



Steadfast

In the Word and Faith



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What Luther Says About Merit



Man Has Always Dreamed of Merit. From the beginning of the world this chief heresy of free will and the merit of works, called the heresy of the Pelagians, has always crept in. Like mud on a wagon wheel, it has at all times entered into and adhered to the doctrine. . . . This trouble will stay and is bound to stay forever. We should, therefore, resign ourselves to what we see happening before our eyes: although one sect goes down, many others promptly spring up, **so** that doctrine may by **no** means remain entirely pure. This is caused by the inability of reason to take its stand on faith alone. If a man is to rest his faith purely and solely on God's Word, the Holy Spirit must create and work this attitude in the heart. Nature is unable to do it by the use of its own powers. No matter what one says or does, it clings to works anyway.

— SL 8, 1001f

If God Looked at Our Merits—If God did not give us anything unless we had earned it and were worthy of it, He could hardly give us bread and plain water. But He does not intend to look at our merit and worthiness but at our need and His grace **and** mercy. He intends to grant us not only bodily blessing but also eternal life. — SL 13a, 763

Christ, and He Alone, Has Saving Merit. Listen to this: For Christ alone it is proper to help and save others with His merits and works. The works of others are of benefit to no one, not to themselves either; for the statement stands: "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17). **For** faith grounds us on the works of Christ, without our own works, and transfers us from the exile of our sins into the kingdom of His righteousness. This is faith; this the Gospel; this is Christ. — SL 19, 1544

Never Stand on Your Own "Merits". Let him who can learn under no circumstances to seek any merit or righteousness of his own, yea, to have nothing whatever to do with any work he proposes to bring before God, but to run and flee from it as from the very devil. — SL 3, 1834

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Devotion — *The Purpose of Holy Scriptures*

2 Timothy 3:15: and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

2. We will consider why they were given, to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

*I*t is essential to believe that the Scriptures are the inerrant, inspired revelation of the Word of God to man on earth. But of great importance now is to consider WHY the Scriptures were given.

v.15. **‘and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.’**

The Holy Scriptures have this unique quality about them: they have the power, the inherent ability in them, to make us wise as to our salvation. ‘Able’ comes from the Greek word ‘*dunamis*’, from which we get ‘dynamite’. Perhaps dynamite is an interesting illustration for the power of the Scriptures. A stick of dynamite in and of itself is powerless, but when set off it has enormous inherent power for destruction.

The Bible is really God’s love-letter to the human race. The central theme to the Book is Christ, God’s revelation of Himself to sinful mankind. It is a book describing God’s power, His wisdom, but also His love. It is a book describing how God has, for six thousand years, never given up on the gem of His creation, lost and fallen mankind, but has constantly sought after Him as the Good Shepherd seeks His lost sheep.

So passionate was God’s love for His fallen children that He would not even wait one day, but He sought them immediately. Saddened by the way His children had despised Him, but still with boundless compassion and love, He comes to them. He comes to them, calmly, in control, gently but firmly. Adam and Eve had merited eternal death because of their disobedience, but the Lord did not want to see them eternally lost. He convicts them of their sins, but also gives them hope, the first Gospel promise, the promised Seed of the Woman, Jesus Christ.

What use then are we to make of the Holy Scriptures?

‘Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me.’

We are to search diligently in the Scriptures to find Christ. We are to constantly devote ourselves to a study of His Holy Word, through faith in Jesus, to

keep our feet steadily on the narrow path that leads to eternal life.

‘The Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.’

Why must we search the Scriptures?

‘Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.’ Acts 4:12.

No other means is available but the Word. Christ can only be found in His Word. Do we want a sure and certain guide to the Father? The only means we have is the Word.

‘If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed. And ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.’ John 8:31, 32.

Don’t we all need Truth today? Don’t we all need the Truth of God’s Word? There are many confusing political beliefs, many confusing religions, much propaganda, selfishness. How can we possibly know what to believe? How can we maintain a sure and certain path to eternal life amidst all of the confusion, the uncertainty, and the lies of men?

Alone by trusting in the One Who has all power in heaven and earth, the One Who is certain, the One Who never fails, the One Who is gracious and seeks our welfare, the One Whose blood cleanses us from all sin.

‘Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever.’ Hebrews 13:8.

Therefore:

What use should we make of the Bible?

We should diligently and reverently read and study the Bible, listen attentively when it is read and explained, believe it, and live according to it.

‘Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of Me.’ John 5:39.

‘Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it.’ Luke 11:28.

‘Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.’ Luke 2:19.

‘If a man love Me, he will keep My words.’ John 14:23.

LUTHER: HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE.

Martin Luther: ‘I study my Bible as I gather apples. First, I shake the whole tree that the ripest might fall. Then I shake each limb, and when I have shaken each limb, I shake each branch and every twig. Then I look under every leaf. I shake

the Bible as a whole, like shaking the whole tree (Context). Then I shake every limb—study book after book (Overview of Book). Then I shake every branch, giving attention to the chapters when they do not break the sense (Observation of Chapters). Then I shake every twig, or a careful study of the paragraphs and sentences and words and their meanings (Greek/Hebrew Word Studies)."

