



Steadfast

In the Word and Faith



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What Luther Says About – Man

Man Lives in a World of Lies. Man is a liar actively and passively, that is, he tells a lie and he suffers a lie; for he who relies on the children of men is deceived (Jer. 17:5).
W-T 2, No. 2227



'Like wolves, Lies Hunt in Packs.' Alas, dear God, how many different shifts evil causes must have, and seven lies are always needed to cover up one lie in order to make it appear as the truth.
SL 19, 1242

IN CONSEQUENCE, Luther is said to have remarked one day, the man who deals in falsehoods had better have a retentive memory.

Lying Calls for a Good Memory A liar must have a good memory, because everyone is justified or condemned by his words. SL 22, 1828, No. 151

A Lie Is Like a Snowball. A lie is like a snowball: the longer you roll it, the larger it becomes. W-T 1, No. 340

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Devotion — *Matthew 10:28-31 Part 2*

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.

We are also to love God above all things.

What does it mean to love God above all things? The Catechism replies: ‘We love God above all things when we have more love for Him than for anything else.’

‘Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind.’

Matthew 22:37.

‘He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.’ Matthew 10:37.

‘For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous.’

1 John 5:3.

Luther had grave trouble with this. How could he love a God Who condemns every sinful thought, desire, word and action? No man could perfectly please such a God. Luther also knew Romans 6:23: **‘For the wages of sin is death.’** Luther also knew what death really is, not merely passing out of existence, but separation, separation of body and soul, eternal separation from God in hell. How could anyone love a God Whose righteousness condemns one forever to everlasting torments? Luther confessed that he even hated God.

But the remainder of Romans 6:23 reads: **‘But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord.’** That gift of God, forgiveness of sins, and eternal life, is available to all. Christ has died for all, all have been declared righteous in the sight of God based on the merits of Jesus Christ. This is called objective justification. And this is truly the love of God, that He sent His Son into the world.

How does this forgiveness, though, become our own? Through the power of faith, faith worked in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

‘Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him.’

‘By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.’ 1 John 5:1, 2.

The true Christian believes in Jesus, not just that Jesus lived, died and rose again, a mere head knowledge, for the devil also knows all that. The true Christian does not just believe that Jesus died for his sins, for Jesus has died for the sins of the whole world, yet not the whole world will be saved. The true Christian believes all of this, but also personally accepts Jesus as his Saviour from sin, realising that he does need a Saviour from sin. In accepting Jesus as his Saviour from sin, the true believer, through faith, also accepts that he must live to please Jesus. **‘For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.’** 1 John 5:3.

John tells us a lot about true love for God (1 John 4:7-21):

The greatness of God’s love: **Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God.**

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is Love.

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Dwelling in God and in His love: **Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.**

No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us.

Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.

And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God.

And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us.

Perfection in brotherly love: God is Love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.

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.

We love Him because He first loved us.

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.
—TJW

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

By Pastor Peters¹. 1890. Translated Pastor B Winter
(Continued from Steadfast January- February 2018)



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 faith of the Christian, then, has to deal with future and *invisible* things and grasps the future things as if they were present and the invisible things as if they were *visible*. Yes, with regard to the eye of faith the *invisible things* are a **thousand times more sure and certain** than the *visible things* are with regard to **the eye of the body**, for here with regard to the eye of the body deception can take place. But faith in the heart of the person who believes can *never* be deceived, since according to Scripture (Heb.11:1) it is a certain, that is, *a sure confidence*, because faith relies on God, the eternal, true God. Faith depends solely on God and on His Word and knows that it cannot be ruined (come to naught) either *in regard to itself*, for of it Scripture says: ‘(God), *Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end*’ (Psalm 102:27), or *in regard to His Word*, for of this the Lord Jesus says: ‘Heaven and earth shall pass away, but *My Words shall not pass away*’ (Mat.24:35). —

When we now thus confess: ‘**I believe in One holy Christian Church,**’ then this is not the language of human conjecture, as we, for example, say in ordinary life: ‘I believe that it will rain this morning,’ but this is the language *of faith which is certain, this is the language of the certain, sure confidence relying on God*, in fact, here relying on God the Holy Ghost. In the Confession of our faith in the words of the Apostles’ Creed we declare: ‘**I believe in the Holy Ghost,**’ not: ‘I believe in *a* Holy Spirit, I think that there is a Holy Spirit,’ Oh no! But: ‘I believe *in* Him as my supreme Good (Possession) and place on Him all my trust, comfort, hope and confidence and therefore know and believe **in One holy Christian Church, because He tells me that the Christian Church exists** (where the Gospel is taught in its purity), that He so gathers, rules and preserves her so that the gates of hell will not be able to overwhelm her (Mat.16:18).

