



Steadfast

In the Word and Faith



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What Luther Says About — Man

The Reason Why Man Was Created. The principal end of man's creation, to which Scripture points, is that, made in the likeness of God, he was to live with God forever. And here on earth he should praise God, thank Him, and obey His Word in patience. This end we do attain to some extent in this life, although in weakness; but in the future life we shall achieve it to perfection. Of these things philosophers know nothing. That is why the world is most foolish at the height of its wisdom, lacking Holy Scripture or theology. For without the Word men know nothing either of their beginning or of their end.— SL 1, 160)



Man No Longer Child of God by Nature. Whatsoever is flesh is ungodly, under the wrath of God, and foreign to the kingdom of God. But if it is foreign to the kingdom and the Spirit of God, it follows of necessity that it is under the kingdom and the spirit of the devil; for there is no intermediate realm between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the devil, which are constantly fighting each other— SL 18, 1891

Restoring the Image of God in Man. The purpose of the Gospel is to restore this image of God. Man's intellect and will have, of course, remained; but both are greatly corrupted and weakened. The chief purpose of the Gospel is to restore us to that lost image, yes, to a better one; for by faith we are born again unto eternal life, or rather unto the hope of eternal life, so that we may live in God and with God and may be one with Him, as Christ says.

Nor are we born again only unto life but also unto righteousness, for faith lays hold of the merit of Christ and is sure that we are redeemed through the death of Christ. This produces another righteousness within us, namely, the newness of life in which, instructed by the Word and helped by the Holy Spirit, we study to obey God. But this righteousness only begins in this life and cannot be perfected in the flesh. Nevertheless, it pleases God, not as though it were a perfect righteousness or as though it were a payment for sins, but because it comes from the heart, which takes comfort in faith and relies on the mercy of God through Christ. — SL 1, 78)

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Devotion — Matthew 10:28-31

V. 28. And fear not them which, kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

V. 29. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

V. 30. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

V. 31. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Ultimately, there is really only one commandment: ‘Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thine heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might.’ This commandment on its own is the sum of the Law; all other commandments are simply a further manifestation of it, ‘and thy neighbour as thyself’. What does this commandment mean?

Luther explains: ‘It is our duty to fear, love, and trust in God above all things.’ All commandments only true Christians can keep, as only they can please God, and that is only through faith.

We have here a command to stop fearing, but in other passages we are commanded to fear God.

We must distinguish between the use of child-like fear (reverence for God flowing from faith) and slavish fear (terror and fear of God).

2 Chronicles 20:29, ‘And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries, when they had heard that the LORD fought against the enemies of Israel.’

2 Timothy 1:7;

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Isaiah 2:10;

Hebrews 2:15; 1 John 4:18:

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

This is the fear that of which the devils are filled, awaiting their final judgment, the fear of God’s wrath and vengeance.

Child-like fear occurs when it is the result of the Gospel:

Psalm 130:4, ‘But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.’

Psalm 119:32, ‘I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.’

Hebrews 12:28, ‘Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.’

When this fear produces hatred of evil:

Proverbs 8:13, ‘The fear of the LORD is to hate evil.’

Proverbs 3:7, ‘Fear the LORD, and depart from evil.’

Job 1:1, ‘There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.’

When this fear brings about godly conduct or produces true wisdom:

Psalm 111:9,10, ‘He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is His name. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.’

Proverbs 14:2(a), ‘He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD.’

Philippians 2:12, ‘Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.’

When unbelievers lack this fear:

Proverbs 1:29, ‘For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD.’

When it belongs to those in whom the Lord takes pleasure:

Psalm 147:11, ‘The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.’

Psalm 115:11; Psalm 103:13; Psalm 33:18;

So how do we fear God above all things? The Catechism answers: ‘We fear God above all things when we honour and respect Him more than all things and keep from doing wrong.’ Verse 28 tells us: ‘And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.’

This is how we are to fear God. There are many fearful things in this world; Jesus is in the middle of describing the opposition His followers will have to face. They will be delivered to councils, and scourged. They will be brought before kings and governors. Their own families will betray them to death. They will be hated and persecuted, persistently hounded, abused, ridiculed, mocked, betrayed. Every weapon the devil can summon will be thrown against them. And yet Jesus says, ‘Stop fearing them.’

‘These things I have spoken unto you that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.’ John 16:33.

The Prince of this world has been judged; the world, his empire, has been overcome.

Hell itself has been conquered by the almighty Son of God. 'Death is conquered, man is free; Christ has won the victory!' Therefore, why should we fear those who can kill the body, but cannot kill the soul? They have all been conquered, they are but barking dogs held in check by the chain of Christ's innocent suffering and death. They can go no further than God allows, and God has already set their limits:

'The gates of hell will never prevail against My Church.' Matthew 16:18.