*Search the Scripture's precious store
As a miner digs for ore;
Search, and you will surely find
Treasures to enrich your mind.*

Therefore search the Scriptures thoroughly. Know that they are the verbally inspired Words of the ever living God, words to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Be convinced that man lives only by every word that comes from the Father.

Forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are alone to be found in the Bible, through faith in Jesus Christ. Study diligently the Holy Scriptures, remembering the words of Christ:

'He that is of God heareth God's words:' John 8:47.

Do you want to be of God? Then hear His Word. And not just hear it, but meditate upon it, take it to heart, apply it to your every day life, and practice it.

But take your study of the Word of God seriously, for this verse ends in warning:

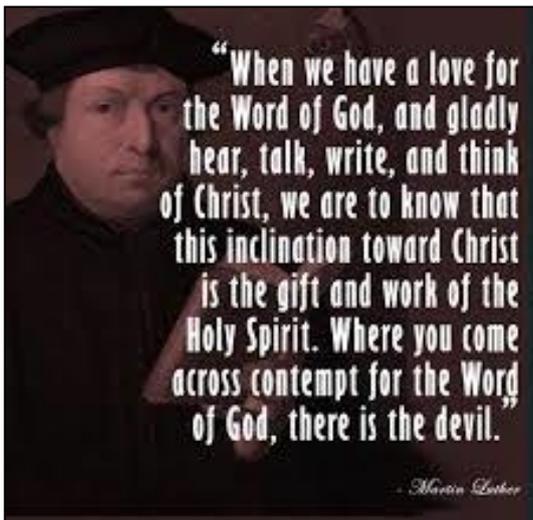
'Ye therefore hear them not, for ye are not of God.'

May we through true faith ever take this warning to heart. As true Christians may we therefore take delight in His Word, seek ever deeper its rich treasures, and ever be comforted and assured by Its promises and Truth. Amen.

TJW.

1517-2017: 500th Anniversary of Luther Nailing the 95 Theses

Are You Ashamed of Being a True Lutheran? Part 2



SERIOUSNESS OF ERROR IN THE CHURCH

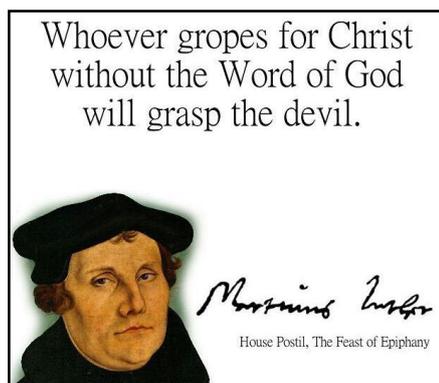
In churches where false teaching rules, the soul's salvation of those who reside there is constantly hindered and tortured by such error (Gal.5:9). Such churches, through their errors, are in rebellion against God. They are mobilized for warfare against the orthodox Lutheran Church, against Christ and His Word. Such was the case in the visible church before the Reformation.

For centuries before the days of the Reformation the Gospel had been hidden from the people during the dark and cruel rule of the pope. People were not allowed to read the Bible which contains the precious Gospel. Sinners were not pointed to Jesus Christ, in whom alone salvation is found. They were told to trust in their own works and in the works of saints. Thus they were led in a way in which they could find no peace. Luther once walked

this way. Anxious to find salvation he entered the cloister. He fasted, prayed to saints and did all the works he was ordered to do. Yet he found no true peace of soul until God brought him the Gospel.

THROUGH THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL LUTHER WAS CONVERTED

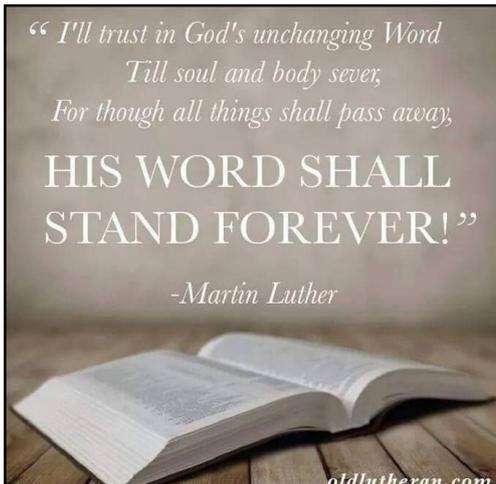
When Luther was in despair of his own works, God opened to him the Bible and there he found the Gospel. He learnt that the sinner is saved by grace through faith in the Saviour who has redeemed us from all sins (Rom.1:16,17). In this Gospel Luther found rest, peace and salvation (Rom.5:1,2). Through the power of this Everlasting Gospel Luther restored the Word back to the church (Rev.14:6,7; Isaiah 8:20). He invented nothing new, but rather held to and remained with the old Word of God, as the Apostolic Christian Church once had it (John 8:31,32). Therefore we, together with Luther, because we too have experienced the



sweat-bath of the Law (Rom.3:20) and the sweetness of the Gospel (Rom.3:24), are nothing less than the re-established Apostolic Church which has been rescued from the Romish errors.