From this statement of our Confession (the Apostles’ Creed) it is clear that the true Christian Church is something that *we cannot see*, but about its presence, existence and nature we can obtain information, clarity and certainty, but also rock-solid certainty only from God’s Word by the Holy Spirit. That now the Lutheran Church also cannot be this Church must even be clear to the most simple-minded, for this is **visible** in its

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.**

individual members, so that we can **count them** and know how large their number is. But this will become ever more clearer to us when we hear what the Holy Spirit, in whom we believe and in whom we place our unquestioned confidence, tells us about the Church.

In order better to understand this matter, however, first of all, we must look more closely at the word ‘**Church**,’ at what this word actually means. The word ‘Church’ is not originally a German word; it may be that, as some say, its descent is from the Old German word ‘Kiren,’ or, as others desire, from the old Frankish word Richi, with the word Ki placed before it, thus Kirichi: the kingdom. Luther, on the other hand, says the word ‘Church’ is of Greek origin². But that (its origin) is of little concern for us. It is much more important what the word actually means and what is understood by it. The Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed tells us this with the explanatory words: ‘**The congregation of saints**’³. Hence the word ‘Church’ means as much as assembly or congregation, actually the congregation or assembly of true Christians⁴.

Let us hear what **Luther** says about this in the Large Catechism:

‘If it is to be rendered plainly, it must be expressed quite differently in the German idiom; for the word *ecclesia* properly means in German *eine Versammlung*, an assembly. But we are accustomed to the word *church*, by which the simple do not understand an assembled multitude, but the consecrated house or building, although the house ought not to be called a church, except **only for the reason that the multitude assembles there**. For we who assemble there make and choose for ourselves a particular place, and give a name to the house according to the assembly.

‘Thus the word Kirche (*church*) means really nothing else than a common assembly.’ (Triglotta. page 691).

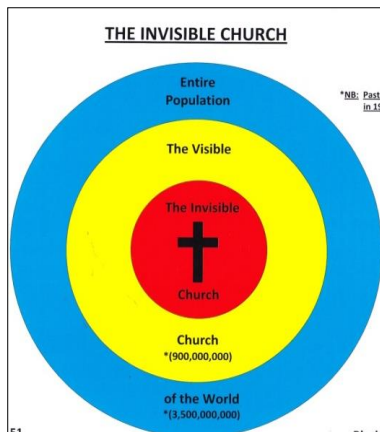
Hence this is the meaning of the little word ‘Church’. It means as much as assembly or congregation and what kind of assembly or congregation the Holy Spirit understands by this we see when the holy writer writes to the Christians in Heb.12:23, that they had come ‘**to the congregation of the firstborn, who are written in heaven**’⁵ (Luther’s translation), and when Paul writes to Timothy (1 Tim. 3:15): ‘**But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church (Luther’s German: congregation) of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.**’ In Eph. 2:19-22 Paul writes: ‘**Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and (and of the household of God;**

² "Thus the word Kirche (church) means really nothing else than a common assembly, and is not German by idiom, but Greek (as is also the word ecclesia); Therefore in genuine German, in our mother-tongue, it ought to be called a Christian congregation or assembly (eine christliche Gemeinde oder Sammlung), or, best of all and most clearly, holy Christendom (eine heilige Christenheit)." (Triglotta, page 691).

³ 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."

⁴ **In expounding Scripture the meaning of a word is obtained through its usage in Scripture itself.** The meaning of the word "Church" (ecclesia) is determined by how it is used in Scripture itself. *Dr. F Pieper* correctly states in Lecture 8 on ‘The True Visible Church:’ Furthermore: **at the time of Christ, as a person then spoke in the street, in the family, in their business, so God speaks to us in the same language in the New Testament.** In expounding Holy Scripture a person must therefore observe this precise linguistic usage. **If a person does not observe this linguistic usage, then he errs, then he does not let Holy Scripture be expounded by Scripture itself,** but interprets it according to his own free will, then he decides the meaning of the words not from Holy Scripture, **but according to his own thoughts.** To put it concisely, **do not then permit anyone to be the master of Holy Scripture, but let Holy Scripture rule everyone.** Therefore it is also necessary that you learn to know with complete precision the *linguistic usage* of Holy Scripture. You cannot make the *usus loquendi*, the popular usage, which has been brought in from the outside, the standard. **In the exposition of Scripture you must apply a grammatical rule which has been taken from Holy Scripture itself.** Likewise, you must examine every Lexicon which you use to see whether it records the meaning of the individual words just as these words have been used in *Holy Scripture*."