We are therefore told not to fear them; and we are told Who we are to fear. They can kill the body, but cannot kill the soul. Their power is therefore temporary; their worst simply brings us into our heavenly reward sooner. We are, on the other hand, to fear Him that has power over both soul and body

in hell. The One we are to fear is the One Who is the absolute Master over even hell itself. We are to fear our Father in heaven, Who has promised to deliver us from every evil of body and soul, property and honour, and when our last hour has come, has promised to grant us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this vale of tears to Himself in heaven.

'For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh (body) is more needful for you.' Phil 1:23-24

On one man's grave it was written: 'He feared man so little because he feared God so much.' What a great testimony! Let us learn to serve our heavenly Father in true, child-like faith, flowing from faith in Christ. —TJW.



The Lutheran Church in its Relationship and Position Towards Other Church Bodies

By Pastor Peters¹. - 1890

Introduction

(Continued from Steadfast November- December 2017)

We call ourselves Lutheran, have formed a Lutheran Synod and have met here (at Convention, BLW) to discuss matters that deal not only with the external welfare of our synod and of our congregations, but above all things to build ourselves upon in our most holy faith, to be strengthened in it and to be absolutely certain that we really have the correct, true faith which once and for all was entrusted to the saints (true believers)². If we do not continue to be certain of this, we cannot firmly adhere to the faith as God's Word requires it of us.

But when we use the word 'faith' in Scripture, it occurs in two ways. In the first place, according to God's Word, we understand the word 'faith' as it is used in Jude 3, 'the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.' Given to the saints (Jude 3), that means, all the teachings which



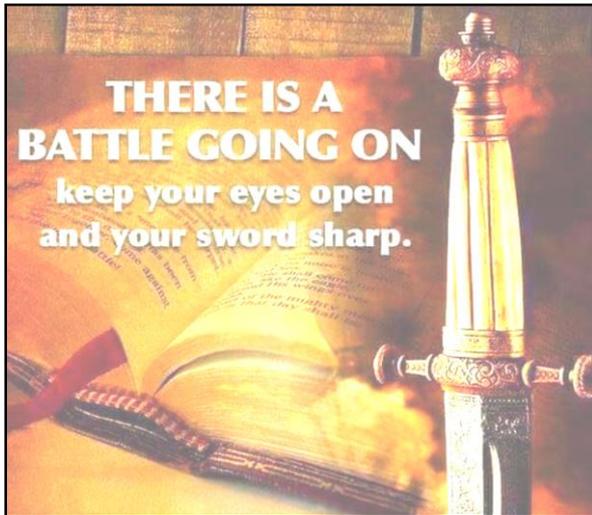
¹ **Pastor Peters** (1850-1925) studied at Hermannsburg, Germany and was ordained in 1877. He was at Murtoa from 1878 until 1904 and was also the founder and principal of the college there. He was the editor of the *Kirchenbote* from 1893 until 1894 and president of the Victorian and New South Wales District from 1893 until 1904. He too **became a very faithful "Missourian" in doctrine and practice** as his excellent commentary on Revelation, "The Judge Is At The Door" shows. He was a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia (ELSA) [which later changed its name to Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia (ELCA)]. **This essay was published in 1890.**

² **Jude 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."**

Tran.: "Divinely-loved ones, while I was making every effort to write you about the salvation possessed in common by all of us, I was compelled instead to write to you urgently, to admonish you to fight strenuously, with intensity and determination for the defense of the Faith which was once for all entrusted into the safe-keeping of the saints." (BLW)..

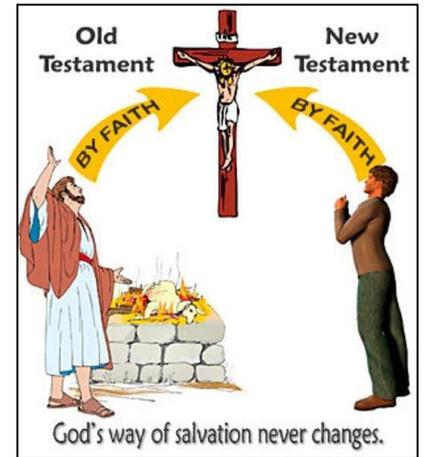
are placed before us in God's Word, that is, the doctrines that deal with faith (doctrine, dogmatics), or the faith (doctrine) which is to be believed.³ On the other hand Scripture use the word 'faith' to refer to the faith by which we believe⁴ to the faith of the heart, the confidence of the heart (in being saved through Christ), by which we adhere firmly ourselves to this faith (doctrine) entrusted to us in the Word, and preserve it and thus be saved by it.