SAVING FAITH MOVED LUTHER TO HOLD FAST TO GOD'S WORD

Therefore we are to regard it as the GREATEST FAVOUR OF GOD, next to having come to faith in Christ, when we are led by Christ into that church which teaches God's Word in all its purity. The orthodox Lutheran church is serious about God's Word; for she does not remain silent in the presence of error, but condemns it and avoids it. She impresses upon both rich and poor out of love to Christ to depart from sin and urges upon them to avoid becoming polluted with the vile world. False teaching churches have gained their outward honour and size only because they have compromised the Truth, and have been unfaithful to their Lord. They play church instead of actually conducting themselves as God's church. Would it not be most disgraceful to be ashamed of Christ through becoming ashamed of that church which teaches His Word as He wants it to be taught?



Whether others regard us as a kind of second-rate church, whether they ridicule us or not, we should NEVER think of ourselves as a second-rate church, nor allow ourselves to be pushed into a corner, like outcasts who must apologize for their existence. It is our duty to remember that false teaching churches exist only by God's permission. The orthodox church has an express command from God for its existence. Therefore our whole heart should belong to Christ and to our church as long as it holds to God's Word. We should be glad to belong to her as a member.

A SACRED PRIVILEGE AND SUPREME DUTY FOR THE CHRISTIAN TO BE A MEMBER OF A CHURCH WHICH HOLDS TO GOD'S WORD

Even under the most humble outward conditions, we should out of love to Christ consider it as our most SACRED PRIVILEGE AND SUPREME DUTY to support our Federation, to defend its precious heritage, faithfully to pass it on to our children, to separate ourselves from the world and

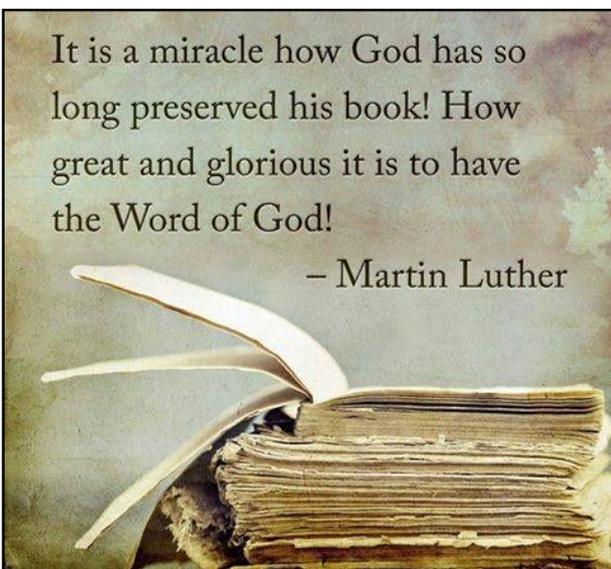
most earnestly strive and daily pray that our descendants may also be heirs of the church of the Reformation.

May God ever grant us courage to take our stand in doctrine and in practice wholly and entirely upon His Word. Let others be strong through other means; we will by the grace of God be strong through the Word.

What rendered Luther so strong and invincible, that he stood his ground, although the world and a corrupt church continually sought his speedy fall? This was his strength, that without making compromises he took his stand unconditionally upon God's Word! In this way alone he overcame despite all adversaries. In this way we also shall hold our own against all enemies and carry out the Lord's work until He come, if we abide in the Word.

Will we also show such love for Christ and His Word?

—B Winter.



St. Paul, a Lutheran

A Bishop of Augsburg found in an inn the New Testament behind the table. Opening it, he noticed the words of St. Paul (Rom. 3, 28): 'Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.' Having read this, he said: 'See there, art thou also a Lutheran?' and threw down the book. — JH (*The Australian Lutheran*, October 1913, p.8.)

Blessed Fruits of the Reformation - Part 3

(Taken from 'The Reformation and Its Blessed Fruits' by M. L. Gotsch)

III. Reformation of the Schools.

23. *What about popular education in Europe at Luther's time?*

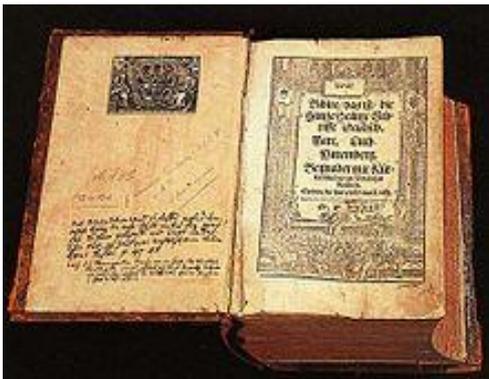
On account of the decline of the Church, education in both spiritual and secular branches was **sadly neglected**. There were a few commercial or Latin schools for boys in cities and towns. But in general boys, and especially girls, received little or no education. The centuries before Luther are therefore known as the 'Dark Ages.'

