



Steadfast

In the Word and Faith



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Office: 7 Graham Street, Kingaroy, Q. 4610.
Postal Address: Box 692, Kingaroy, Q. 4610.

Editor: Pastor G L Winter – glwelcr@bigpond.net.au

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Contents:

- Page 37: What Luther Says about *Luther*
Page 38: Devotion – *Mark 12:28-34* – TJ Winter
Page 40: *The Lutheran Church in Its Relationship and Position Towards Other Church Bodies* – Pastor Peters, translated BL Winter
Page 43: *The Lord's Prayer Part 3 – Second Petition* – Pastor S Wood.
Page 45: Congregational *Singing*
Page 46: Report of Convention 2018
Page 47: *Notes and News*

What Luther Says About — Luther

Parental Disciplining Not Neglected. My parents forced me to obey and did so with a strictness that tended to make me disheartened. Because of one nut my mother once flogged me until the blood ran. This strict discipline finally moved me to enter the monastery. Although they meant very well, I was only disheartened. They could not understand the difference in dispositions by which corrections are to be tempered. One must punish in such a way the apple lies beside the rod. For it is bad if children and pupils lose their friendly disposition toward parents and teachers. There have been unsavory schoolmasters who by their ruthless practices have checked many highly gifted pupils (*egregia ingenia*). W-T 3, No, 3565 a



Luther Once Was a Zealous Monk. When I was a monk, I crucified Christ daily, and I blasphemed Him by that false confidence which constantly clung to me. Outwardly I was not as other men — robbers, unjust, adulterers — but I kept chastity, obedience, and poverty; in fact, free from the cares of this life, I devoted myself entirely to fastings, vigils, prayers, the reading of Masses, etc. Meanwhile, however, I constantly fostered mistrust, doubt, fear, hatred, and blasphemy of God with this soft of sanctity and self-confidence. And this righteousness of mine was nothing but a dunghill and a realm most pleasing to the devil. For Satan loves such saints and regards with the greatest delight those who destroy their own bodies and souls by defrauding and depriving themselves of all the blessings of God's gifts. —SL 9, 102

Luther Was Once a Loyal Papist. If anyone had pious regard and zeal for the papistical laws and the traditions of the fathers, I certainly did before the light of the Gospel arose. And with great earnestness I urged and defended those laws and traditions as holy and their observance as necessary for Salvation. Then I tried with all possible diligence to keep them myself, weakening my body with fasts, vigils, prayers, and other exercises, more than all those who nowadays so bitterly hate and persecute me because I deprive these performances of the glory of being able to justify. For in the observance of these things I was so diligent and superstitious that I placed a greater burden upon my body than it could bear without imperiling my health. My adoration of the pope was disinterested (*pure*); for I was not seeking prebends (revenue from a Cathedral or church, GLW), dignities, or other advancements. But whatever I did, I did in the simplicity of my heart, in

pious zeal, and for the glory of God. 'But things were gain to me,' those I now with Paul count 'loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord. (Phil. 3:7-8). SL9, 100 f.

How Luther Came to See the Light. At first I clearly saw that the free grace of God is absolutely necessary to attain to light and eternal life; and I anxiously and busily worked to understand the word of Paul in Rom.1:17: The righteousness of God js revealed in the Gospel. I questioned this passage for a long time and labored over it, for the expression 'the righteousness of God' barred my way. This phrase was customarily explained to mean that the righteousness of God is a virtue by which He is Himself righteous and condemns sinners. In this way all the teachers of the church except Augustine had interpreted the passage. They had said: The righteousness of God, that is, the wrath of God. But as often as I read this passage, I wished that God had never revealed the Gospel; for who could love a God who was angry, who judged and condemned people? This misunderstanding continued until, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, I finally examined more carefully the word of Habakkuk: 'The just shall live by his faith;' (2:4). From this passage I concluded that life must be derived from faith... Then the entire Holy Scripture became clear to me, and heaven itself was opened to me. Now we see this brilliant light very clearly, and we are privileged to enjoy it abundantly. SL2,320f

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Devotion — Mark 12:28-34

Prayer:

Our loving heavenly Father, You have showed to us Your intense love by sacrificing Your Son, Jesus, in our stead. By Jesus' example You have also taught us how we are to live and to love, to know You by faith in Him, to love You above all else and to love our neighbour as ourselves. He sought nothing but the eternal honour and glory of His Father, showing us how to love You with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength. He came from on high to seek and to save all lost sheep, tirelessly and selflessly devoting Himself to serving others for their eternal welfare.