And since this faith (saving faith in Christ) is not the work of man, but has arisen from the faith (pure doctrine) entrusted ('to the saints'), that is, it has arisen from the doctrine of faith (pure Word) found in the precious Gospel, brought to our hearts and worked therein by the Holy Spirit, then the true only saving faith can only then be truly certain, truly strong, truly joyful within us, if we have the doctrine of faith (pure Word), the precious Gospel, the faith (pure doctrine) entrusted ('to the saints'), entirely quite pure, clear and unadulterated. If this is not the case, then our (personal) faith is also uncertain, weak, insecure, ill, and we are in grave danger of soon losing it altogether. Hence just as our constant sigh of the heart must therefore be: 'Lord, do not let the Light of my faith go out, anoint me with the Oil of Gladness (Rejoicing)⁵, that from this time on the Light of my faith in my soul will never go out,' just so also must our constant endeavour be, to maintain and to preserve the Oil of Faith, the precious Word of God pure and clear; and for this to happen it is indispensably necessary that we constantly possess it.—



only then will we be able to continue to be preserved from error and take the correct position in doctrine against all other church groups with all their possible shades of error by which we are surrounded here in our new fatherland.

Therefore it is certainly timely if we focus our attention on our church to which we profess faithfulness and once more think deeply about and ponder at length on the relationship and the position of the Evangelical Lutheran Church compared with other church bodies. Our purpose is to become more certain that it takes the correct position on Scripture and towards these church



Now since we call ourselves Lutheran Christians, then above all things we must know the pure Lutheran doctrine and be convinced that in it we have nothing else than the pure doctrine of God's Word. If we are convinced that the Lutheran doctrine is God's pure Word, then it is also necessary to hold firmly to the Faith and to fight for it, in order that we hold that fast which we have so that no-one takes our crown⁶. In these times when sects and religious fanatics abound,



³ In his **Christian Dogmatics** Dr. F. Pieper states (Vol. II, p.450): "Jude 3: '**Contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.**' The term πίστις (faith) here **denotes the entire Christian doctrine**. This is done in accordance with the principle: The naming is done according to the most important part (*denominatio fit a parte potiori*). **Since the doctrine that we are justified by faith in the Gospel is the characteristic feature of the Christian doctrine, the entire Christian doctrine thus is called πίστις (faith).**" In a sermon on this text **Walther** states concerning the use of faith in Jude 3: "True faith, or what is the same, the pure doctrine".

⁴ Eph.2:8,9 etc.

⁵ This is a reference to Psalm 45:6,7 and Heb.1:9 where the **Holy Spirit** who is called the "**Oil of Gladness**" will anoint our Saviour, Jesus Christ to all eternity to be our Prophet, Priest and King. That is what the word **Messiah** means -- the Anointed One.

⁶ Rev.3:11.

bodies, so that we then can learn what position we also, as members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, in these evil and dangerous times have to take against the various sects and groups around us.

For this overview I have drawn up 15 Theses which we now want to look at in turn.

Thesis 1: The Evangelical Lutheran Church is not the one holy Christian Church which we confess in the Third Article and outside of which is to be found no salvation and blessedness.

The Confessions of our Church state: 'I believe in the Holy Spirit; in One holy Christian Church, the congregation of saints.'⁷ Already the first two words clearly testify that we confess that these words do not mean the Lutheran Church; and such confession we joyfully make.

'I believe'⁸, we confess. But according to the Scriptures faith is 'is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen' (Heb.11:1)⁹.

(Pages 3,4; Bolded emphasis added. To be continued. Some paragraphs have been shortened.)

Tributes to Luther (Part 2)

Philip Jacob Spener (German Lutheran Pietist, 1635-1705)

'In the days of our fathers, God was pleased again to have pity on His Church, and to give it a token of His favour, in the blessed work of the Reformation. At that time then did He send forth preachers of the Gospel, in goodly numbers, and endowed with precious gifts, amongst whom was one, a star of the first magnitude, who surpassed all the rest, that venerable man of God, Dr. Martin Luther. Gladly do we embrace the opportunities that are often given to us to speak of him; and by so doing, to record our gratitude to God for the blessings conferred upon the Church, through his ministry.' (*Tributes to the Memory of Martin Luther*, Rev. P. C. Croll, pp. 23-24)

Augustus Herman Franke (German Lutheran Pietist, 1663-1727)

'Concerning his Reformation, I hold that God truly raised and led [Luther] to the great work of bringing back to light again the pure, evangelical doctrine which had become so beclouded under the papacy; and that no one could have come from God who professed a reformation of the Church contrary to that of Luther. For the pillar of this Reformation consisted in the fact that all human work, teaching and tradition was abolished and annulled, and that instead all honour must be given to God the Lord, who has made Christ Jesus to be unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. Hence, since I thus honestly regard Luther's doctrine to have been the true, evangelical, pure and Apostolic doctrine, founded upon the Word of God, and builded upon such a foundation on which alone we can come to God and be saved, and since Luther was saved in this doctrine, I am persuaded as for myself, also to live and die in this faith.' (*Tributes to the Memory of Martin Luther*, Rev. P. C. Croll, pp. 24-25)