24. *Describe the conditions which prevailed in Germany.*

Luther and Melancthon were appointed to visit the congregations in Saxony. They found an **appalling ignorance of the common people as well as of the clergy, especially in spiritual matters**.

25. *How did Luther face these conditions?*

As was his custom, he not only uncovered the sores, but also administered a cure. Having a keen interest in the education of the masses, he set forth, in published writings as well as in sermons, the deplorable consequences of neglecting the youth, **impressed upon parents and the civil authorities the duty of educating children and the youth**, and most admirably showed ways and means of properly educating the children of both rich and poor.



26. *What were the results of Luther's activities in the interest of a general education?*

Thorough reforms were introduced in all Germany and the surrounding countries. New schools were opened everywhere. Above all, **the Word of God was given its proper place** in the course of studies of both elementary schools and higher institutions of learning.

27. *What was the greatest blessing of the Reformation still benefiting our schools?*

The Small and the Large Catechism written by Luther, especially the former. As a friend of Luther said, 'The world could never repay Luther for the excellent and most beautiful exposition of the chief Christian doctrines of the Word of God.'

28. *Tell us more of these precious books.*



They were called the best of their kind. Especially the Small Catechism was not only widely circulated in Germany, but **translated** and used in England, Scotland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and many other countries. In our day even children of East India, China, Africa, and of far-off islands are studying it in their language.

29. *How are we still reaping these blessings of the Reformation?*

Up to the present day Luther's Small Catechism has never been equalled and is therefore used in all our Lutheran schools. These schools were founded when our Synod was organized, and our Lutheran Church, by God's grace, has grown wonderfully. **Congregations which neglected to build and maintain Christian day-schools in which the Small Catechism is daily taught, suffered inwardly and outwardly.**

IV. Benefits which Family Life has Reaped from the Reformation.

30. What did the Church at Luther's time teach about matrimony, God's oldest institution on earth? Though marriage was (falsely) called a sacrament, it was **despised and regarded as unholy** compared with the unmarried state of priests, monks, and nuns. After a man had become a priest and after men or women had vowed to enter a cloister, marriage was made a sin for them.

31. What Bible truths concerning the unmarried and the married estate did Luther proclaim in tracts and sermons?

He proved that the vows of monks and nuns in which they promise never to marry are **sinful and therefore not to be kept, and that services rendered in accordance with them are displeasing to God**, as Christ has said: **'In vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men'** (Mat.15:9). **He showed that the estate of marriage is a divine institution, and that God blesses all married people who live in it according to His will.**

32. How did Luther by his example confirm what he had taught?

Having for years taught that holy wedlock is a precious gift of God, he, in the fear of God and with the consent of his parents, on **June 13, 1525, married Catherine von Bora**. The bride, a former nun, no longer regarded her vows as binding after reading one of Luther's tracts.



33. Tell of the family life Luther and his Kate enjoyed.

For more than twenty years they practised what Luther had taught of how a Christian home should be conducted. Luther dearly loved his wife and his children. He reared his children in the fear of God. Students and friends often were guests at his table, some for a greater length of time; they always took part in the daily family devotion, which consisted in Bible reading, singing of hymns, and prayer. In his leisure time Luther enjoyed the company of his beloved wife and children. A happy family life, indeed!

34. What instruction does Luther lay down for the members of a family?

He said children must regard their parents as placed over them by God Himself and honor them accordingly. **Parents should bring up their children in the fear of God and teach them to know and love their Saviour. All members of the family must seek the welfare of their souls**, since Christ says: **'What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'** (Mark 8:36).



35. How many families of the present day reap the blessed fruits of the Reformation?

'If true Christian, Lutheran family devotion would be revived in our homes, the fruits would be greater than any of us could ask or think!' (S. in L. Wit.)

The Chief Doctrine of the Reformation

The Reformation was one of the greatest events in human history because it dealt with the issues that are of the highest importance to the welfare of men. Chiefly it dealt with the question of how a sinful human being can be declared righteous at the judgment bar of a holy God. ‘How can man be justified with God? How can he be clean that is born of a woman?’ (Job 25:4) This is man’s ultimate question, and it was rightly answered with the Reformation by the doctrine of justification. This doctrine was not only the chief doctrine of the Reformation, but it is God’s most important instruction for all men of all time. It is, in fact, the central theme of Scripture, yea, the very purpose for which God gave us His Holy Word. At the time of the Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church taught that men were saved by their own works and the intercessory work of the church. Martin Luther, God’s chosen instrument for this time, showed from Scripture that this was not so. A man cannot be justified by his own works, but only by faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ. ‘For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ (John 3:16). ‘For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.’ (Eph. 2:8-9).