No matter how unpleasant for us it may be, we all need to be convicted of our sins before we see a need for Your Son in our loves. Therefore, by the power of the Holy Ghost, convict us all of our sins, how far short we have fallen of loving You with all our heart, soul, and strength and our neighbour as ourselves. By faith teach us how we are to love You properly, fearing, loving, and trusting in You above all things. Drive us all deeper into the study of Your Word that we may ever become more and more acquainted with You. Ever increasing in our love and trust for You, may all fear be removed from our hearts and replaced with the boldness of faith.[GW1] [GW2] As we ever increase in grace, may all jealousy, hatred, envying, rivalry, strife, be driven from our hearts. May they be replaced by fear and love for You, agape love, sacrificial loves, love which sacrifices everything for You, a love by which we crucify our own fleshly desires for Your glory. Grant us all true peace and contentment which flows from love and trust in You, contentment in You which satisfies us regardless of our circumstances. As you have forgiven us through Jesus Christ, may we always forgive those who have sinned against us and instead seek to serve them in love. May Your love be so perfected in us that it provide a foretaste of the perfect love in heaven, pure, innocent, selfless, the perfect love which will be ours when we are restored to the fullness of the image of God. Amen.

As we ever increase in grace, may all jealousy, hatred, envying, rivalry, strife, be driven from our hearts. May they be replaced by fear and love for You, agape love, sacrificial loves, love which sacrifices everything for You, a love by which we crucify our own fleshly desires for Your glory. Grant us all true peace and contentment which flows from love and trust in You, contentment in You which

satisfies us regardless of our circumstances. As you have forgiven us through Jesus Christ, may we always forgive those who have sinned against us and

instead seek to serve them in love. May Your love be so perfected in us that it provide a foretaste of the perfect love in heaven, pure, innocent, selfless, the perfect love which will be ours when we are restored to the fullness of the image of God.

There was a church in Toowoomba that had this plaque outside. 'This church is not full of hypocrites. There is always room for more.' If only 'good' people came to church, all churches would be empty- for where are the 'good' people? After all, the Bible teaches us, 'For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.'

It can be so easy for people to judge others, but it is not by our standards that we will be judged, but by God's. We usually summarise God's Law under the heading of ten commandments, but have any of us really kept the first? Have any of us 'loved the Lord with all our heart, with all our understanding, with all our soul, with all our strength?' But alone for the grace of God, can any of us claim to be any better, any holier, to possess any greater righteousness, than others?

The most important thing for any man is to discover the true and living God. 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.' It's important that you know who God is.

Secondly, you must come into a loving relationship with Him.

Many weighty questions were put Jesus' way; sadly the majority were not sincerely asked, but with the intention of trapping and publicly humiliating Him. But Jesus conquered each time, wielding the Sword of the Spirit, subduing His foes with the Word of God. But truly this was possibly one of the most important of all questions put to Jesus.

'Which is the first commandment of all?'

The Old Testament has many commands, rules, and regulations; think of particularly the Ten Commandments, the Church Laws, the State Laws. The Jews counted them all up, calculating 613, laws regarding washing, purifying, sacrificing, worshipping, tithing. Many, even some Christians, will claim that in the Old Testament, people were saved by the Law. Indeed, this is obviously what this scribe, who Matthew further describes as a lawyer, believed. It is the very essence of his question, a very direct, simple, blunt question. Matthew says they asked Jesus this question to test Him.

But notice Jesus answer. Notice that His answer is actually given in three stages. We often talk about the two tables of the Law, love God and love your neighbour. Jesus does say this but notice where He begins.

And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel: The Lord, our God, is one Lord;

and thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

Jesus begins His reply, quoting Deuteronomy 6:4, 5, quoting what the Jews call the 'shema', the 'Hear'. The words, 'hear, oh Israel,' are words calling for attention. The Israelites are being called to attention, to pay careful attention to what is now to follow. The words that God is about to utter are vitally important, so now drop everything else and pay strict attention.

Why does Jesus start by quoting verse 29, 'The Lord, our God, is one Lord?'

He is identifying the one true God, the Lord God, the everlasting Triune God, eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, all-holy, perfect in righteousness and truth. Exodus 34: 6, 7:

And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed, The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. And that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and upon the children's children unto the third and to the fourth generation.

Therefore Jesus is saying first of all that it is important to first of all know the Lord, before one can keep any commandment.

Adam and Eve knew God perfectly; they were created in God's image, perfectly righteous and holy. But resulting from their sin, mankind has lost the image of God, perfect, complete knowledge of Him. Therefore it is impossible to truly 'know' the Lord based upon man's own reason or strength. 1 Corinthians 2:14:

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

So man must truly know the Lord first. Hebrews 11:6:

'But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.'

So how, in view of the fall, do we come to know the Lord? Alone by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord. 'I am the

Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.’

This is the God we are to worship: the Triune God, the Father Who has created me, the Son Who has redeemed me, and the Holy Ghost Who sanctifies me. One God, yet three Persons. We come to know Him alone by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. But how do we show Him

our love? How do we worship Him? How do we serve? What does it truly mean to know the Lord?
—TJ Winter.