Charles P. Krauth (Lutheran Theologian, 1823-1883)

'The greatness of some men only makes us feel that though they did well, others in their place, might have done just as they did. Luther had that exceptional greatness which convinces the world, that he alone could have done the work... He was not a secondary orb, reflecting the light of another orb, as was Melancthon, and even Calvin; still less the moon of a planet, as Bucer or Brentius; but the centre of undulations which filled a system with glory. Yet, though he rose wondrously to a divine ideal, he did not

⁷ What is stated is Luther's translation. The words we use are: "**I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints.**"

⁸ **Walther in Church and Ministry** (Pages 38,39) states: "If according to these words ('I believe'), the Church is something that must be believed, **it cannot be visible**, for '**Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen**' Heb.11:1). For this reason Augustine writes: 'This is faith to believe what you do not see' (Tract.10 on John); and in another place: 'You fool, what you see is not faith.'"

⁹ Luther translates this, as **Walther's Law and Gospel** (Page 139) points out, as follows: "**Faith is having a sure confidence regarding things hoped for and not doubting things unseen.**"

cease to be a man of men. He won the trophies of power and the garlands of affection. Potentates feared him, and little children played with him. He has monuments in marble and bronze, medals in silver and gold; but his noblest monument is the best love of the best hearts, and the brightest, purest impression of his image has been left in the souls of regenerated nations...

‘Living under thousands of jealous and hating eyes, in the broadest light of day, the testimony of enemies but fixes the result, that his faults were those of a nature of the most consummate grandeur and fullness, faults more precious than the virtues of the common great. Four potentates ruled the mind of Europe in the Reformation – the Emperor, Erasmus, the Pope, and Luther. The Pope wanes, Erasmus is little, the Emperor is nothing, but Luther abides as a power for all time. His image casts itself upon the current of ages, as the mountain mirrors itself in the river that winds at its feet – the mighty fixing itself immutably upon the changing.’ (*Tributes to the Memory of Martin Luther*, Rev. P. C. Croll, pp. 67-69)

C. F. W. Walther (Lutheran Theologian, 1811-1887)

‘We have no reason to be ashamed of the person Luther. On the contrary, we have the strongest reasons to glory in him, in defiance of the slanders of the papists. His unfeigned piety, his invincible trust in God, his dauntless heroism in the presence of danger, his unremitting diligence in prayer and supplication, his genuine meekness and simplicity, his transparent disinterestedness far removed from avarice and the love of money, his tender sympathy for all the sorrowing, his beneficence ever flowing freely for all who were in need, his sincerity utterly averse to the ways of the flatterer and of the hypocrite, his candour that marked his intercourse with the lofty and the lowly, his sobriety, his abstinence, his purity, his self-consuming diligence, his faithfulness as son, as husband, as father, as preacher, as professor, as friend, as counsellor, as citizen – in a word, his full exemplary piety, all together present a model of true Christianity that may command admiration, and is worthy of the imitation of all subsequent times. Further, we have abundant reason to boast of Luther’s exalted gifts, and the use he made of them; of his profound wisdom, his extraordinary learning, his penetrating judgment, his commanding eloquence, his fine poetic inspiration, his incomparable services to the Church, the State and society at large, to art, to science, to our German name and our glorious German speech, and above all to the gigantic work of the Reformation, the triumph of which, under God, the Church owes to the faithfulness of Luther.’ (*Tributes to the Memory of Martin Luther*, Rev. P. C. Croll, pp. 223-224)

Philip Schaff (Church Historian, 1819-1893)

‘[Martin Luther] figures in history as the great Reformer who set in motion the mighty struggle for religious and civil liberty throughout Europe; as the founder of the Lutheran Church, which is one of the largest Protestant denominations, and second to none in every department of sacred and secular learning; as the prince of Bible translators, whose version still has the strongest hold on German-speaking Christendom and is used Sunday by Sunday and day by day in every Lutheran Church and household; as a hymnist whose ‘Ein Feste Burg ist Unser Gott’ inspired the advancing armies of the Reformation, and struck the key-note to the richest hymnology of the world – Truly, greatness enough to insure the immortality of half a dozen men... There is no man in history after the incomparable St. Paul, who accomplished more for his race than Martin Luther.’ (*Tributes to the Memory of Martin Luther*, Rev. P. C. Croll, pp. 75-76)

Charles Julius Hare (Anglican Archdeacon, 1795-1855)

‘To some readers it may seem that I have spoken with exaggerated admiration of Luther. No man ever lived whose whole heart and soul and life have been laid bare as his have been to the eyes of mankind. Open as the sky, bold and fearless as the storm, he gave utterance to all his feelings, all his thoughts. He knew nothing of reserve; and the impression he produced on his hearers and friends was such, that they were anxious to treasure up every word that dropped from his pen or from his lips. No man, therefore, has ever been exposed to so severe a trial; perhaps no man was ever placed in such difficult circumstances, or assailed by such manifold temptations. And how has he come out of the trial? Through the power of faith, under the guardian care of his Heavenly Master, he was enabled to stand through life; and still he stands, and will continue to stand, firmly rooted in the love of all who really know him.’ (*History of the Christian Church*, Vol. VII, Philip Schaff, p. 739) S Wood.

