

## Interviews with God

•**I ASK:** *'In Sickness Shall I Resort to Prayer or to Medicine?'*

•**THUS SAITH THE LORD:**

'Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.' Ps.50:15.

'I will come and heal him.' Matt. 8:7.

'Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.' Jas. 5:14.

'Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaster upon the boil, and he shall recover.' Isa. 38:21.

•**TO WHICH I RESPOND**

'I thank Thee, O Lord, for the skill of doctors and nurses. I bless Thee for the healing drugs which Thou hast created. They are gifts of Thine which I receive with thanksgiving. Yet I realize that in the time of sickness all human efforts and remedies are vain without Thy blessing. So I pray Thee, lay Thy hand in benediction upon every soul in this community who is ill. Give them patience in their affliction, and wherever it is possible, grant a speedy restoral of health and strength; for Jesus' sake. Amen.'

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## Turn it over to God

*Psalm 55:22: 'Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee; He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.'*

The best thing to do is—turn the situation over to God. 'Yes, but what about all those go-getters who rise with the sun, skip breakfast, and break records while I'm just "giving it to God"?' you ask. Good question. Look at Jesus; He didn't get started until He was thirty. What about all those 'wasted' years? He left them to God. And how did He react to those who heard His message, shrugged, and walked away? He left them to God. And what about those nit-picking Pharisees who gave Him so much grief? He left them to God as well.

A minister once described a time in his ministry when he felt driven and drained by never-ending demands. He writes: 'If folks weren't changing, I felt responsible. If some drifted, somehow I was at fault. If there wasn't continual growth, I acted as if I needed to make it happen. If a sermon failed to ring with clarity and power, I struggled all of Monday and half of Tuesday. Talk about wasted energy! Time has helped; so has age. Virtually all of the things that once stole my joy and assaulted my motivation—I just leave to God. Don't I care? Of course I care. But those cares are now placed in the hands of One who can handle them. What once bothered me, I've learned to give over to Him who doesn't mind being bothered. Whereas criticism used to cripple me for days, I now do my best to sift, shift, and sail. I learn what I can—and turn the rest over to God.'

**SoulFood: Isa 45–48, Luke 3:1–10, Ps 79, Pro 2:9–10**

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## Brief History of the Church -- Life and Deeds of Dr Martin Luther

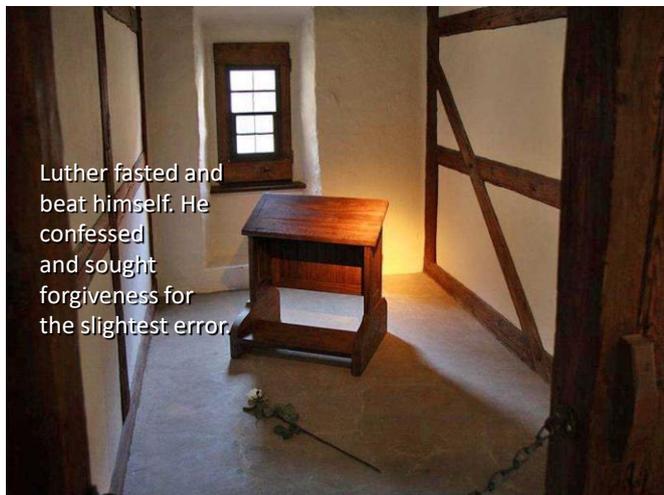


[Since what the late *Professor Koch* teaches is so true, "**History is a great teacher**", let us take note of the following lessons of History and value God's grace in preserving His Word with us.]

### CHAPTER IX. LUTHER'S CONFLICTS IN THE CLOISTER.

(Continued from the Oct-Dec 2018 issue of the *Messenger*)

#### ALL LUTHER'S MONKISH WORKS GAVE NO COMFORT



Luther sought to merit the grace of God by his own works; therefore his experience in the cloister was "heartily and murderously bitter." Day and night he tortured and tormented himself with fasting and prayer, with singing and study, with lying on beds of pain, with cold and weeping: he designed to take heaven by storm. Sometimes he read and wrote so zealously that he forgot the *horas canonicas*<sup>1</sup>—the prayers prescribed for certain hours. To satisfy his conscience and the papal ordinances, he would then lock himself in a cell and, without eating or drinking, make up what had been neglected. In this way he so fretted his mind that once **he could not sleep for five weeks and was near mental derangement.** Rather, it was

not enough for him most punctually to observe the rules of his order; he imposed upon himself additional tasks. Thus he could say of himself with truth: "It is certain that I was a pious monk, and so scrupulously observed the regulations that I can say, **if ever a monk entered heaven by monkery I shall enter also.** All my companions in the cloister who knew me, will testify to this. For if these things had continued **I would have tortured myself to death** with watching, praying, reading and other labours."