The Reformation was in truth a reflection and consequence of Martin Luther’s own struggle in coming to know the doctrine of justification. Luther grew up in a strict Roman Catholic family. He did not then know the comfort of the Gospel, but he did know the terrors of the Law in his own experience and conscience. Few men have ever tried harder to earn God’s favour by their own merit than he. As a monk, Luther strove mightily by fastings, prayers, and severe treatments of the body, to subdue his own sinful flesh. Despite these efforts, he knew that he was lost. He was deeply perplexed with the question of how a sinner can be justified in the sight of a holy God. By God’s grace, Luther one day came in contact with the Word of God, and began to read. Never before had he heard such things. He read and read until he had such a familiarity with the Scriptures that he knew many passages by heart. And then the moment came, the moment of liberation. As he was reading the first chapter of Romans, his eyes fell upon the words ‘the just shall live by faith’ (Rom. 1:17). Suddenly he realized that God’s righteousness was not something that we attain by our effort and works, but something that we receive by faith as a gift from Him. It is not our righteousness that avails with God, but His, that is,

God’s righteousness which is freely given to us in the Gospel of Christ.

Listen to Luther’s own description of that wonderful day. He says, ‘Though I lived as a monk without reproach, I felt that I was a sinner before God with an extremely disturbed conscience. I could not believe that He was placated by my satisfaction. I did not love, yes, I hated the righteous God who punishes sinners ... At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words, namely, “In it the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, ‘He who through faith is righteous shall live.’” There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the Gospel, namely, the passive righteousness with which merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, “He who through faith is righteous shall live.” Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates.’ (*Luther’s Works*, Vol. 34, pp. 336-337)

The doctrine of justification presupposes the knowledge that all men are sinners and that the wrath of God abideth upon the children of disobedience. Through His suffering and death upon the Cross of Calvary, Jesus Christ has ‘delivered us from the wrath to come’ (1 Th. 1:10). ‘All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.’ (Rom. 3:23). ‘There is none that doeth good, no not one.’ (Rom. 3:12). ‘The carnal mind is enmity against God.’ (Rom. 8:7). ‘We were dead in trespasses and sins.’ (Eph. 2:1). Justification means that God does not impute our trespasses unto us, but rather imputes to us the righteousness of Christ. ‘For he hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.’ (2 Cor. 5:21). By grace alone, the guilty one is ‘translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son’ (Col. 1:13). The child of wrath is ‘accepted in the Beloved’ (Eph. 1:6).

The doctrine of justification also presupposes faith in the Gospel, how that ‘Christ died for our sins’ (1 Cor. 15:3). Faith trusts in, clings to, and rests upon this promise. As a ring is precious because of the diamond it holds, so faith is precious because of the Gospel it holds. The Gospel is the object of faith, and yet at the same time it is that which creates and sustains faith. ‘Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God’ (Rom. 10:17). And the Gospel is not merely a teaching about God, but ‘it is the power of God unto salvation’ (Rom. 1:16). It is the seed that is planted in our hearts and brings forth the entire tree of the life of God in us with the blessed fruits of the Holy Ghost. ‘Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth.’ (James 1:18).

So we have seen that the doctrine of justification was the chief doctrine of the Reformation. It proclaimed Jesus Christ as 'the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world' (John. 1:29). 'Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.' (1 Cor. 5:7). 'Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.' (1 Peter 3:18). This was the glorious message of the Reformation. It proclaimed the love of God in Christ. For our sake He became man. As the man Christ Jesus, He was born, He suffered, and He died. But the Scriptures say, '[no man] can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: for the redemption of their soul is precious.' (Psa. 49:7-8). Thus while Jesus Christ is a man, He is

not only a man. Nay, He is the God-man. The blood of Christ is the blood of the Son of God. God Himself hath purchased His church 'with His own blood' (Act. 20:28). It is the humanity of Christ that qualifies Him as our substitute. It is the Deity of Christ that gives to His atoning work its infinite power to save. 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.' (1 John 1:7).

*When Rome had shrouded earth in night,
God said again, Let there be light!
And thus by His most precious Word
The saving truth He hath restored.*

M. Loy, 1915

—S Wood

Home and Father

In one sense the man is the home-maker. It is he who takes the initiative and thinks of establishing a home of his own. He goes forth to seek a companion. He realizes that he is to be responsible for the up-keep of this home, that he must support and maintain that home. He has chosen his life-work as farmer, business man, mechanic, teacher, physician, or he has entered some other profession. The wife is to accommodate herself to the husband's position in society and in the community.