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

By Pastor Peters¹. 1890

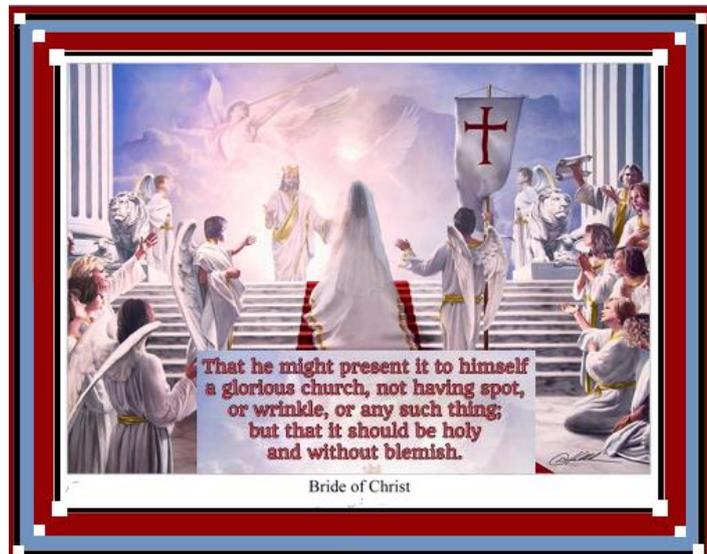
(Continued from Steadfast May - June 2018)



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.

From this it is again clear what our thesis says that the visible Lutheran Church is **not** the Church about which we confess in the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed and **outside of which is to be found no salvation and blessedness**. For this Church is not a visible fellowship of assembled believers at this or that place, in this or that country, but it is the *communion* (congregation) of *saints* (true Christians only), because the Holy Spirit in His Word describes the Church to us as such a congregation (fellowship of true believers), to which no

unregenerate person, no godless, wicked person, no hypocrite, no unbeliever belongs. For thus Paul writes about this Church that Christ loved it and has given Himself for it **‘that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word,²⁷ that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish’** (Eph.5:26,27). And John writes about hypocrites and those who have fallen away from the faith: **‘They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest**



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

² **Kretzmann**: "Christ consecrated His Church, set it apart for Himself. And this He did by cleansing each member of the Church **by the miraculous washing of water, by the sacrament of Holy Baptism**. For this water is not simple water only, as Luther very correctly writes, but the water comprehended in God's command and connected with God's word. The water of Baptism cleanses from the corruption of inherited sin, it has the power to regenerate, to renew heart and mind, the nature of man."



that they were not all of us' (1 John 2:19). Our *Confessions*³ state: 'So also we confess in our holy creed and faith: 'I believe in one holy Christian Church.' In these words we say that the Church is holy, but the wicked and ungodly cannot be the holy Church.... The true Church is the Kingdom of Christ, that is, the assembly (congregation) of all saints (true Christians), for the wicked are not ruled by the Spirit of Christ.... If the Church which is indeed truly the Kingdom of Christ and of God, is distinguished from the kingdom of the devil, then the wicked, who are in the devil's kingdom, cannot in any way be the Church,

even though in this life the wicked are found among true Christians and in the congregations (visible church bodies), and also have the Pastoral Office and other offices in it, because (the exact membership of) the Kingdom of Christ has not yet been revealed.... And also with this the parables of Christ agree, in which He clearly says in Matt. 13 that the good seed are the children of the Kingdom, but the *tares* are the children of the *devil*, and that the field is the *world*, not the Church.... And when Christ says: '**The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea**' (Mat.13:47), and like wise like ten virgins, He does not want the wicked to be the Church, but shows how the Church appears in this world. Therefore, He says that it is 'like' these, and so forth, that is to say, as in a catch of fish the good and the bad lie mixed together, so the Church here is hidden among the great crowd of the wicked, and He does not want the pious to be offended by this.' (Apology paragraphs 6-29⁴. Emphasis added.).