But **all his good works brought him no consolation;** he was always sad and sorrowful. Therefore he redoubled his zeal and employed all the means which the Romish Church offered and recommended to obtain peace. "We did everything," he says, "that was suggested to us in the name of the Church, in order that we might find comfort and assistance, and not despair of divine grace; but instead of consoling us **they led us to the devil and plunged us still more deeply into anxiety and terror** for there was nothing that could give us assurance, as they must themselves confess their doctrine to me, that **a person cannot and should not be certain that he is under divine grace.**"

"I had chosen," he relates, "twenty-one saints, read mass every day, and each time called upon three of them, so that I completed the round in a week; and especially did I invoke the holy virgin, whose woman's heart I thought more easily moved to propitiate<sup>2</sup> the Son. The petitions and ejaculations<sup>3</sup> of all, including the holy monks, were of this import<sup>4</sup>: 'Dear mother of God, assist us, and intercede for us against the rigorous judgment of thy Son, else there is for our souls no comfort, nor help, nor counsel.' But with all my masses, prayers, watchings, chastity, **I could never succeed in getting so far that I could say: Now**

<sup>1</sup> Latin for "regular hours" for prayer.

<sup>2</sup> To win or gain Christ's favour by doing something that pleases Him.

<sup>3</sup> Sudden cries made out aloud.

<sup>4</sup> Like this example.

**I am certain that God is gracious to me, or now I have experienced that my order and strict life has helped me and conducts me to heaven."**



From this we perceive **how the Romish doctrine brought Luther to the most horrible despair.** By its influence he had lost **Christ**, who was no more regarded as his dear Saviour, but whom he was taught rather to consider **an angry, terrible Judge**, as they pictured Him sitting upon the rainbow. He sought to propitiate God by his good works, but just because he was honest and sincere he saw this to be impossible. He followed the papistic doctrine most faithfully until **he learned by experience** that it is false and comfortless as a well without

water. Accordingly he thus describes his condition in the cloister: "The executioner and the devil were in our hearts, and fear, trembling, terror and anxiety tormented us day and night. In fine (to summarize), **a cloister is a hell, in which the devil is abbot and prior, and monks and nuns are the lost souls.**"<sup>5</sup>

## Catholic Works Gave Luther No Assurance Of Salvation



*The Confessional*

In his **anxiety** he went to confession daily and thus wearied **his confessors.** **The papists teach that whoever would receive forgiveness of sin must, in auricular confession<sup>6</sup>, specify all his sins.** But this is impossible, and hence Luther never knew whether he had confessed all. Confession, therefore, was to him a rack<sup>7</sup>. Nor did the absolution comfort him; for it was imparted to him **with the condition that he must himself atone for his sin by penitence and good works.** But he did not know how much was requisite for such satisfaction. His confessors, indeed, imposed upon him

certain penances, which he most conscientiously performed; but **he still could not know whether God was really gracious to him on this account.** His confessors pointed him to purgatory as a hope for the supply of all deficiencies in his penance. But neither did this quiet him; for no mortal could tell how long the expiation in purgatory must endure. Some were of the opinion that there could be no deliverance from it,... Indulgences and masses for souls should, indeed, render them assistance; but this, too, was a very

<sup>5</sup> **Luther** later referred to this time as follows: "That was the **time of blindness when we knew nothing of God's Word, but led ourselves and others into misery by our own idle talk and dreams.** And I was one of those who **indeed bathed in this sweat or in this bath of anxiety.** Therefore let us give heed that we may thoroughly grasp and retain this doctrine (pure Gospel of Christ, Editor), if other fanatics and false spirits wish to attack it, **so that we may be fore-armed and learn,** while we have the time and the beloved sun again enlightens us, and **buy while the market is at our door."** Sermon on 18 Sunday after Trinity

<sup>6</sup> The Catholic Church demands that its people also go to private confession to the priest. After expressing their sorrow for their sins, the priest tells them they are forgiven and then requires that they perform certain good works for their salvation

<sup>7</sup> ~~Something which~~ caused him extreme pain, anguish, distress.