Some young men shrink from assuming these responsibilities. Some rush into them helter-skelter, carried away with some fanciful momentary infatuation. The young man with a spiritually enlightened mind should know that God has prepared him to be a home-maker and desires to see him at the head of a home. The Christian young man knows that the same Lord who has created the need of air has supplied air, the same Lord who has created the need of food has supplied it, and He who wishes a father to make a home and rear a family will also support the father and supply him with what is necessary for this undertaking. When a young man has become convinced that he ought to enter the holy estate of matrimony, he should not hesitate, but take the matter to God in prayer. Nor ought he despise the counsel of godly and experienced parents. He is not to wait till some

violent passion or near-insane infatuation carries him headlong into an experiment in matrimony, but he is to weigh what the Bible says concerning marriage, and he is to read what God has recorded for our learning concerning -the choice of a proper life companion. Just as Abraham did not allow Isaac to take a wife unto himself from the depraved Canaanites, but saw to it that he was given a woman who would in spiritual, mental, and physical matters be a true companion to him, so a Christian young man should plan to enter this estate advisedly, for he assumes grave responsibilities. He is to be the one who is to seek daily bread for himself and his own household. He is to remember what God has said: "If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel," 1 Tim. 5, 8.

He will soon find that in the sweat of his face he must eat bread, Gen. 3, 19. Moreover, the deceit, rapacity, and greed of his fellow-men will cause him no little hardship. In addition, his own sinful nature and the sins of his own family, reverses in business, loss of health, and other troubles will cause him many a dark hour and many a serious conflict.

One of the most dangerous temptations which beset the father and husband may arise from the wish to shift the work of bringing up his children in the fear and admonition of the Lord upon other shoulders. A man may say to himself, I am the one who is to earn the money, who is to pay the bills, but my wife is to take care of the home, she is to rear the children; I leave that part to her. That is a false position, and many a home has been wrecked through this course of the father and husband. Even as a wife cannot say, It is my husband's business to provide the funds, but must in many cases assist in the store, on the farm, in keeping accounts, and in practising economy in the home, in watching over the finances of the family, so the husband must also take part in the rearing and education of the children. God expressly says to the fathers: 'Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,' Eph. 6, 4.

In many cases the father is forced to be away from home for the greater part of the day or, it may be, for days or even a week at a time because his business or profession takes him away. But then he ought to take every opportunity to be in the midst of his family, to note the development of his children, their

characteristics, and their propensities. Where matters are as they should be, his company will be desired after his absence. The family will request his opinion, he will be consulted, his wife and children will crave his companionship.

What a blessing, then, if a father is such a home-maker as God would have him be, a true friend and a wise counsellor of his children, a loyal and faithful mate to his wife, and in the true sense of the word the head of the home, the king in his little kingdom!

In that home of his he is to be more than the President of the United States is in this country. He is to provide food; clothing, and shelter; but he is also to provide education for the mind of the child, and above all things he is to provide spiritual sustenance and spiritual care and nurture and admonition for the souls of the children.

Poor father if he has no Christian helpmeet, and poorer still if he has not learned that art by which Jacob won his name of Israel, that art of casting all his care upon God! 1 Pet. 5, 7.

And in addition to this art of prayer a father must learn that other art which Luther commends so highly, the art of using the means and helps which God has provided for fathers. Among these means and helps one of the most useful and helpful is Luther's Small Catechism. At the head of each one of the chief parts of this Catechism, Luther has placed these words: 'As the head of the family should teach them in all simplicity to his household.' Luther assumed that he was dealing with a normal home of father, mother, and children. This little Catechism is not a large, difficult book; it is just such a manual which the father of the house may use for the instruction of his children. Let the father note what Luther writes in the introduction to his Catechism: 'Choose whatever form you think best and adhere to it forever. When you preach among the learned and judicious, you may show your art and set these things forth with as many flourishes, and turn them as

skillfully, as you wish; but among the young adhere to one and the same fixed form and manner and teach them, first of all, the text of the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, etc., so that they can say it after you word for word and commit it to memory.' A few minutes each day will mean so much. The father should realize that there is a time for play and a time for sporting with his children, but that there is also a time of seriousness, a time of prayer, and a time of showing them the earnestness of life. It is his duty to teach his children that pain and suffering follow in the wake of sin. The man, the father, is to heed the word: 'Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,' Eph. 6, 4; and again: 'Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged,' Col. 3, 21.

God frequently admonishes children to obey their fathers, to listen to their fathers: 'My son, hear the instruction of thy father.' But how can a son listen to the instruction of his father if his father will give him no instruction or if the father's instruction is contrary to God's instruction?

When considering all this, we shall see that the father's position is not an easy one. But let him remember the will and purpose of God. It is God's will that fathers should be God's representatives, and it is God's purpose to accomplish great things through the father's efforts. Blessed is that father who spends his best years in rearing a family of godly and able boys and girls, who again will be powers for good to all with whom they come to live!