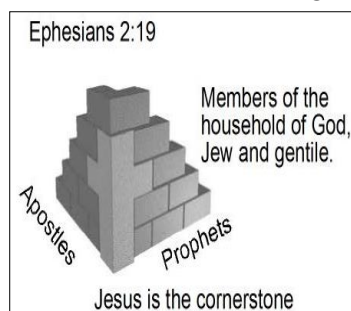
⁵ **Kretzmann** on this verse: "For the holy Christian Church, **the communion of saints**, is not an earthly, visible mountain, but a **fellowship of saints**.... The ideal Zion is the place where God manifests His presence, the fullness of His grace in Christ. It is the heavenly Jerusalem, since it is not earthly and made with hands, and yet will be the final abode of all believers, Gal. 4, 26. God has His home, the throne of His mercy, in the midst of His Church, Rev. 14:1; 21:2; 1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16. Into this **communion** the believers have entered. They are thus united with many thousands of angels in a fellowship of bliss, heaven and earth being united through the coming of Christ, Col. 1, 20; Eph. 1, 10. **We belong, by faith, to the great festival assembly, to the congregation of God’s first-born children, those that have been converted to faith in the foremost First-born, the eternal Son of God.**"



and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner-stone; in whom *all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord*; 22. in whom ye also are builded together for an *habitation of God through the Spirit.*'

In these words we hear clearly as the Holy Spirit describes the 'Church' as the assembly (congregation) of the firstborn, as an assembly of such whose **names are written in heaven**, as a congregation of **true believers in Christ**, gathered (built) together into a **dwelling place of God in the Spirit**, growing into a **holy, spiritual, temple in the Lord**, and are **members of God's household** (His spiritual house), whose **chief Corner-stone is Christ** and whose **foundation is the doctrine** of the holy (sanctified) **Apostles and Prophets** or in other words, **the Word of God**. When we thus

call this house (building) in which we are gathered for worship, a Church, or a house of God, then that occurs in an *improper* sense⁶, for the reason, as Luther says, because here the Christian congregation, God's spiritual house or His Church is gathered together. For God does not dwell in non-living houses made by the hands of



men, but His house (Church) is a *living* house. The building blocks in this house (the Invisible Church) are the *souls and hearts* of *the* people in whom the Holy Spirit has made His dwelling place by faith in Christ and whom He has by God's Word called, enlightened, made spiritually alive, converted and have been born again. By faith in Christ He has placed these into this beautiful building and preserves them in the faith until the end and He continues to insert new stones until the holy temple (of His Church) will be completed on the last day. **It is also clear from this that the Lutheran Church is not nor cannot be the Church, as we confess in the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed.** Because oh! not everyone who adheres to it is a member of the family of God and a citizen with

the saints, not everyone who belongs to it is a living building block, but there are many who are lukewarm, dead, sham Christians, Christians only in and name and appearance. *To be continued. (Pages 5-8; Italicised emphasis is Pastor Peters; Bolded emphasis added. Some larger paragraphs have been divided into shorter ones.)*

Lord's Prayer, Part 1 – Introduction

Over the next issues of Steadfast I would like to share with you some thoughts on the Lord's Prayer. I have found that the longer I have been a Christian, the more I have come to appreciate the immeasurable wisdom of this simple prayer. We should remember that the Lord gave this prayer as instruction to His disciples. One of them had asked, 'Lord, teach us to pray' (Luke 11:1), and Jesus said, 'When ye pray, say, Our Father...' (Luke 11:2). This prayer is for us. It teaches us how to pray. It contains all of the topics that God would have us express to Him in prayer. Just as all of the commandments of God are comprehended in the Ten Commandments, so all the topics of true prayer are comprehended in the Lord's Prayer. The mark of a good prayer is not fervour or eloquence, but it

is the content of the prayer. Right prayer concerns itself with the right topics. And it is these topics that are so simply and masterfully provided for us in the Lord's Prayer.

The Lord's Prayer begins with these wonderful words, 'Our Father which art in heaven'. Luther says, 'God would by these words tenderly invite us to believe that He is our true Father, and that we are His true children, so that we may with all boldness and confidence ask Him as dear children ask their dear Father.' (*Luther's Small Catechism*, 1943, p. 152). There are three thoughts contained in this brief introduction.

1. We pray to God as our Father

⁶ Not truly or strictly belonging to the thing under consideration. It is a figurative use of the word **Church**. The building is called Church because of the Christians who worship there. But the **strict meaning** of the word **Church** refers only to those who truly believe in Christ.