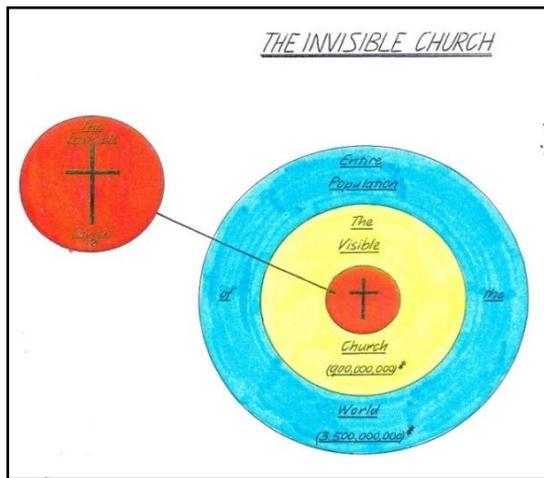
But such a holy congregation (the true Christian Church) consists of **nothing but the pious**, such a congregation is without **stain (spot)**, or **wrinkle**, which is not seen in the Lutheran Church, nor will it ever indeed be found on this earth at any particular place or at any particular time, as the Chiliast fanatics think. Before the resurrection of the dead a time will never come where no-one else but the saints (believers) and the pious will rule the earth and all the wicked will be exterminated, as the Chiliasts think. These fanatics are expressly **rejected** in the 17th Article of the Augsburg Confession. But this congregation (communion) of saints is, as our Confession states, '**hidden among the crowd of the wicked,**' as therefore also the **Lord Jesus** describes His beloved Church as a Kingdom hidden from human eyes, when He states: ²⁰ **The kingdom of God cometh not with observation**⁵: ²¹ **Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you** (in your heart, BLW)' (Luke 17:20,21).

³ The translation from the **Latin version** of this is as follows: "In the Confession we have presented this sentence almost in the very words. Thus also **the Church is defined by the article in the Creed** which teaches us to believe that there is a holy Catholic Church. ⁸¹ The wicked indeed are not a holy Church. And that which follows, namely, the **communion of saints, seems to be added in order to explain what the Church signifies, namely, the congregation of saints.** (Triglotta, p.229).Therefore, **the Church, which is truly the kingdom of Christ,** is properly the congregation of saints. For **the wicked are ruled by the devil, and are captives of the devil;** they are not ruled by the Spirit of Christ. (Triglotta, p.231).... If the Church, which is truly the kingdom of Christ, is distinguished from the kingdom of the devil, it follows necessarily that the wicked, since they are in the kingdom of the devil, **are not the Church;** although **in this life,** because the kingdom of Christ has not yet been revealed; they are **mingled with the Church,** and hold offices [as teachers, and other offices] in the Church. (Triglotta, p.233).... And with this clearly agree the parables of Christ, who says, [Matt. 13:38](#), that the good seed are the children of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the Wicked One. The field, He says, is the world, not the Church. (Triglotta, p.233).... Therefore, this passage is more against the adversaries than in favour of them, because it shows that the true and spiritual people are to be separated from the carnal people. Christ also speaks of the **outward appearance of the Church** when He says, [Matt. 13:47](#): The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, likewise, to ten virgins; and He teaches that the Church has been covered by a multitude of evils, in order that this stumbling-block may not offend the pious." (Triglotta, p.233).

⁴ Taken from the German Edition; my translation.

⁵ **Dr. E.W. Koehler** from old Missouri translates these words, '**not with observation,**' '**so that it cannot be observed**

However, because we cannot now look into another person's heart in order to learn whether he has become, by faith in Christ, a subject in this Kingdom, Paul says: **'Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, 'The Lord knoweth them that are His.' And, 'let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity'** (2 Tim.2:19). According to this we can probably recognize **under certain circumstances** that a person does *not* belong to the Church, for example, if he does not want to give up sinning wilfully and deliberately, but insists on continuing in it, then such a person is certainly not a Christian. But not all who outwardly depart from iniquity are by this already Christians and members of the Church. As long as this departure from iniquity is only merely outward, they are certainly hypocrites, and such hypocrites find themselves everywhere and always among and beside the true Christians. That is why it stands written there: The LORD alone



knows those who are His, that is, His Church, for only those who have belonged to Him, only **'those who are His'** constitute the Church. Certainly, they are also people who can be seen by us, but when we see them, we see them only as physical people, but not as spiritual people, for the life of the spiritual man is hidden with Christ in God, Col.3:3⁶; the true spiritual nature of the man of the heart, this new creature in Christ is hidden, 1 Pet.3:4⁷ and consequently the Church itself also remains hidden from the eyes of men. This is clearly expressed in the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed with the words: 'The congregation (communion) of saints (true believers in Christ, BLW).

Incidentally, it is to be noted that in the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed often the words 'Communion (fellowship) of saints' is said instead of 'congregation of saints.' In the **Large Catechism** Luther writes about the origin of this expression 'Communion' (Gemeinschaft), that it came about due to the ignorance of those **'who understood neither Latin nor German,'** and he says 'although no German language speaks thus (in this manner,

or seen.' He states: 'We have always believed, and we still believe that **this text does indeed prove that the Church is invisible**....if the kingdom is the rule of Christ *in the hearts* of His believers, then the kingdom is certainly "within" them.' The *kingdom of God comes to you the very moment that God rules in your hearts by faith in Christ.* Luther took the same position. If, then, this text tells us that the kingdom of God is within us, then that means that also **faith is in our hearts, and that we are members of the Church.**

Dr. Koehler continues: "**Faith invisible to the human eye.** Now, persons can indeed be seen. Yet what makes them members of the Church is invisible to human observation. Faith is a matter of *the heart*, as Paul writes: *'With the heart man believes unto righteousness,'* Rom. 10:10. Faith itself remains invisible. Likewise the kingdom of God is *within us*, and whenever God rules in the heart, **it will show itself outwardly in the conduct of the person.** Because we can judge only outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart, 1 Sam. 16:7. We cannot look into a person's heart and see whether he has true faith in the Savior and is ruled by the Spirit of God. It is possible that men will say, 'Lord, Lord,' and have the form of godliness, yet, neither faith nor the kingdom God is within them."