What higher honour can a man seek than to be lord and master, king and commander, in his home? If he founds a home which is a kingdom, a church, a school, all in one, and he is at the head of it, what a privilege!

Of such a home one has written: 'A church within a church, a republic within a republic, a world within a world, is spelled by four letters home! If things go right there, they go right everywhere. If things go wrong there, they go wrong everywhere. The door-sill of the dwelling-house is a part of the foundation of Church and State.'"

Spurgeon said: 'Home is the grandest of all institutions. Talk about Parliament Give me a quiet little parlour. Boast about voting and the Reform Bill if you like, but I go in for weeding the little garden and teaching the children their hymns.'

By the fireside still the light is shining, The children's arms round the parents twining; From love so sweet, oh, who would roam? Be it ever so homely, home is home.

We fathers should remember that the homes which we found, in which we are kings, are to be images of heaven, and they will be very close to heaven if God is there and the angels are there and God's saints are there. Of this home each one of us should say: It is to me the dearest place upon earth. There is only one place better than it, and that is heaven, my eternal home.

Then here will I and mine to-day A solemn covenant make and say: Though all the world forsake Thy Word, I and my house will serve the Lord.

(The Lutheran Witness, 1930, pp 66-67.)

Quote

The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you.

It is the traveller's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. Here Paradise is restored, Heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good the design, and the glory of God its end.

It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will be opened at the judgment, and be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labour, and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.

Can I Be a Christian If I Don't Believe In the Resurrection?

In a recent article in the New York Times, widely-followed columnist Nicholas Kristof asked that question of Christian pastor and author Timothy Keller. His answer might surprise you (as will the fact that it was actually printed in the New York Times):

"Jesus' teaching was not the main point of his mission. He came to save people through his death for sin and his resurrection. So his important ethical teaching only makes sense when you don't separate it from these historic doctrines The Christian Church is pretty much inexplicable if we don't believe in a physical resurrection." Kristof goes on to ask whether billions of 'good people' like Mahatma Ghandi are consigned to hell because they didn't believe in Jesus. Keller replies, "The Bible makes categorical statements that you can't be saved except through faith in Jesus (John 14:6; Acts 4:11-12) You imply that really good people (e.g., Gandhi) should also be saved, not just Christians. The problem is that Christians do not believe anyone can be saved by being good. If you don't come to God through faith in what Christ has done, you would be approaching on the basis of your own goodness." Kristof, Nicholas. "Pastor, Am I a Christian?" The New York Times 2S Dec. 2016, p. SR19. (Reprinted from The Lutheran Spokesman, Apr 2017, p 16).

Christianity: The Most Persecuted Religion Worldwide

We tend to think of "martyrdom" in terms of ancient Rome and the early church. But people are giving their lives for the Christian faith as much in modern as in ancient times. In fact, according to a recent study by renowned author and sociologist Massimo Introvigne, Christianity is by far the most persecuted religion in the world. On average, one Christian is killed every six minutes in our world today. Last year, over ninety thousand Christians were killed for their faith. Of those, seventy percent were in African tribal conflicts, and thirty percent in government persecutions, attacks on Christian villages, or terror attacks worldwide. Cipollone, Elisa. 'Christians: The Most Persecuted in the World.' Faithzette. Lifezette.com, 4 Jan. 2017. Web. 4 Jan. 2017. (Reprinted from The Lutheran Spokesman, April 2017, p 16).

Tyre and Sidon

by Daniel Herman

Tyre and Sidon are two ancient cities that are mentioned frequently in the New Testament— many of the people who followed Jesus evidently came from these two cities, and Jesus on at least one occasion visited the area and healed the daughter of a Canaanite woman. Since Tyre and Sidon were not part of Israel, the people were non-Jewish and were considered to be "Gentiles."

Both Tyre and Sidon are ancient cities along the coast of Lebanon with a long and significant history. Both cities were inhabited from the earliest stages of urbanisation, and both were important Phoenician maritime trade centres in the first millennium BC. The cities continued to thrive under Roman, Byzantine, Islamic and Frankish rule, and are commercial and agricultural centres to this day. Although Tyre and Sidon were neighbouring port cities, they were not necessarily allies. Coins minted by both of them in the second century BC indicate their rivalry—Tyrian coins call Tyre the 'Mother of the Sidonians', and Sidonian coins call Sidon the 'Mother city of Tyre'!

Tyre was also famous in the Old Testament period. Hiram, the king of Tyre, provided Solomon with the timber and artisans for building the temple in Jerusalem (I Kings 5:10–18). Under the Phoenicians Tyre was a major seaport and its merchants reached as far as the shores of Spain. The Phoenicians also founded colonies along the Mediterranean including sites such as Carthage and Gades.

Tyre was also known for its purple-dyed textiles, worn in the ancient world as a mark of royalty. The ancient Tyrians extracted the dye from the Murex, a marine snail that still lives along Tyre's shores.