In our prayers, we must first above all things consider God as our dear Father. After His resurrection Jesus said, 'go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God' (John 20:17). God wants to be regarded as 'our Father'. He wants us to address Him on the basis of such an intimate and dependable relationship. He wants us to believe and know that He loves us with a fatherly heart and seeks only our good. He is the One who knows us best and accepts us unconditionally in His dear Son. He has been with us from the very first moment of our existence and has also preserved us up to this hour. We owe all of who we are to His love and kindness. He wants us to understand this and to trust His goodwill. Just as earthly fathers naturally love their own children so our heavenly Father loves us because we are His own. As His dear children we have been begotten of God our Father and we bear His image and likeness. As our dear Father He delights in us and has taken responsibility for our well-being and growth. He wants us to look to Him as the source of all wisdom and every good thing. As a Father He provides for our needs and protects us from all harm and danger. He exercises us with problems and concerns for our own growth and edification and He carefully and skilfully guides us unto maturity. He wants no forced prayers, but rather the free and sincere expressions of those who love Him who has so loved them. 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?' (Matt. 7:11).

2. We pray to God as His children

We are the children of God. 'For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.' (Gal. 3:26). 'Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth' (Jam. 1:18). 'Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God' (1 John 3:1). We are children of the great King, 'and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ' (Rom. 8:17). In our prayers, we should 'reckon' ourselves as such. Not only are we thereby exercising our faith in the unseen things of God, but we are also encouraged to greater confidence and trust that our prayers will be heard by our loving Father. 'Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father' (Gal. 4:6). Our heavenly Father will be kind and loving to His children. We should trust that at all times. We show our greatest trust in God by always returning to our heavenly Father as often

as we go astray. It is the mark of little children that they are quick to run to their fathers with all their cares and concerns. They readily believe what their father says. They implicitly trust that father knows best. Jesus said, 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' (Matt. 18:3).

3. We pray to God in true faith

'He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him' (Heb. 11:6). Faith requires that we believe that God is both willing and able to do what we have asked. James says of the praying Christian, 'But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord' (Jam. 1:6, 7). Luther says that when we pray we are lifting up a cup for God to fill so to speak. We must keep the cup steady with the hand of faith. If we doubt God's will and ability we shake the cup and are unable to receive the blessing poured out. 'Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss.' (Jam. 4:3). When we pray 'our Father' we are acknowledging that God is willing to do all good and helpful things for us. He is our Father who loves us and is willing to give us every good thing. When we pray 'which art in heaven' we are acknowledging that He is also able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think' (Eph. 3:20). 'Our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased.' (Psa. 115:3). 'With God all things are possible.' (Matt. 19:26). 'For with God nothing shall be impossible.' (Luke 1:37).

Finally, while we should commit the Lord's Prayer to memory and say it often, we should be careful about saying it with a detached heart. God sees the heart. Due to the familiarity of the Lord's Prayer we can easily say it in a cold and mechanical way. Luther also recognized this particular danger. He writes, 'Many pray the Lord's Prayer a thousand times a year, and though they pray it a thousand years, they would not have prayed one letter thereof properly.' (*Daily Bread*, F. E. Pasche, p. 280). Again to a young Christian, he says, 'I want your heart to be stirred and guided concerning the thoughts which ought to be comprehended in the Lord's Prayer. These thoughts may be expressed, if your heart is rightly warmed and inclined toward prayer, in many different ways and with more words or fewer. I do not bind myself to such words or syllables, but say my prayers in one fashion today, in another tomorrow, depending upon my mood and feeling. I stay however, as nearly as I

can, with the same thoughts and ideas.’ (*Luther’s Works*, Vol. 43, p. 198). May God teach us to pray with the thoughts and ideas that we have gleaned from this simple introduction to the Lord’s Prayer.

*Our Father, Thou in heaven above,
Who biddest us to dwell in love,*

*As brothers of one family,
To cry for all we need to Thee:
Teach us to mean the words we say,
And from the inmost heart to pray.*

(M. Luther, 1539)

S Wood

Christian Humility

BY REV. G. RUNKEL

II

To add one more question: — Does humility oblige a man to be careless in his apparel? To disregard decency? Said a filthy miser: Look at me. I am none of the proud and selfish kind. My humble shanty, the scanty furniture, the threadbare clothing and my frugal meals speak well for the disposition of my mind! Alas! The niggard as well as the sloven are far from observing that simplicity and moderation which, avoiding all unnecessary expense, abstains from customs in which excess and vanity prevail. There may, in the opinion of the ignorant, be a show of lowliness in ‘neglecting the body’, Col 2:23 (whether such inattention to the necessities of daily life be recommended by monks and nuns, or by misers) but such demeanour is not at all in conformity with the ordinances of the Creator, according to which man is to honour his body, even in nourishing and cherishing the same.—

True humility, the effect of divine grace operating on the soul is, in general, that disposition of the mind, wherein the Christian reduces and confines his own opinion concerning himself and his advantages in a manner conformable to his relation to God, which relation is clearly described in the holy Scriptures.