⁶ Col.3:3, "**For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.**" Kretzmann: "When the Lord converted us through the power of His Word, He gave us complete fellowship with Christ. So we Christians died to the world and to earthly, transitory things; we renounced the devil and all his works and all his pomp. **At the same time we entered into the communion of Christ's wonderful life. We now enjoy the mysterious union with Christ which is concealed with Him in God.** This life ... may be foolishness in the eyes of the foolish children of this world, but to us Christians it is a divine conviction, a certain experience. At the same time, **by our union with Christ, we are united in fellowship with God the Father Himself.**"

⁷ 1 Pet.3:4, "**But let it (your adornment, BLW) be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.**" Kretzmann: "The true ornament of a Christian woman is the hidden man of the heart, the new spiritual nature and life. This new, divine life will ever manifest itself in a disposition and in deeds of gentleness and meekness, in a quiet spirit, without pride, assumption, anger, and passionate boisterousness, Rom. 7:22. These virtues will **clothe a Christian woman better than the costliest mantle which this world can supply, and, what is more, such conduct is precious in the sight of God.**"

BLW), nor understands it thus.' Luther continues: 'But to speak correct German, it ought to be eine *Gemeinde der Heiligen* (a congregation of saints), that is, a congregation made up purely of saints, or, to speak yet more plainly, *eine heilige Gemeinde, a holy congregation*. 50] I say this in order that the words **Gemeinschaft der Heiligen (Communion of Saints)** may be understood, because the expression has become so established by custom that it cannot well be eradicated, and it is treated almost as heresy if one should attempt to change a word.' (Triglotta, p.691)⁸.

In the Lutheran Church⁹ the expression '*Communion of Saints*' is not said there anymore. On the other hand, this expression is maintained firmly with an apparent preference in the united Churches¹⁰ so that when one hears it in a church service, one becomes suspicious and can be quite certain that one is in a Unified Church.

(Pages 11-13; Italicised emphasis is Pastor Peters. Bolded emphasis added. Next time we complete Thesis One. Some larger paragraphs have been divided into shorter ones.) BLW.

Lord's Prayer, Part 3 – Second Petition

The second petition to the Lord's Prayer is 'Thy kingdom come'. 'Thy kingdom' is commonly designated in the New Testament as the 'kingdom of God' or the 'kingdom of heaven'. Interestingly, the expression is never used in the Old Testament, only alluded to in Daniel 2:44 and 7:27. There it says that 'the God of heaven [shall] set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed', and this kingdom 'shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom'. Both John the Baptist and Jesus began heaven through the Son of Man who came from heaven. It also brings us heavenly blessings and leads us to heaven. It is a *spiritual dominion*, a definite realm imperceptible to the things of sight and sense. 'The kingdom of God *cometh not with observation*: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God *is within you*.' (Luke 17:20, 21). The kingdom of God is not

their ministries by building upon these prophecies. Both say to the Jews, 'Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' (Matt. 3:2; 4:17). This, then, becomes a major theme of the New Testament, where the synonymous expressions 'kingdom of God' or 'kingdom of heaven' are used over 100 times.

The kingdom of God is a spiritual dominion where Christ rules. Wherever the King is, there also is His kingdom. It is sometimes called 'the kingdom of heaven' because it has its *origin* in of this earth. Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence.' (John 18:36).

The Scriptures speak of the kingdom of God as threefold. There is the kingdom of power, kingdom of grace, and kingdom of glory. However,

⁸ Luther also explains this further: "The Creed denominates the holy Christian Church, *communio sanctorum*, a communion of saints; for both expressions, taken together, are identical. But formerly the one [the second] expression was not there, and it has been poorly and unintelligibly translated into German *eine Gemeinschaft der Heiligen*, a communion of saints. 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....

"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*).

⁹ "49] So also the word **communio, which is added, ought not to be rendered communion (Gemeinschaft), but congregation (Gemeinde)**. And it is nothing else than an interpretation or explanation by which some one meant to explain what the Christian Church is." Large Catechism, Triglotta, pages 689,691).

⁹ Peters means the confessional or orthodox Lutheran Church of his day. In the German liturgy book of our former once orthodox ELSA (1912) this expression of the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed reads: "**die Gemeinde der Heiligen**," "the congregation of Saints," or we mean: a **Christian congregation or assembly, holy Christendom**.