Christian Humility

BY REV. G. RUNKEL
FIRST PAPER.

True humility is a plant not to be found in the field of the natural heart of man. No! The heart which, according to God's own declaration is, by nature, deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, cannot from its own soil and by its own power bring forth the lovely lily of lowliness. On the contrary, it cannot but yield an abundance of ugly thorns, and thistles of haughtiness, striving without intermission, to avail itself of every favouring circumstance to gratify its inborn propensities to pride and ambition. From within,— out of the heart, evil things proceed, amongst which evil things pride is expressly mentioned. Mark 7, 22. The unregenerate heart is indeed an abominable fountain of corruption. Of the wicked one the Scriptures say that he is proud and insolent, Psalm 10. Man, in his natural state, may appear humble, he may wear a garb resembling meekness, he may give preference to acting the part of lowliness, finding it more expedient so to do; he may be walking with the apparent humility and modesty of an angel (Col. 2.) and yet, notwithstanding all this, he is but 'vainly-puffed up by his fleshly mind'. The hypocrites exert themselves in affecting the virtue of lowliness of mind, but it is only their outside that is fair,— 'having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof'. (2 Tim. 3.) 'Unless the heart be renewed, we look in vain for true humbleness, which is more than all the crowns and all splendour upon earth, and the true spiritual life that pleases God'. (Luther.) This humility is a gift, a grace, that comes down from above, from the Father of lights. the Giver of every good gift. It is an offspring of living faith in Christ Jesus; it is an essential branch of godliness by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and therefore found only with true Christians. Humility, this 'most admirable quality of love', by which true peace and good order is preserved, truly *adorns* Christians. but none else except those that are Christians indeed. And whereas they know and esteem the beauty of this virtue, they are diligently aspiring after the same, delighting in manifesting and in practicing it as they are admonished to do. 'Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, — humbleness of mind, meekness, long – suffering'. Col. 3. 'Be clothed with humility', 1 Pet. 5. That is to say, Be ye truly humble and let your conduct be a proof of the lowliness of your heart; follow the foot-prints of your Saviour, who has left an example of His

humility and bids you to learn from Him, because He is 'meek and lowly in heart'. Mat. 11.

But wherein does Christian humility consist? Are Christians to treat themselves with contempt in their words and actions? Are they obliged to put to silence their spiritual adoption, whereby they have received a right to the glorious privileges of the children of God. Must they, concerning themselves, say only such things, as tend to their own dispraise? Indeed not, inasmuch as such deportment is altogether contrary to the divine instruction and exhortation, that we, being a light in the Lord, should walk as the children of light, proving what is acceptable unto the Lord,—unto the glorification of God and the good of our neighbour. Christians do not disdain, but rather, recognize and prize that treasure, of which Solomon, the Preacher, (ch. 7) speaks, saying, 'A good name is better than precious ointment'. It certainly did not derive from humility, but rather from profanity (Hebr. 12, 16,) that Esau despised his birth-right, selling the same for the pottage of lentils. The unconcerned *what-do-I-care-temper* of mind is a mark of humbleness no more than it was a sign of pride in St. Paul, when he admonished Christians to be the followers of him and to mark them which walk *so as ye have us for an example*.'

Is it humility to give everybody else, whoever and whatever he may prove to be, the preference to one's self? Impossible! God never enjoined the wise to be the scholar of the fool, nor the righteous to submit to the dictates of the vicious, nor does His Word advise Christians to consider themselves inferior to the ungodly, who 'walk in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.' Eph. 4. Thus St. Paul, for instance, did not give preference to King Agrippa and his council, but, with a heart glowing with affection for their spiritual welfare, declared, 'I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day were altogether *as I am*, except these bonds.' Acts 26. Faithful Christians, who are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, the temple of the Lord Sabaoth, do not cast away their spiritual birth-right and hence cannot judge themselves, in their blessed state, inferior to the children of this world, exalted as their renown may

be. For the children of God have something exceedingly great to exult in, of which the world knows not,— they ‘glory in the Lord’, and in His salvation.