The knowledge of God’s greatness and goodness, and self-knowledge, in the light of divine revelation, are two indispensable requisites, which, however, in order to prove useful, must be combined with and sanctified by faith in Christ, the Saviour and Mediator. With regard to our relation to God, we are, in the first to observe that He is our creator and Ruler, and that we are the works of His hands. He is the potter we are the clay. Is. 64:3. He the all-sufficient in His essence and attributes, we nothing without Him. From this knowledge results the sense of entire dependency on God, that without Him we are naught, incapable of performing anything, even regarding temporal affairs. Sensible of this our own nothingness, we shall be guarded against attributing to ourselves any excellence or good. ‘I am but dust and ashes’ — was the candid confession of Abraham, showing how deeply his soul was humbled in the presence of the Lord of Glory. Whoever has high thoughts of the dignity of the divine Being, will have low thoughts of himself, whereas on the other hand a man that prides himself by the very fact of indulging in self-esteem, robs God of His honour.

Secondly, it is to be observed that, with reference to our moral condition, we are sinners, depraved and unclean, not deserving anything good, but deserving only punishment at the hands of the most just and holy God. ‘Man is humiliated,’ says Luther, ‘when through the knowledge of sin, the heart is terrified on account of God’s wrath, and earnestly seeks grace, — not apparently merely before men, but sincerely, for God’s sake, out of the fear of God.’ Self-righteousness in whatever guise this detestable vice may appear, is damnable haughtiness. The self-righteous are ‘the proud in the imagination of their hearts,’ and God has threatened to scatter them as the whirlwind scatters dust and chaff. They are ‘the mighty’ who shall be taken down from their lofty throne of self-conceit. They are ‘the rich’ boasting of having at least some merit of their own in the sight of God; but they shall be sent away as they are in themselves — empty, devoid of goodness, devoid of justifying grace and faith, devoid of peace with God. ‘Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.’ Rev 3:17 —

True penitence is true humility. Out of this *depth* come the cries and sighs: God, be merciful to me, a sinner! I know, I feel, I confess, that I have sinned against Thee. My sin is ever before me (Ps. 51:3.). and wherever I turn my face, I see my sin, and through it Thy just anger. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, and

save me for Thy mercy's sake!—To acknowledge, with a contrite heart that, regarding our own moral relation to God, we are wretched lost sinners, who are saved by grace alone, is in truth that 'low degree' (Luke 1:52) which has the glorious promise of exaltation.

Thirdly it is to be observed that, with the reference to the state of grace, everything pleasing unto God, is due to Him alone. 'To the praise of the glory of His grace, He hath MADE us accepted IN THE BELOVED.' Eph 1:6. That we are justified and sanctified that we, who were as the sheep going astray, in the wilderness of ignorance and sin, are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls is in every particle, the gift of the grace of God, given to us by the effectual working of His power. He having condescended to favour us, the earthen vessels, with His heavenly treasures, though we in no respect are worthy of these blessings. This being true, it is evident, that real humbleness is extant only in a heart that, being illuminated by the light of the Gospel, ascribes spiritual life from its very foundation and beginning to its consummation in the world to come, solely to the sovereign grace in Christ Jesus. And whereas the children of God know that in the present state, they do not attain to perfect holiness of life, the inward sense of their many defects and sins is to them an incessant admonition to humble themselves in the presence of their God. Such true lowliness will express itself in their conduct towards their fellow Christians as well as towards all men in general. Although they do appreciate a *good* name ('an honest report', see Acts 6:3; ch 10:22), they are far from aspiring after a *great* name. (See Gen 11:4; Dan 4:27). They do not seek honour, nor do they boast of any attainments, nor vaunt themselves to be superior of others. 'Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, envying one another.' Gal. 5:26. Let no man 'think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but soberly.' Rom. 12:3. 'In honour preferring one another.' Rom 12:10. — 'The love and friendship of Christ manifested towards us, should induce us to esteem one another highly and dearly, for the sake of Christ who dwells in us. It is not admissible for us to reject any one in consequence of his imperfections. We should remember that our Lord dwells in the weak vessel, and honours him with His presence. If then, Christ regards him worthy of kindness and affection, so as to give him as great an interest in Christ as we have, we should bow before him, as the living temple and seat of our Lord. What can it concern us, how insignificant the seat is upon which the Lord sits? If it is not too insignificant for Him to sit upon and honour it, why should we, His servants not honour it?' (Luther.)