¹⁰ This refers to those congregations of King Frederick III's Union Church, a compromise union between the Lutherans and the Reformed on the Lord's Supper.

this division does not mean that there are three separate kingdoms over which God rules. Rather, His dominion is one. But it exerts itself in three different spheres, according to the different character of those who are governed. All creatures belong to the kingdom of power, all Christians, residing on earth, belong to the kingdom of grace (Rom. 5:1,2; Acts 5:14), and all Christians, residing in heaven, belong to the kingdom of glory (Acts 7:55,56; 1 Pet. 5:4; 1 John 3:2). When we pray, ‘Thy kingdom come’ we pray only in respect to the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory. The kingdom of power cannot ‘come’, because it is already present with all things. Christ and His invisible Christian Church dwell in the kingdom of grace. Through faith in the Gospel God ‘hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son’ (Col. 1:13). Here ‘are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge’ (Col. 2:3), including ‘righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost’ (Rom. 14:17). The Christian Church holds the keys to this kingdom through the preaching of the Gospel, how that ‘Christ died for our sins’ (1 Cor. 15:3). The Church opens the door of entrance to the kingdom (according to the Greek of Matt 16:19, announces that it already has been opened by God, GLW) for those who repent and believe the Gospel, and it locks the door (according to the Greek of Matt 16:19, announces that it already has been locked by God, GLW) to those who reject the Gospel. All men should ‘seek first the kingdom of God’ (Matt. 6:33), that the kingdom of grace might come to them. Christ, the King, brings His kingdom to us and rules in our hearts via the Word of God. We receive the King and His kingdom with childlike faith. ‘Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.’ (Luke 18:17). Luther says, ‘The kingdom of God comes indeed without our prayer, of itself; but we pray in this petition that it may come to us also. The kingdom of God comes to us when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead a godly life, here in time and hereafter in eternity.’ (Luther’s Small Catechism, p. 155).

We pray ‘Thy kingdom come’ for ourselves and our fellow Christians, who have already entered the kingdom of grace. We pray that God might

further enlighten the eyes of our hearts to better perceive, appreciate, and retain God’s kingdom of grace in us. With Luther we pray ‘that God would graciously grant us true faith and a godly life’ (Louis Wessel, Proof Texts of the Catechism, p. 36). We also pray for those unbelieving who yet reside outside of the kingdom of grace. Again with Luther we pray ‘that God would extend His kingdom of grace on earth’ (Louis Wessel, Proof Texts of the Catechism, p. 37). ‘Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest.’ (Matt. 9:38). ‘Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified’ (2 Th. 3:1).

Finally, ‘Thy kingdom come’ also refers to the future kingdom of glory, that kingdom that is yet a *coming* kingdom. We pray with earnest desire that this glorious kingdom may soon be revealed, when the things of faith become the things of sight. ‘For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.’ (1 Cor. 13:12). ‘Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as he is.’ (1 John 3:2). ‘For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.’ (Rom. 8:19). ‘We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.’ (Rom. 8:23).

With Luther we pray ‘that God would hasten the coming of His kingdom of glory’ (Louis Wessel, Proof Texts of the Catechism, p. 38). ‘Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.’ (Luke 12:32). ‘Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world’ (Matt. 25:34). ‘Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.’ (Matt. 8:11). ‘Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father’ (Matt. 13:43). ‘The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come... Even so, Come Lord Jesus’ (Rev. 22:17, 20).

*Thy kingdom come! Thine let it be
In time, and through eternity!
O let Thy Holy Spirit dwell*

*With us, to rule and guide us well;
From Satan’s mighty power and rage
Preserve Thy Church from age to age
(M. Luther, 1539) —S Wood*

Congregational Singing

A Christian may sing though he be alone. St. James says: 'Is any merry? Let him sing psalms.' Certainly, when two or three are gathered in Jesus' name, they may sing. When Paul and Silas were imprisoned at Philippi, they 'sang praises unto God', so that 'the prisoners heard them.' More often, however, Christians sing when they meet for divine worship. In the 100th Psalm we are exhorted to 'come before His presence with singing.' And what a delightful and heavenly scene it is to see a whole Christian congregation singing heartily, and as with one voice, praises unto the Lord!

God is pleased to hear His children sing, for He has again and again commanded them to do this — 'Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord' (Col. 3, 16); and again 'Singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.' (Eph. 5, 19). How often are we exhorted in the Psalms to 'sing unto the Lord a new song'! God calls upon us to sing; how can any Christian, then, remain silent?

