes one which must have made a deep impression upon him in his youth.

'They painted a large ship, which they called the Holy Christian Church, in which sat no laymen and no kings nor princes, but only the pope with his cardinals and bishops, who occupied the front,



under the Holy Spirit, and the priests and monks, who sat with oars on the sides; and thus they sailed away towards heaven. The laity swam in the water about the ship; some were drowning, some drawing themselves to the ship by ropes, which the holy fathers, by grace and by sharing their good works, cast out to them that they might not drown, but be taken along to heaven, clinging to the ship. There was not a pope, cardinal, bishop, priest or monk in the water; nothing but laymen.

This picture was a representation and brief summary of their doctrine concerning secular callings; and that it is a fair representation of the doctrine contained in their books they cannot deny. For I also was one of the company that taught such things believing them in my ignorance. Thus

they condemned laymen with their whole order, insomuch that even princes and lords, in the hour of death, had monk's cowls put upon their heads and were buried in them, thus boldly denying Christ and renouncing and despising Baptism and all sacraments, condemning their secular vocation, putting all their trust in the holy cowl and the imputation of the good works of the order, and deriving all their consolation from them, whilst, clinging to their rope and their ship, they ascended to heaven.' Once he exhibited a tablet, upon which this picture was painted, dilated upon its meaning, and then added: 'It is a very old picture, conceived by a monk of Venice, the purport of which we believed as an article of faith, yea, even against the Christian faith.'

When Martin had returned from Magdeburg to Mansfeld, the aged count Guenther was taken very sick and had Luther invited to his castle, where he remained and waited upon him till the count's death. When he returned home he spoke in high terms of praise to his family of the excellent testament of the count. In answer to the inquiry about the contents of this glorious last will and testament, he said that 'He desired to depart from this world trusting alone in the bitter sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, consoling himself with His merits, and commending his soul to Him.'

‘I thought,’ Luther afterwards said, ‘even as a young pupil, can this be such an excellent testament? For it seemed to me that if the count had bequeathed something considerable to churches or monasteries, this would have been a more note-worthy testament. But we see by this that our God has always, even in the midst of the darkness of the papacy, preserved many Christians unto eternal life, who have embraced the merits of His only Son and clung to them in faith. Therefore my father justly praised the count's last will as an excellent testament, although as a young pupil I did not then understand it.’

*Life And Deeds of Dr. Martin Luther* by Rev. Hermann Fick (an old Missouri pastor) and translated by Prof Loy, pages 14-18 .] (to be continued).

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## Halloween History and the Bible

Psalm 24:1: *‘The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein.’*

This Psalm is a Psalm of David, a ‘hymn of the Messiah and His kingdom, to prepare the believers of the Old Testament for His coming and to inspire the believers of the New Testament with the proper regard for their King.’ (Kretzmann). David points out in the opening verse that everything belongs to the Lord. In particular reference to 31 October, instead of celebrating Halloween, as a festival to the dead, demons, and overall, Satan, may we instead celebrate it as a memorial to the grace and mercy of the Lord for restoring the Word of God in its truth and purity to the church under Martin Luther.

There has been considerable paganism that has been associated with Halloween over the years. Evil acts such as vandalism, fires, destructive pranks, pretending people are something they are not by dressing up (and particularly by the glorification of sensuality, death, and demons). So, a word of caution must be given to Christians who promote some of the questionable modern practices of Halloween.

Bodie Hodge, from Answers in Genesis, wrote an article on October 29, 2013 dealing with the history of Halloween. Excerpts from this article have been quoted to reveal the antiquity of this festival and its heathen nature, but also interesting research which possibly connects its origin to the Tower of Babel.

<https://answersingenesis.org/holidays/halloween-history-and-the-bible/>

When Did Modern-day Halloween Get Started?

In the early 1900s, the migrating Irish and Scots brought Halloween traditions to the United States. Over time, Halloween catapulted into mainstream culture.