**uncertain** consolation, because **no one could tell how many masses are necessary to redeem a soul from purgatory**. "O, it is a terrible plague in Christendom," Luther exclaims, "that people are led into uncertainty and left to trust in their uncertain works."

The **torment of soul** which he suffered under this false papistic doctrine, he thus describes: "When I became a monk I gave all possible diligence to live uprightly according to the rules, was accustomed often to repent of my sins in sincerity and to confess all as far as possible, and performed the penances laid upon me as strictly as I could. And **yet my conscience could never find rest and assurance**, but always remained in doubt, since I thought: in this and this thou hast sinned, here thou hast not sufficiently repented of thy sins, and there something was forgotten in thy confession. Therefore the more I sought to support my doubting, weak and troubled conscience by human ordinances, the more its doubts, and weakness, and trouble increased from day to day; and the more I sought thus to observe the human ordinances, the more I transgressed them. In short, the more sedulously (sincerely) I endeavoured to become holy through my works, the worse I became. **For St. Paul declares it to be impossible for man to obtain peace of conscience by the works of the law; much more is it impossible to obtain it by human ordinances, without the promise and Gospel of Christ.**"

Nor did the reception of the Lord's Supper afford him any comfort. This sweet and solacing sacrament also had **the papists corrupted with false doctrine**, and thus they had deprived Christians of all the joy which it was designed to give. "For they had taught us," he says, "that we must attain a purity in which we are free from every particle of daily sin, and a dazzling holiness, upon which God can scarcely bear to look. This I could not find in myself, and therefore **the sacrament filled me with terror.**" "When I was most devout I went to the altar with doubts, and with doubts I again departed. If I said my penitential prayers I doubted; if I neglected to say them I despaired: for we all held the delusion that we could not pray, and would not be heard, unless we were as pure and sinless as the saints in heaven."

From this we perceive **how the Romish doctrine brought Luther to the most horrible despair**. By its influence he had lost **Christ**, who was no more regarded as his dear Saviour, but whom he was taught rather to consider **an angry, terrible Judge**, as they pictured Him sitting upon the rainbow. He sought to propitiate God by his good works, but just because he was honest and sincere he saw this to be impossible. He followed the papistic doctrine most faithfully until **he learned by experience** that it is false and comfortless as a well without water. Accordingly he thus describes his condition in the cloister: "The executioner and the devil were in our hearts, and fear, trembling, terror and anxiety tormented us day and night. In fine (to summarize), **a cloister is a hell, in which the devil is abbot and prior, and monks and nuns are the lost souls.**"<sup>8</sup>

## **Christ And Christ Alone Saves Through His Sacrifice On The Cross**

[Amid these conflicts Luther must have perished had not God, through the Gospel of Christ brought Him **to the certainty of His salvation in Christ's work of Redemption alone**. All of these experiences were intended by God to show Luther **how useless it is to be saved by the Law** and **how we are saved by faith in Christ's atoning sacrifice alone**. Once this message worked faith in his heart the **true peace with God** entered and he **received the certainty of his salvation** so much so that he did not want to lose it. He never again wanted to go back to the tortures of the Law. Editor's Comment]

(From *Life And Deeds of Dr. Martin Luther* by Rev. Hermann Fick (an old Missouri pastor) and translated by Prof Loy, pages 41-45. To be continued. Emphasis added.)

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[This is the painting that Luther is referring to. According to mediaeval thought, the end of time will herald the Last Judgement. Angels with trumpets will

raise the dead from their graves and Christ will pass judgement over them as the "Judge of All". His mother, Mary, and John the Baptist, who had once announced the coming of Christ, are interceding (???) on behalf of the resurrected people. A friendly smiling Peter has opened the golden Gates of Heaven for the good. Accompanied by the strains of angelic music, they are entering a Paradise whose architecture is curiously reminiscent of Cologne Cathedral. The wicked, on the other hand, are being dragged down by an enormous chain into Hell where they are tormented by frightful devils. Editor]

(From *Life And Deeds of Dr. Martin Luther* by Rev. Hermann Fick (an old Missouri pastor) and translated by Prof Loy, pages 41-45. To be continued. Emphasis added.)