May we all learn our own weakness and reflect that God has conferred upon others their portion of grace and gift, so that no one has a right to exalt himself over another. It was a very good advice which someone gave to his friend, who had been complaining that, although he was doing his best, he seemed to be held in very little repute: 'Set yourself down for nothing, and if any person takes you for something, it will be all clear gain. (*The Lutheran Witness*, 1884, pp. 129-130.)

YOUR FAITH

Part Two

(Rev. F. G. Kleinig, *Gatton, QLD.*)

Another false faith is the blind, formal, impersonal faith

Many people today stake their hope of salvation on the fact that they belong to some church; often it does not really matter which one. Scripture doctrine does not worry them much; as long as the minister talks about God and Christ and heaven — it does really not matter whether what he says agrees with Scripture or not, as long as he is a good speaker, that will do. Anyway, they say, we belong to the church, we were confirmed in the church, we were married in the church, and we expect to be *buried by the church*; in short, we stood for the

church, and believe in it, what else do you require from us? Surely we have our ticket to heaven! With respect to this, Luther tells the following story: 'A doctor of theology once met a coal-miner on the bridge at Prague. Moved to compassion by the fact that the fellow was a poor layman, the doctor asked, My good man, what do you believe? The miner answered: I believe what the church believes. The doctor: But what does the church believe? The miner: The church believes what I believe. Later when the doctor was about to die, the devil so severely troubled him concerning his faith that he did not know which way to turn and found no rest until he said : 'I believe what the miner

believes.’ A similar story is told of the great Thomas Aquinas. It is said that as his end came on, he could not hold his own against the devil until he said: I believe what is written in this Book. He was holding the Bible in his arms.’ There you have the blind, formal, impersonal faith. Luther concludes the story with these words: ‘God grant us very little of this faith; for if they had no other faith than this, all three of them - the doctor, the miner, and Aquinas - believe themselves into hell.’

And finally we come to the true faith — the only saving faith

The only saving faith is the true Christian faith; the faith which rests on the Word of God as its sure foundation, which clings to that Word, and will not be moved from it either in life or in death. It is the faith which centres on Jesus Christ as the only Saviour from sin, death and hell and which looks for peace and salvation to nothing else either in heaven or on earth or **under the earth except alone to the Lamb of God, which** taketh away the sin of the world. Luther defines it thus: ‘The true faith dwells in a heart that embraced and grasped the Son of God as the Scriptures speak of Him, and firmly holds that God gave His only- begotten Son into death for us, and has so loved us that for His sake we should not perish but have eternal life.’ This faith is grounded on Scripture alone, on nothing else; it is very, very personal. I must *myself* believe in Christ as *my* Saviour; no one else can do it for me; this faith presupposes the knowledge that *I myself* am a lost and condemned sinner, without any merit, righteousness or worthiness of my *own*, I myself must bring my very own sins to the foot of His cross; I myself must then accept, yes *truly accept* through God’s Spirit the forgiveness which He through His work of redemption won for me, and now offers me in His holy Gospel. My *own heart* must be in this matter, not merely my head. Everything must be very, very personal. St. Paul writes: ‘*With the heart* man believeth unto righteousness’ (Rom. 10, 10); again, ‘Thy faith hath saved thee’ (Luke 7, 50). This faith no man can create in himself. It is solely and alone the work of the Spirit of God. Scripture says: ‘No man can say that Jesus is the Lord (i.e. believe in Jesus as the Saviour) but by the Holy Ghost’ (1 Cor. 12, 3). And the Holy Spirit creates faith, the true faith, only through the Gospel, which is the Word of God. ‘Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the

word of God’ (Rom. 10, 17). Therefore, friend, if you are to have *in your heart* the true Christian faith, the only faith which will save you from hell, you must give the Holy Spirit the opportunity to create in you this faith. You must use the means of grace, the Word of God and the Sacraments, prayerfully, regularly, and in all sincerity. You must have the Word of God *in your home*; you must *come to church* to hear the Word; you must come to the *Lord’s Supper* for the strengthening of your faith. Not only occasionally, but *regularly*. Now, reader, have you this true saving faith in your heart? Only two persons know. One is you yourself, the other is God. But how can *you know*? Well, have you in your heart a desire to thank your Saviour for all that He has done for you? Does your heart tell you to do something for Him? Has your faith made a different person of you, or do you still love to do things which you know to be wrong? Do you feel you should help to spread the Gospel of Christ through your own testimony and through your gifts? And then do you put these desires into practice? If your faith prompts you this way, and out of love to Christ you then set about *to do these things*, without a doubt you have the *true faith* ‘the faith that worketh by love,’ as the Scriptures say. You may count yourself amongst the number of the saved.