Does not God, moreover give us cause to sing His praises? They who have been called out of the darkness of legal servitude into the brightness and joy of Gospel freedom and liberty cannot but sing. The children of God of whom we read in the Bible gladly sang of God's mercies. Moses sang a song of triumph and praise after the overthrow of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea. David is called 'the sweet singer of Israel,' and his songs were sung by the Old Testament people of God in their sanctuary. What was it that set David's heart afire with praise and inspired his psalms of thanksgiving? It was his meditation upon Him who forgiveth all our iniquities. When Jesus had instituted the Sacrament of the Altar, He sang an hymn with His disciples. Congregational singing was so common among the first Christians that Pliny characterized them as ('those who sang hymns to Christ'.) Those early Christians, whose hearts were so full of the joy of their Lord, sang 'psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.' Their mouth overflowed with praise for God's deliverance.

Sad to say, in the course of time singing in the churches was restricted more and more, until well-nigh became a function of the clergy only, and the people were condemned to be passive spectators of the ceremonial pageant and silent listeners to the priestly chant. But congregational singing again came into its own at the time of the Reformation. When Luther, that 'Nightingale of Wittenberg', again proclaimed the tidings of God's mercy in Christ, the Christians began to sing as never before. For Luther not only preached the Gospel, he also believed it, and— sang it. He introduced congregational singing at every divine service. In order to have good congregational singing, he composed no less than 37 hymns himself, and inspired and induced others to write hymns. It is said that more than 2,000 hymns and melodies date from the Reformation period: So important and So far-reaching was Luther's influence as a hymn-writer that the Jesuit Conzer

indignantly declared that 'Luther's songs have damned more souls than all his books and speeches.'

History teaches that whenever and wherever the Gospel was preached in its full sweetness, there and then the people began to sing. Congregational singing flows from faith in the Gospel-message. When the heart is full of religious fervour, the lips will overflow with religious songs. Heathenism has no hymn-books. The Buddhist chants are weird, with a vein of sadness in them as of joy unattained, of hope unrealizable. They give many people a sense of unutterable homesickness. But since we Christians have an all-sufficient Saviour, we may sing: 'O rejoice, ye Christians, loudly, for our joy is now begun.'

This privilege has been intended for *all* men, and since *all* who are attending divine service are supposed to have come together for worship, it follows that *all* ought to sing. The people of the Reformation period fairly sang themselves into Luther's doctrine, and, generally speaking, we may say that our Lutheran people have kept it up ever since. It would certainly seem that when people who have voices to sing enter the house of God and sit there mute during the entire service, their hearts are not truly uplifted to God in worshipping Him.

In our day the 'choir craze' has taken hold of many churches, and paid trained choirs have almost gotten a 'corner' on this department of the divine service. It is said that a number of years ago an elder of a church in Syracuse insisted on singing in the services, but the choir soon elected a committee to request him to give up this practice. And so there are many churches in which most of the singing is left to a delegation of four or more persons, who sing 'Rock of Ages' in the same spirit in which they sang 'Grand Duchess' or 'Don Giovanni' on' the evening before.

But though it is true that there is a field for the choir to work in (as, e. g., in leading the singing and in the anthems), yet it is also true that the church is not there for the purpose of furnishing music and giving concerts for the entertainment of those who visit the house of God. The mission of every part of the church-service, and therefore also of the music of the church, is edification and worship. They who come to church are expected not only to receive, but also to give; to render unto God their sacrifice of song and praise.

For the proper exercise of congregational singing it is necessary to observe certain principles. For one thing, the subject-matter must be of the right kind. False doctrine is in many respects more dangerous in a hymn than it is in a sermon. Many hymns contain no specific confession of Christianity. They breathe the spirit of sickly sentimentality rather than of faith and devotion, as, e. g., 'Happy birds that fly round Thy altars, O Most High.' Fortunately the hymns in our Lutheran hymnals have for the most part been well chosen, so that there is not much danger of going astray in this respect. There is no sighing and crying and uncertain seeking after God in them, but a happy certainty and a definiteness of conviction:

*Now I have found the sure foundation,
Where evermore my anchor grounds.*

At the same time sweet sentiments are also not wanting, wherever they are in place, as, e. g., in the hymn 'Jesus, Thou My Heart's Delight'.

Congregational singing must also be done in the right; aye, in the best possible manner. Oftentimes the text is full of religious fervour, while the music is frivolous and suggestive of

worldliness and of 'rag-time' songs. The melodies of our church-hymns ought to be serious and elevated, and should harmonize with the sacred moments when the soul is in communion with its God. Besides, the hymns are to be sung with understanding and in faith. St. Paul says: 'I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.' Cor. 14, 15. We are to understand and believe the truths we express, otherwise our praising God is hypocrisy and an offense to Him.

Oh, that there might be among us an ever-growing appreciation and increasing use of this part of Christian worship! Then, our worship here will be a fitting prelude to the congregational singing which will be exercised in heaven, from whence this practice came, and where it will be perpetuated through one eternal day.

Clayton, Mo. R. Hope.