Is it humility to deny or conceal those spiritual gifts, of which some have received a greater portion than others? Not at all. The Lord distributes a different amount of ‘talents’, and every recipient is to improve the amount awarded to him: ‘trade with the same’, is the Lord’s own command. Whatever gifts or endowments we may possess, they are not our own, they are God’s property and hence we must employ them in His work, according to His will. The more He has committed to your trust, the more He will ask of you. Do not think it a virtue to be idle or slow when, consistent with your avocation and your endowments, you might make yourselves useful. We read that the wrath of God was kindled against Moses, because the latter, protesting his unfitness, insisted upon being excused from being appointed to deliver the children of Israel from their oppression, notwithstanding that God had chosen him and promised him protection and victory.—The deep sense of your own weakness must never be allowed to induce you to disobey God; on the contrary, it ought always to lead to God, to ask His grace and power to be mighty in you, and to enable you, according to His design, to ‘trade’ with the amount of talents you have received. ‘As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God’. 1 Pet. 4, 10. ‘I have no such silly humility as to disown the gifts God has bestowed upon me’, said the humble Reformer, Luther.

Is it humility, to give up the truth of God, or at least to let false doctrine pass without opposing it? Most certainly not! Not Christian meekness, but carnal indifference, foolish carelessness and cowardice will forsake the fortress of truth. Humility never tenders the heart faint, but gives strength, courage and boldness in carrying on the battles of

the Lord. Moses, to whose sincere meekness the Scriptures testify, did not deviate from the Word of God in order to please Pharaoh, mighty and insolent though this tyrant proved to be. Fearing not the wrath of the King, fearing none but God alone, Moses, the humble servant of God, boldly demanded the dismissal of his people. Because Elijah, the prophet, walked in humility in the presence of God, he was brave enough to meet the enraged Ahab with this bold censure coming from his lips; ‘I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of God’. 1 Kings. 18. Was St. Paul an obstinate, haughty man, because he neither would nor did submit in the least to the opinions of false teachers? Did humility make his heart throb in view of the mighty errorists? Indeed not. He declares: ‘To whom we gave subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you’. Gal. 2, 5. In reviewing the life of Luther, we can not but admire the lowliness of mind, he evinced in all his works and actions, however not a single instance may be pointed out, which would even intimate weakness or timidity in his warfare against the corrupters of truth. Humility encourages the heart, valiantly to defend the pure doctrine and to withstand false doctrines, because, like charity, it ‘rejoiceth not in iniquity (falsehood), but rejoiceth in the truth’. Really grand and of utmost importance is the following utterance of Luther, which cannot be too well pondered: ‘In matters pertaining to God’s Word and honour, a minister and a Christian must indeed carry his head high and be confident and bold.... Here we have nothing of our own which we are at liberty to give away or to surrender; all belongs to our God and Lord, who commands us to hold fast to His Word.... In this respect, then, we must not trifle nor be lowly minded; let all such humility, that departs from the Word of God, perish forever.’ (*Lutheran Witness*, 7 January 1884.)

Our Faith

Part One (Rev. F. G. Kleinig, Gatton, Q’ld.)

What is your Faith? In other words, what do you really believe? The reason why we ask you this question is that the answer you give is of vital importance to you, since your eternity is bound up with it. Upon the answer *you* give to this question depends where you are going to spend eternity, whether in heaven or in hell. Dr. Luther pointedly remarks: ‘It is what you believe that will either save you or condemn you.’

Now, since what you believe will decide where and how you are going to spend *your* eternity, we shall discuss a number of different beliefs held by people of today.

There is first of all the faith of the Atheist.

He believes there is no God; he believes the universe and all it contains made itself; he believes death is the end of everything; he believes there is no hereafter, no heaven, no hell, nothing. The grave is the end of his faith, rather a dismal, hopeless end. He really is a no-hoper, and we need not bother ourselves with him. Luther says: 'If someone says that God is not God, just let him go. For we have nothing to do with the man who believes nothing at all and denies everything one says of God and God's Word. He who dares deny what nature teaches everyone, and what is granted by the reason and intellect of all men should not be disputed with, but should be referred to a physician who should clean out his brain for him.'

The atheist may learn better some day — perhaps only when it is too late. The verdict of Scripture on the atheist runs as follows: 'The fool bath said in his heart, there is no God.' (Ps. 53, 1).

Then there is the faith of the natural, unconverted man

This faith holds that there is a God and a life to come. It believes that God will reward those who lead a decent, respectable life, and that He will punish those who lead a bad life and do wicked things.

Every human being is born with this faith in his heart, holds on to it in a greater or lesser degree during life, and puts his trust in it in the hour of death. This is the faith of the heathen, the faith of salvation by good works. It is the most widely-held faith on earth, it is the belief of the Hindus, the Buddhists, the followers of Confucius, the Mohammedans, the Jews, the Freemasons; it is held by many people inside the visible church, who believe that by taking Jesus Christ as their example, and following, as best they can, the pattern set by His perfect life, they will surely inherit eternal life.