But this wealth attracted various enemies. In the sixth century the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Tyre for over 13 years! He failed to conquer the city because part of it was on a well-fortified island. In 332 BC Alexander the Great also attempted to conquer Tyre. But Alexander filled in the causeway between the island and the mainland and was then able to place battering rams against the walled island, and so take it by force. Despite Alexander's deliberate destruction of the city, Tyre managed to recover and during the Hellenistic period it flourished again. One of the best indicators for the city's power was their mint, which produced silver coins for the Seleucids, and from 126 BC Tyre minted its own coins. The Tyrian silver tetradrachms were known for their consistent high level of silver, and so became the official currency in the Eastern Mediterranean. The annual Jewish temple tax, for instance, was paid with Tyrian shekels. [Taken from: Archaeological Diggings, Newsletter No. 9, March 2017]

Report of Annual Fellowship Day, 2017 – Kingaroy

In order to commemorate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation, the members of the ELCR met at Kingaroy on 26 March 2017, for their Fellowship Day. Pastor Gavin Winter conducted the Confessional Address, based on Gal 2:9. Pastor Bryce Winter took the address, basing his sermon on 2 Tim 1:8, '*Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the power of God.*' Using as his theme **LET US NOT BE ASHAMED OF LUTHER WHOSE NAME WE BEAR**, the preacher explained three questions, I. In What Does this Consist? II. Why this is our Sacred Duty? And III. How are we to Carry Out this Sacred Duty?

The Essay in the afternoon was presented by Pastor Tim Winter, based on the topic, *On Eagles' Wings: Borne in Christ's Arms, From Oppression to Glory*. The essayist explained how the LORD, 1. Sustains His Church; 2. Saves His Church; and 3. Is glorified by His Church. Copies of this essay are available through our pastors.

Notes and News

Hospital:

. We pray that they will all again enjoy better health. May they find comfort in these words from *Starck's Prayer Book*.

Prayer

O loving and gracious God, Thou alone art worthy to be loved. Thee, and Thee alone, I ought to love with all my heart and with all my soul and with all my strength. Oh, I acknowledge and confess before Thee with exceeding great sorrow of my soul that my love to Thee, my faithful Creator and loving Father, to Jesus, my Redeemer and Saviour, and to the Holy Spirit, my Teacher and Guide, has not only been extinguished in me by original sin, but that I have not at all times yielded to the calling and operation of Thy grace and to the promptings of Thy Holy Spirit by which true love of Thee might again have been kindled in my heart.

I pray Thee, do change my heart. Pluck from it all love of the world and of sin, and let these words be ringing in my ears: 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' Destroy in me all love for the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, to all of which, alas I am very much inclined by nature. Kindle in me by Thy Holy Spirit a pure and true love of Thee that may love Thee as the highest good for Thine own sake

alone, and flee all vanities of the world. For if I desire to be a child of God, the love of sin, of the world, and of self must be cast out of my heart, and I must love Thee alone above all things.

Therefore, my God, I come to Thee and pray Thee: Grant me Thy Holy Spirit that He may plant this noble, necessary, and Christian grace in my heart. In His strength I will love Thee, my God, with all my heart and constantly. My soul shall think of Thee; my lips shall speak of Thee; Thou shalt be dearer to me than all the world and its joys, dearer than all earthly fortune and glory, yea, dearer than all men. From love of Thee I will cease to sin knowingly; from love of Thee I will shun all sinful persons and societies; from love of Thee I will begin to become truly pious, and order my life only according to Thy Word and will. I will honour and fear Thee; I will serve, follow, and obey Thee.

O loving God, enkindle this love in my heart more and more, that I may not love Thee only for a few days, weeks, or years, but that my love of Thee may be ever increasing and continue to my blessed end. Fill me with courage whenever I am called upon to suffer for my love of Thee; strengthen me at such

times by Thy mighty aid. Thus let me be united with Thee in love here in time and hereafter in eternity. *Thee will I love, my Crown of gladness, Thee will I love, my God and Lord, Amid the darkest depths of*

sadness, Not for the hope, of high reward, For Thine own sake, O Light divine, So long as life is mine. Amen (Starck's Prayer Book , Prayer, pp184-186.)



The original Lowood Church, 3 March 1996

is a love that Clings in faith to Christ and His Word and shows itself outwardly in a life of godliness. May God continue to bless the Lowood congregation with faithfulness to God's Word.

20th Anniversary, Lowood: On the 26th January 2017, Our Saviour Congregation Lowood celebrated the 20th Anniversary of their present church building. Their present church was dedicated on December 1, 1996, by Pastor Gavin Winter.

Pastor Gavin Winter based his anniversary address on Ps 26:8, using as his theme, THE LOVE THE SINCERE BELIEVER HAS FOR THE HOUSE OF GOD. He pointed out, I. It is a love not for the Building as such but because of the Word of God that Dwells there; and II. It