## A Short Exposition of 1 Peter:

Simon Peter was the son of John, or Jonas, a fisherman of Bethsaida in Galilee. Peter was married not only at the time when he became a disciple of the Lord (Matt. 8:14), but also some 25 years later. We are told that his wife went with him on his missionary journeys (1 Cor. 9:5). He was one of the Lord's closest friends. His impulsive nature brought upon him the Lord's rebuke on a number of occasions. Relying on himself and his own strength he denied his Saviour three times, but the Lord brought him to true repentance. It is believed that Peter died in Rome as a martyr under the Emperor Nero between the years of 62-66 A.D.

This letter of Peter, under inspiration of the Holy Ghost, was written at "Babylon". Kretzmann states that "Babylon" was "most likely a designation (title) for Rome, this city, under Emperor Nero, having become a second Babylon". The people to whom Peter was writing were greatly outnumbered by the heathen people around them and they suffered much for their faith in Christ. In order to urge them to remain faithful, to comfort them, to strengthen their faith, to appeal to them to continue in their Christian life and dedicated obedience to the will of the Lord, as well as to build them up and firmly to ground them in the Divine truth so that their terrible foes may not overcome them, Peter places before them some wonderful truths which are of abounding help for us in these last wicked days. Peter has often been called "the Apostle of Hope". Certain details mentioned in this letter indicate that it was around the early to middle part of the sixties, shortly before Peter himself was martyred, when this epistle (letter) was written. Dr Beck states that it was in the year 62, at Rome, that Peter wrote this.

### Greeting, title, address:

1 Peter 1:1: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia."

In the times of the Apostles, they did not sign their name at the end of the letter, but at the beginning, so that right from the outset you knew who was writing. He signs his name as "Peter". His

original name was SIMEON which in Hebrew means “hearing”, and was shortened to SIMON. But the Lord Himself gave Simon another name which indicated what Simon would be like as a result of what he taught.

He received the Aramaic name of “CEPHAS” (John 1:42), which means “A STONE”. Aramaic was the common everyday language of the Jews at the time of Christ. Here the Greek word “*Petros*” is used, meaning “a large stone which is separated from a huge massive rock”. Peter was called “A man like a rock”, to indicate, particularly after Pentecost, his rock-like faith in Christ, his immovable loyalty to Christ’s Word, and his firm direction to serve Christ all his life. He was called “a man like a rock” because he based his faith on the “massive rock” of Christ’s Word (Mt. 16:18). The special outpouring of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost made Peter such a Rock-man, an inspired teacher and writer of God’s Word. That is why what he writes here is absolutely trustworthy without the least mistake whatsoever.

He tells us about His OFFICE when he correctly describes himself as “an Apostle of Jesus Christ”. In Greek the word “Apostle” comes from two words: one meaning “off” and the other meaning “to send”. This term, according to the Greek, is used “of a person who is sent from someone else with credentials (proof of who he is) on a mission”. It is used in Scripture distinctively for those

- 1). who were personally taught the saving Word;
- 2). who personally saw and were witnesses of the Lord’s powerful miracles, especially His resurrection;
- 3). who were directly and personally called to be Apostles by the Lord (Acts 1:13, 26; Luke 6:14-16; Rom. 1:1).

Their duty was to be living witnesses of Christ and to be absolutely inspired, inerrant and infallible teachers and writers of Christ’s Word in order to bring salvation to all men. The office of Apostle went out of existence with the death of Saint John.

Dr Luther: “The disciples (of the Lord in His day, the twelve) are called “Apostles”...that is, those who have been sent out, or ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20), as men who have not originated their message, but have received it through the special sending and command of the Holy Ghost. This is also the reason why we should stay with their message alone and neither hear nor heed any other teaching and message; for this alone is the true doctrine that gives hearts true, sure knowledge and comfort, and it justifies them before God” (What Luther Says, Vol. I, p 40).

(Next time, we will see to whom Peter writes this letter, where they lived, and have a look at a doctrine which should regularly be used by the Christian in these last days for abundant comfort- the Doctrine of Election).

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## **The Duties And Obligations Of Office Bearers**

Introduction:

We here begin a short series of Articles outlining the duties and obligation of the Office Bearers of the Luther League. Office Bearers, those who perform special duties and functions on behalf of their Luther League, are chosen because the members of the society feel they are able to perform these responsibilities.

Therefore, those elected to these positions, should regard this as a privilege and honour and do their best to fulfil their obligations to the best of their ability.