The tragic thing about this type of faith is that while it holds out to its followers a blessed and happy eternity, it without fail leads them to hell. Even many church-people are shocked when they hear this; but it is a fact, for the Scriptures say: 'By the deeds of the law (good works) there shall no flesh be justified in God's sight' (Rom. 3, 20); and, once more, 'As many as are of the works of the law are under the, curse' (Gal. 3, 10).

Salvation by good works, good conduct, a decent and respectable, even deeply religious life, is the faith and hope of every natural, unconverted person; but this faith leaves him in Satan's kingdom, and he must be 'born again,' that is, he must be truly converted, if he is to enter the Kingdom of God and be saved. Should you, reader, still hold this FALSE FAITH, with which also you came into this world, you would still be amongst the unsaved, even though you were baptized and confirmed, and go to church and the Lord's Supper regularly. Your religion would be the religion of the Law, a religion which cannot save, but which inevitably leads to hell. Should you still hold this religion, then throw it away, the sooner the better, and begin looking for the only saving faith.

Thirdly, we note the faith of the Devils

Satan and his evil angels also have a faith. But it is a frightening faith. They believe there is a God; but whenever they think of God, they tremble with agonizing fear (Jas. 2, 19) because they know that this is the God they once rebelled against, and who, when Judgment Day comes, will cast them into the fires of hell, where they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Rev. 20, 10).

Merely to believe in the existence of God will save no one. And yet we do find people who think this is sufficient. Surely their spiritual knowledge is NIL. To know there is a God without knowing the way to Him is quite useless, and offers not the least bit of comfort or hope. Luther remarks to this: 'I have often asserted that no one should try to believe in God except through a mediation. Therefore, we ourselves cannot take action before God, for we are all children of wrath. But we must have another through whom we may come before God, who shall intercede for us, and reconcile us with God. Now there is no other Mediator than the Lord Christ, who is the Son of God. Therefore that is not a true faith which is held by the Turks and Jews: I believe there is a God who has created heaven and earth. The devil believes precisely this. But it does not help him. So men venture to appear before God without Christ the Mediator. But St. Paul says, Rom. 5: We have access to God by faith; not through ourselves, but through Christ. Therefore we must bring Christ with us, must come with Him, must satisfy God by Him, and all we have to transact with God we must do through Him and in His name.'

No Christ, No God; *No Christ, no God, no Salvation!* And that's that.

Then we have head-faith, quite common among Church People

People holding this type of faith frequently know the Scriptures quite well — in their head. They have a good knowledge of Bible stories, they know the history of Christ quite well, they can readily tell you the story of His

birth, His life, His suffering, His death, His resurrection; they can also discuss doctrines of Scripture, Scriptural practice, and other things relating to the Christian religion. But their knowledge of these things has never gone deeper than their head. It has never reached down into their hearts. It is merely an historical knowledge, which the owner fails to apply to himself, an imaginary faith. We again listen to Dr. Luther: 'An imaginary faith is one that hears about God, Christ, and all the mysteries of the incarnation and redemption, comprehends all the things it has heard, and knows how to speak about them beautifully. Yet it remains mere imagination and pointless hearing, which leaves in the heart only a sound of that Gospel about which it chatters a lot. But in reality this is not faith, for it does not regenerate, and

does not change the heart, does not make a new man of the person, but leaves him in his former view and way of life. This sort of faith is, moreover, very harmful. It would be better not to have it at all. A heathen who is moral is better than a hypocrite who has such a faith.'

Readers, you wouldn't by any chance have this type of faith, would you? (*The Australian Lutheran, 1961, pp 41-142. To be continued.*)

Simeon Stylites

It is wonderful to see to what extreme rigour of bodily mortification and torture, the *mystics* of the fifth century, who pretended to be more perfect than other Christians, subjected themselves, in order to appease the Deity, and to deliver the celestial spirit from the bondage of this mortal body. 'To live among wild beasts — nay in the *manner* of these beasts, roam about like madmen, in desert places, and without garments; to feed their emaciated bodies with hay and grass, to shun the converse and the sight of men; to stand motionless on certain places, for many years, exposed to the weather; to shut themselves up in confined cabins, till life ended; — this was accounted piety; this, the true method of eliciting the spark of Deity from the secret-recesses of the soul.'

Among this class of fanatics, none obtained greater celebrity than the *Stylites*, or pillar-saints; who stood on the tops of lofty columns, for many years, or to the end of life, to the great astonishment and admiration of the ignorant multitude. The author of this singular institution in this century, was Simeon, a Syrian, commonly called Simeon Stylites. As a matter of curiosity, and illustrative of the superstition and stupid credulity of the age, I must transcribe the history of Simeon, as it is given by the translator of Mosheim.