Note Well!

If you say: ‘I have faith,’ but your faith urges you to *no thankfulness* towards the Saviour, if it does not prompt you *to do* the will of God; if, for example, you say you believe, but *will not go to hear* the Word of God? nor will you show *any interest in the building* of this kingdom of God, then you may be quite certain your faith is *not the true saving faith*; it is a dead faith as the Scriptures say: ‘But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?’ (Jas. 2, 20). And if your faith is a dead faith, you are still amongst the unsaved, you are still on the way to hell. So what? The Scripture says: ‘Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves’ (2 Cor. 13, 5):

**THEREFORE, SEE TO YOUR FAITH,
MAN, SEE TO YOUR FAITH,
BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!**

(The *Australian Lutheran*, May 31, 1961)

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

Many years ago, in the reign of Mary, daughter of Henry VIII, the Protestants of England were persecuted by the Catholic Queen and the priests of the Romish Church.

In the old town of Canterbury there lived at that time Dame Katherine Chase, the widow of a brave Englishman. She had four children; the first two were twins, aged fifteen; the next had just passed her twelfth birthday, whilst the youngest was a little girl of some ten summers. She had also two nieces of from twelve to sixteen years. Katherine and her children and nieces had become Protestants, being convinced that the doctrines proclaimed by Luther were the doctrines of the Bible. They also told others of their faith and tried to bring them into the pure Gospel light.

When the Catholic Queen began the persecution of the Protestants and filled the dungeons with prisoners, trying with tortures to compel them to deny the glorious faith, she heard of Dame Katherine and her children. Her anger was kindled, and she sent men to Canterbury to bring the dame and her family into the royal presence.

One day Dame Katherine sat in her room surrounded by her children and nieces. Thinking of the cruel persecutions, she said: 'My children, these are times of strife; many, many good men have suffered and died for Christ's sake, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to die for Him. After all, the pain here is short—nothing compared to a blissful eternity with our Lord. Thinkest thou that thy strength would bear thee up until the end?'

'Nay, mother, not our strength, but our faith in Him who died that we might live,' said her oldest daughter, Elizabeth. And the children all cried aloud, 'Mother, we will be true to the last, God helping us.' Whilst they were thus conversing, their persecutors entered the house, and they were taken before the Queen.

'Woman!' said the Queen, 'in memory of thy husband's bravery we bring thee to our palace and into our presence. How dardest thou leave the church and teach others vile heresy? Fearest thou not the curse of his holiness the pope? Dost thou not dread my wrath? Answer me! for I will bear no dallying. Speak! for ere thou leavest my presence thy fate is sealed.'

'Most gracious Queen,' said Katherine, 'I am judged by my God, and by Him alone. I fear not the people, nor yet the bishops. God is with me; man cannot harm me. With God alone is forgiveness of sins. Both the saints and the virgin have not this power. Christ is our Intercessor. We need not the aid of saints. When He died, He died for all; and by faith in Him we are saved. So help me God, I will die if need be; for God will receive my soul washed in the blood of the Lamb.'

'Woman, beware!' broke forth the Queen, her eyes flashing with rage. 'If thou dost not take back thy blasphemous words,' continued Mary, 'thou and thy children shall die. So rid we ourselves of vile heretics.'

Here a bishop began with words both false and honeyed to persuade the widow to return to the Romish church; but she and her children and nieces remained firm. So they were taken to prison, when the widow prayed in sorrow for strength. 'I can bear it all,' she cried, 'but my little ones! Oh, my children! God pity us!'

It was a dark morning when the prisoners were led out of their cells into the wide yard, where a great company of priests and bishops were assembled, along with a crowd of idle people who came to see the 'heretics die.'

'Wilt thou recant?' asked one of the bishops.

'Never!' answered Katherine. 'I fear no death. My body thou canst kill, but my soul will rest in heaven.' Then the bishop spoke with the children and painted the horrors of the death they were about to die, and the joys that would be theirs if they returned to 'Mother Church.' Whilst he spoke, the mother prayed, 'Help them, O my Father!' And the children remained firm.

Now the bishop solemnly, slowly said: 'Three times I will ask ye if ye will recant, will turn from blind sin, and live; if ye will not, then cursed be ye, and death will cleanse us from these heretics.' Breathless stood the crowd, looking at the stake and the lighted torch. All was ready. There stood the brave little company of martyrs.

'Dame Katherine and children, will ye confess your sin and return to the true church?'

Firmly spoke the mother, while loudly, clearly came the answer in the silvery voices of the children: 'We will not.' Again he asked—again they answered. Then there was a dead hush. For the last time came the stern words: 'Will ye recant?' Higher, clearer came the answer: 'We will not.'