As with other positions in life, office bearers are not born but made. Some may have natural talents (e.g. ability to speak, humour) which help them so be successful as leaders. Others may take many years of experience before they learn properly the art of performing their tasks. For those who are not immediately successful at their job, the following points may be of help:

- 1). If you are not at first successful, do not immediately despair. Time will teach you the things you do not at first know.
  - 2). Do not become dejected at your mistakes but be willing to learn from them and improve yourself.
  - 3). Remember that the other members of the Society look up to you. You are not only their leaders but also the example they follow.
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4). Don't be afraid to ask your pastor, older ones or the meeting itself if you need their advice on any difficulty you encounter.

5). Finally, the Lord has asked you to perform these duties. Don't fail Him by being lazy and negligent.

The success of the Luther League hinges on the ability and energy of its office bearers. If they are diligent, the other members of the Society will rally behind them and give their support. If, however, the office bearers take the attitude that they could not care less about their duties, the other members will soon lose interest. The commitment and enthusiasm of the office bearers is therefore a major necessity if the Luther League of a congregation is to be successful.

"Luther Society meetings are an important aspect of the Luther League, and if these meetings are to be conducted in an efficient and orderly manner, it is essential that not only the office bearers, but also the ordinary members are aware of their rights and responsibilities".

(Guide to Meeting Procedure, Page 1).

(Next time: Part II, The Duties and Obligations of the Chairman).

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## Report On Bible Study At Woombye Luther League Camp

### Bible Study 2

On the basis of the Bible Pastor Bryce Winter continued with the second study in the series dealing with Dr. Franz Pieper's Essay entitled "**The Distinction Between Orthodox & Heterodox Churches.**"

A vigorous discussion occurred dealing with:



**[1] Some of the false reasons many people use for joining a church body.** Some join a church body because:

- (a) it was the closest to the them in distance;
- (b) they get a lot of fun, excitement and emotional enjoyment out of the liturgy and church activities;
- (c) of its size in membership, or beauty of the building, or the outward love shown among its members, or they can do their business better among these people or perhaps there are important people of the world attending this church.

**[2] God's Word requires that we join and be members of a church body which teaches God's Word in its truth and purity.** John 8:31,32; Mat.7:15; Rom.16:17.

**[3] Why many people do not join such a church body:**

- (a) They do not recognize the serious nature of false doctrine, Gal.5:9.
- (b) They have forgotten the difference between orthodox and heterodox churches. By taking up membership in heterodox churches, they commit sin and place their souls in danger.



- (c) They do not see the wonderful glory of an orthodox church and the vital importance of purity of doctrine.
- (d) Their pastors and teachers have not taught them what God's Word says about these matters.
- (e) They view these things on the basis of their reason instead of judging the orthodox and heterodox fellowships according to

God's Word.

**[4] By God's grace there are true believers in false teaching churches:**

(a) because here is sufficient of the fundamental teachings there to bring them to the faith;

(b) God in a special measure of His grace preserves them from the errors that are taught there;

(c) The errors taught there place them in constant danger of losing their faith; it is only those portions of true doctrine still found there which can keep them in the faith;

(d) They are ignorant as to what God's Word teaches about the difference between orthodox and heterodox churches.

True Unity in the pure Word Begins with Faith in Christ

**John 10:27,28** " My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand:"



**[5] A true Christian's chief concern is that he or she belongs to the holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints, to that blessed class of people who from the heart believe in Christ as their Saviour. John 3:18, 36. This faith is kindled and maintained through the **Gospel** by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of those who have acknowledged themselves before God as sinners.**

**[6] These true believers are scattered locally over the whole earth wherever the seed of the Gospel is sown. They *differ* according to education, culture, language, and customs. Yet, they are **most intimately connected** with one another. Daily they make *the same discoveries*, that they are lost sinners, and that God for Christ's sake richly and daily forgives them all sins. John 10:16**

**[7] This Church is invisible in this life, because we cannot see that which makes a person a member of the Church, namely, faith. Only God, who knows the hearts, can see that. It will only become visible in heaven, where its members will walk no longer by faith, but by sight, where they will be glorified by seeing God, and where they will shine as the brightness of the firmament. 2 Tim. 2:19; Luke 17:20,21.**

Ryan Tunstall

## The Australia Day Weekend in Pictures

It was a weekend of growing in the faith, enjoying the beauty of God's creation, and at night, fine dining, culture with some musical entertainment from the Woombye Trio, and an enjoyable evening of Christian fellowship. They also visited Snow White that weekend.