'This Simeon, we are told; was born at Sisan, in Syria, about A. D. 300. At the age of thirteen, while attending his father's sheep, he heard a public exposition of Luke vi. 21-25, (*Blessed are ye that weep now, etc.. But woe unto you that laugh now, &c.*) which determined him to become a monk. Having therefore passed a novitiate of two years, he removed to a monastery near Antioch, where he now lived ten years. Here his abstinence and his voluntary mortifications were so excessive as to draw on him censure from the other monks. He

once swathed himself from his loins to his neck, with a rigid well-rope of palm, during ten days, which caused his whole body to fester and discharge blood. Being expelled the monastery for such austerities, he retired to the adjacent mountain, and let himself down into a dry cave. After five days the repenting monks sought him out, drew him forth from the cavern, and restored him to their fellowship. But not long after, he retired to a little cell, at the foot of a mountain near Antioch, and there immured (confined, GLW) himself three years. During this period, having caused his den to be stopped up with earth, he remained buried forty days, without eating or drinking, and when disinterred, was found nearly dead. So pleased was he with this experiment, that he afterwards kept such a fast annually as long as he lived. Next, he removed to the top of the mountain, where he chained himself to a rock for several years. His fame had now become very great; and crowds of admiring visitors, of all ranks and characters, thronged around him. He instructed them, healed their diseases, and converted heretics, pagans, and Jews, in great numbers. Incommoded (inconvenienced, GLW) by the pressure of the crowd, he erected a pillar, on which he might stand, elevated at first- six cubits, then twelve, twenty-two, thirty-six, and at last forty cubits. The top of the pillar was three feet (one Metre, GLW) in diameter, and surrounded with a balustrade. Here he stood, day and night, and in all weathers. Through the night, and until 9 o'clock A. M. he was continually in prayer, often spreading forth his hands, and bowing so low that his forehead touched his toes. A bystander once attempted to count the number of these successive prostrations, and he counted and till they amounted to twelve hundred and forty-four. At 9 o'clock A. M. he began to address the admiring crowd below, to hear and

answer their questions, to send messages and write letters, etc., for he took concern in the welfare of all the churches, and corresponded with bishops, and even with emperors. Towards evening, he suspended his intercourse with this world; and betook himself again to converse with God, till the following day. He generally ate but once a week, never (?) slept, wore a long sheepskin robe, and a cap of the same. His beard was very long, and his frame extremely emaciated. In this manner he is reported to have spent thirty-seven years; and at last, in his sixty-ninth year, to have expired unobserved, in a praying attitude, in which no one ventured to disturb him till after three days; when Anthony, his disciple and biographer, mounting the pillar, found that his spirit was departed, and his holy body was emitting a delightful odour. His remains were borne in great pomp to Antioch, in order to be the safeguard of that unwalled town, and innumerable miracles were performed at his shrine. His pillar also was so venerated, that it was literally inclosed with chapels and monasteries, for

some ages. Simeon was so averse from women, that he never allowed any to come within the sacred precincts of his pillar. Even his own mother was debarred this privilege, till after her death, when her corpse was brought to him, and he now restored her to life, for a short time, that she might see and converse with him a little, before she ascended to heaven.—Such is the story gravely told us by the greatest writers of that age, and as gravely repeated in modern times, by the Roman Catholic historians.’

We are told that many in Syria and Palestine, followed the example of Simeon, though none fully equalled him; and that this stupid form of religion continued in the East, down to the twelfth century, when it was finally abolished. The Latins, however, did not follow the East in this matter; and when one attempted it in the German territory of Treves, the neighbouring bishops had his pillar pulled down and prevented him. (*The Lutheran Witness*, 1886, p.111.)

Notes and News

Hospital: Over the last couple of months the following people have spent some time in Hospital. May they find comfort in these words.

Moments With God

Read Genesis 4:3-15

Verses 4,5 — *The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering, but unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect.*

LORD GOD, how often our hearts tempt us to believe Thou art not just and righteous. How often the world doth ask us to think Thou art not worthy to be followed. Happy are we in possessing Thy holy Word; for it showeth us how through generation after generation, Thou hast always dealt fairly with men. It is only when we are not willing to do Thy pleasure that Thou turnest from us. If we will but listen to Thy voice we will find Thee always true and faithful. How plain Thou hast made the way of life to us.

We need but yield to the wooing of Thy Holy Spirit, we need but accept, in the strength which He giveth us, Thy way of salvation, and all will be well with us. Lord, deal with us according to our several needs. If we grow proud and self-willed, send us Thy rebukes. If we come to Thee with gifts which are not holy, which are of our own unhallowed reason do Thou deal with us according to thy wisdom, not according to the will of our own flesh. Keep us ever mindful of our unworthiness. Make us understand that no service can please Thee unless it is the true service of a heart purified by the blood of Jesus Christ. And oh, lead us away from our inborn selfishness into a self-sacrificing spirit which is willing to lay all upon Thine altar, asking only that thou wouldst in mercy accept what it bringeth to Thee. We ask it in His name who offered up Himself for us. *Amen. (Moments with God, p.9.)*