The holiday, though, has roots reaching much further back. Some researchers claim that the holiday can be traced back about 2,000 years to the Celts of Europe, who occupied parts of Ireland, the United Kingdom, and northern France. It was a pagan festival called ‘Samhain’ (pronounced ‘sow-in’) that celebrated more or less the honour of the dead and involved the offering of large sacrifices of crops and animals...

The Name ‘Halloween’

Around AD 600, Pope Boniface IV created All Saints’ Day, and Pope Gregory III later moved this holiday to November 1 in an effort to give a Christian alternative to this pagan celebration.

Christians who did not want to celebrate pagan festivals celebrated something of positive spiritual value—in this case honouring the saints and martyrs. With the overwhelming expansion of Christianity in Europe, All Saint’s Day became the dominant holiday.

In fact, the current name of ‘Halloween’ originates from the day before All Saint’s Day, which was called ‘All Hallow Evening’; this name was shortened to ‘All Hallow’s Eve’ or ‘All Hallow’s Even.’ The name changed over time and became ‘Hallowe’en’.

A couple hundred years later, the Roman Church made November 2 All Souls Day to honour the dead. This may well have been influenced by the continued persistence of the day of the dead by the ancient Irish, Scots, and others in Europe. Standing against this, many Protestant Christians celebrate October 31 as Reformation Day in honour of reformers such as Martin Luther, John Calvin, and others who spearheaded the Reformation in the 1500s.

Other Cultures Have a ‘Day of the Dead’

Although many affirm that Samhain was the origin of modern-day Halloween, it is significant to note how many cultures throughout the world have celebrated a ‘day of the dead’ (often with sacrifices), occurring at the end of summer and fall. There seem to be too many parallels to call these similar celebrations a coincidence...

In Asia, there are similar festivals. For example, the Chinese celebrated the Ghost Festival, which was a day to pay homage to dead ancestors...

What Is the Original Source for Halloween?

It seems no coincidence that cultures all around the world in both present and ancient times have had a holiday when the dead were remembered and animals were sacrificed. We can make a pretty strong argument that this holiday goes back to a time when all the peoples lived together—and then they took this holiday to various parts of the world.

Otherwise, it seems strange and difficult to explain how these cultures developed celebrations that are so similar. This would likely push the true origin of ‘Halloween’ and these other ‘days of the dead’ to the time before the dispersion at Babel (Genesis 11), over 4,200 years ago, after which different early cultures began to vary in its practice...

Other Christians in the past have recognized this connection. For example, Alfred Rehwinkel, a professor of theology at Concordia Seminary, realized that nations throughout the world had a similar day of the dead, and he directly related this to the Flood of Noah’s day. John Urquhart pointed this out as far back as 1931, soon after the holiday of Halloween gained prominence in the United States.

‘Due to the many, varied accounts of celebrations of the day of the dead around the world, I would strongly suggest that its origin was a time when people groups were still gathered together or had closer ties.’

How should the Christian celebrate 31st October?

Upon the command of the Lord (Joshua 4:5-7) Joshua instructed twelve men to:

v. 5. Pass over before the ark of the Lord, your God, into the midst of Jordan, and take you up, every man of you, a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel,

v. 6. that this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, ‘What mean ye by these stones?’

v. 7. then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off, and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel forever.

The purpose of this was to establish a memorial, a reminder to the Children of Israel in their future generations of everything the Lord had done for them. In like manner the Christian Church has established various festivals to remember and celebrate the works of the Lord. Christmas celebrates the work of God the Father sending His One into the world for lost, sinful mankind. Easter celebrates the work of Redemption of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Pentecost is a memorial of the work of the Holy Ghost, how He established, built up, and will continue to preserve, the Christian Church on earth.

Halloween is at best a man-made festival of dubious nature; at worst it is a celebration of the works of the devil and all evil. Why not be like Joshua, and use it as a memorial to the Lord, a day of praise and thanksgiving to God for preserving the Word of God in its Truth and purity. Through the work of the Reformation, the three ‘solos’ were restored to the Church:

Sola Scriptura (Scripture alone);  
Sola gratia (Grace alone);  
Sola fide (Faith alone).