Then Katherine was bound to the stake. ‘My children, O my children! fear not. Soon, soon shall we meet before the blessed throne. Be firm, be true! O Father in heaven, pity these blind people! Lay not this to their charge! Open their eyes that they may see Thee! Save them in mercy!’ Thus, whilst the flames rose, she prayed for her persecutors.

The children were then led out and bound; the torch was set to the wood. Higher, higher rose the hungry flames. ‘Wilt thou recant?’ was again asked. ‘No—no!’ came from the fire.

‘No—no— Jesus!’ The fire soon buries them from sight; the childish voices are hushed; the souls of Katherine and her dear ones have risen through the fire to their God. They were faithful unto death and received the crown of life.

(AL, 1922, pp 71-72.)

Notes and News

Hospital: Over the last couple of months the following people have been time in Hospital.
has spent some time in hospital.

Moments With God

Read Matthew 5:13-20

VERSE 17 — LORD JESUS, what strange perversity of human hearts is this, that they refuse to understand Thee and to receive Thee as Thou art? Thou hast plainly proclaimed Thyself the Redeemer and the Saviour. Thou dost call Thyself the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world. We read that Thou art the End of the laws to them that believe. All this, because Thou wouldst have us know we no longer need to fear the wrath of God on account of our transgression of the law, a law which we are unable to keep because we are born in sin. What comfort Thou hast brought to us, Lord Jesus. Yet, again and again the natural man, not yet drowned out of our hearts doth rise and put into our minds the thought that Thou art a destroyer of the law, and that, since Thou hast put it away, we may live according to the flesh, that we may disregard the righteousness and holiness which befit Thy followers. Preserve us, Lord Jesus, from the foolish and hurtful thoughts of minds which do not bow down to Thee. Make clear and firm in our souls, the truth of Thine atonement. Thou who gavest the law, didst obey the law. Thou didst take its yoke from our shoulders upon Thine own freeing us from the curse of our disobedience, but freeing us into a liberty in which Thou dost give us strength to do the Father’s will. Preserve us in this faith and life unto our end, in Thy great mercy. *Amen.— Moments With God, W Schuette, p.11.*

Fellowship Day, Brisbane, 2018

The annual Fellowship Day of the ELCR was held in Brisbane at Immanuel Church, Capalaba, on 18 March 2018. The opening service commenced at 10.00 am with a Confessional address presented by Pastor Bryce Winter based on 1 Cor 3:6. Pastor Tim Winter took the address, using Psalm 2 as his text. All members shared in Holy Communion together. The collection for the day was \$4386.20.

The afternoon essay was presented by Pastor Gavin Winter, the topic being, *Navigating the Digital Age – A Christian’s Attitude to the Internet and Social Media*. He explained the topic with three points:- I. What Do We Mean by Social Media and the Internet, and What Changes Have They Brought to our Lives? II. What Dangers are Involved and What Opportunities Do They Bring for the Christian? III. What Measures should Christians Take to Protect their Souls, Minds, Lives and Homes, and Use the Digital Age to Advantage? It was good to see the discussion that was generated. Copies of this essay are available from our pastors.

You have today been Confirmed in your faith, and you have vowed to be true to God in faith and in obedience unto your end!

You have spent a number of years through Sunday School and Confirmation, learning the vital doctrines of the Bible. But this should only be a start to your leaning of God's Word. Your whole life should be dedicated to learning more about your Saviour and His Word and the way to Salvation.

I would urge you, as a dear child of God, to be an earnest, prayerful, and attentive hearer of God's Word. It is the one thing - the only thing, that can preserve you and give you strength to hold fast your eternal riches. The more you experience the weakness of your flesh, the more you are tempted, the hotter the conflict becomes, the oftener you ought to take your refuge in God's Word, and pray God to bless you through it, and keep you steadfast in His Word and faith unto the end.

Watch over your precious treasure, keep that which is committed unto you, *'hold fast that which you have,'* fight the good fight of faith. It is but a short time..... *'Behold,'* says Christ, *'behold, I come quickly.'* Soon, soon He will come to take you from the battle of this life, and to give you the crown of victory. Blessed, yes, blessed is he that has been faithful unto death! Then, when the world, its lust, its joy, its glory, and its pride will have passed away, and all who loved it will perish shamefully, then will the faithful confessor of Christ, appear clothed in white raiment, His name confessed before heaven and earth, as the name of a great conqueror; then He will be raised to sit with Christ on His throne.

Yes, then shall be fulfilled of all those who have kept the faith, the precious words: *'These are they which come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe all tears from their eyes.'*

O child of God - do you not wish to be there?

Oh, then, *'Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown!'*