(
LW 1919, p 132-133)

2018 ELCR Convention, Lowood

On August 19, 2018, the 52nd Annual Convention of the ELCR was held at Our Saviour Church, ELCR, Lowood. The day began with a service conducted by Pastor Tim Winter, basing his address on Ps 18:4-19. Greetings were received from Pastor Stuart Wood in which he stated, 'We also pray that the Lord would bless your 2018 Annual Convention. May He grant you faith to receive His Word with all readiness to carry out His will with joy. May He also protect your young people from the powerful temptations of the devil, the world, and the flesh.'

After this the business meeting of the day began. The Federation Chairman, Morris Winter, presented his report in which he urged the gathering, 'So let us be neither overwhelmed nor fearful, but focus on the Almighty God who has given our tiny church the wonderful privilege of bearing the Standard of His Pure Word in the midst of a wicked world and fast-decaying visible Church.'

Notes and News

Verse 24 – *Being Justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*

JESUS, Redeemer of our souls, our only Saviour from sin and eternal death, what peace doth dwell in our hearts because we know our salvation resteth upon Thy life, and suffering and death, and not upon our own poor efforts. What confidence doth dwell in our hearts because we know we are indeed fully justified, even in the sight of Holy God, who can not permit one sin to go unpunished. We know that Thou hast made our salvation complete. Nothing is wanting of all that God in His infinite righteousness must demand of us. Thou hast rendered all He must require, Thou hast paid all He must demand. Freely and fully Thou hast secured our justification. There is no condemnation for us. Thou hast so fully accomplished our justification that we need have no thought of trying, by work or merit of our own, to add to that which Thou hast done for us. O our Redeemer, grant us freedom from hours of doubt and darkness, when we might perhaps feel that our sins are not fully forgiven. Preserve us from those temptations of the devil in which he doth suggest that our sin can still condemn us in God's sight. Help us to beware of those who teach that our own works are the way to justification in the eyes of God. But, as Thou dost keep us safe from these errors, grant that we may not become ensnared in the false belief that we can have true faith in Thee and still remain in the works of the flesh. We ask it for Thy name's sake. *Amen.*

Hospital: Since last *Steadfast* the following people have spent time in hospital:

words above. May they find comfort in the

Confirmation — Brisbane:

On 8th July, 2018, the Confirmation was held in Immanuel Church, Brisbane, of Matthew Noll (Woombye), Courtney Kleinig, Thomas Kleinig, Kody Scotland and Jacob Wilson (Brisbane). After about 2½ years instruction, the Confirmation Examination was held in the morning, the members of Trinity Congregation Woombye being present. The children were questioned by Pastor Gavin Winter for a little over an hour and a half.

The Confirmation service was held in the afternoon, Pastor Gavin using as his text Matt 28:20, 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' Dealing with the theme, **THE PROMISE OF**



Jacob Wilson, Kody Scotland, Courtney Kleinig, Pastor G Winter, Matthew Noll, Thomas Kleinig

CHRIST'S PRESENCE WITH US THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES, Pastor explained, **I. Why We Need This Blessed Promise; II. What this Promise of Christ's Presence Involves; And III. May You Cling to this Promise Throughout Your Lives.** He urged the five young Christians who in the presence of God took their Confirmation Vow, to be comforted throughout their lives by the knowledge that if the clung to Him in faith the Saviour, would always be with them.

Sunday School Conference, Kilcoy

On 14 July 2018, 10 people, including the pastors, gathered for a day to assist the Sunday School Teachers of the ELCR with their important work. Pastor Tim Winter took the Opening Devotion basing his words on Exodus 13:9. Pastor Gavin Winter dealt with *The Spiritual Qualifications of a Sunday School Teacher*. Sharon Noll delivered the Demonstration Lesson, dealing with *Blind Bartimaeus*. Pastor Tim Winter supervised the discussion that resulted from this lesson. Pastor Bryce Winter, though absent for the day, made a recording and PowerPoint dealing with the topic, *Understanding the Use of Rhetorical Questions in the Bible*. (Please contact Pastor Gavin for a copy of the Demonstration lesson, as well as Pastor Bryce Winter's topic).

—GLW.

Corrections to Fellowship day Essay, 2018

1. P 7, L12, instead of 'Word War,' put 'World War.'
2. P 7, L 13, Delete 'been.'
3. P10, L 4, close bracket after '(Eph 4:29.'
4. P10, L 9, instead of 'Abbot' put 'Abbott.'
5. P17, L6, '?' after 'internet.'
6. P 18, L 20, instead of 'he' put 'be.'

Thank you to Alun Noll and John Kleinig for making available in booklet form the Sermon on Romans 14:13-23:
Pastor F G Kleinig Reading and Expounding a Sermon for the Fourth Sunday after Trinity, from 'Standard Epistles' Preached by Dr CFW Walther