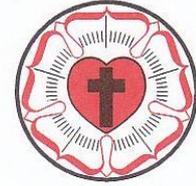




Steadfast

In the Word and Faith



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What Luther Says About —

The Lord's Supper



Luther's Love for the Lord's Supper. I certainly love it with all my heart, the precious blessed Supper of my Lord Jesus Christ, in which He gives me His body and blood to eat and to drink orally, with the mouth of my body, accompanied by the exceedingly sweet and gracious words: Given for you, shed for you (Matt. 26:26 ff; Mark 14:23 f; Luke 22:19 f.). SL 19, 1292

Luther Hopes to Remain Loyal to His Teaching on this Matter. Please God, I intend to remain loyal to my confession. Of course, I am a human being and can fall, as all of us are human beings and can fall. Yet I trust that my dear Lord Jesus Christ – who who has led me into so many sweatbaths for His name's sake, yet has never forsaken me – has not in vain given me such conscientiousness (*solchen Ernst*) in the matter of His holy Sacrament. And although He may let me be tempted and fall in this or some other article, I trust that He will not permit me to fall farther than did St. Peter, who indeed denied Him with his mouth out of fear and fright but continued to love Him in his heart, wept soon after the fall, and confessed the true state of his heart to his dear Lord with lamentations. SL 19, 1289

The True Body Received by All Partakers of the Bread. This passage of Paul (1 Cor. 10:16) stands there as a rock and forces us to the conclusion that all who break, eat, and receive this bread receive the body of Christ and partake of it. And since this cannot, as has been said, be a spiritual partaking, it must be a bodily one. For we can receive Christ's body in only two ways, either spiritually or bodily. Again, this bodily communion cannot be visible or sensory; otherwise no bread would remain. Again, it cannot be mere bread alone; otherwise it would not be a bodily communion of the body of Christ but of the bread. Therefore the body of Christ must be truly and bodily though invisibly present where the broken bread is present. There stands the passage. Let him who is a knight of the blade put a dent into it. I will look on. SL 20,240

Real Presence Independent of Character of Clergyman or Communicant. Although a rascal, a godless and unbelieving person, takes or gives the Sacrament he takes or gives the true Sacrament, that is, Christ's body and blood, just as truly as he who administers and receives it most worthily, so long as the Sacrament is celebrated as Christ has instituted and commanded it and the words of Christ are spoken. For the Sacrament is not based on the holiness of men but on the Word of God. And just as no saint on earth, yea, nor any angel in heaven, can

make Christ's body and blood out of the bread and wine, just so no one can alter or change the essence of the Sacrament, even though it is misused. For the Word by which it was instituted and made a Sacrament does not become false because of a person's unbelief. For He does not say: If you believe or are worthy, you have My body and blood, but Take, eat and drink, this is My body and blood (Matt.26:26 ff.) W-T 6, No. 6770

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Devotion — John 16:23, 24 Part II

The prayer that never fails:

And in that day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

We find Jesus here in the upper room with His disciples. He is preparing and strengthening them for His coming capture and death, His departure from them. *'A little while, and ye shall not see Me; and again a little while, and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father,'* (verse. 16). This saying confused them. What did He mean by saying, 'I go to the Father?'

Kretzmann: 'That Christ went forth from, or was sent by, the Father means nothing else than that He, the true Son of God from eternity, became a true man, and revealed Himself on earth in human nature, essence, and form, permitted Himself to be seen, heard, and felt, ate, drank, slept, worked, suffered, and died, like any other person. Again, that He goes to the Father, that means that He will be glorified by His resurrection from the dead, that He sits at the right hand of God and reigns with Him in eternity, as eternal, almighty God. For by His coming down or going from the Father He revealed and proved Himself a true, natural man; but by His return to the Father He declares Himself to be true, eternal God, out of God the Father, and thus remains in one person both God and man, and should be thus known and believed.'

By His going to the Father His work of redemption would be complete. The atonement He had won for our sin would be satisfactory to the Father. Then He would send forth the Holy Spirit, Who, as Christ promised:

'All things that the Father hath are Mine; therefore said I that He shall take of Mine, and shall show It unto you,' (verse. 15).

As a result of His returning to the Father, He now promises:

'And in that day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you,' (verse. 23).

In what day? The day in which the Holy Spirit comes. After Christ has suffered, died, risen and ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of God. On this day 'the Holy Ghost will come to you, and work in you, and give you such courage that you will become My officers and coregents, change the whole world, abrogate the Law, or Jewry, destroy the heathen idolatry, and rebuke and change the whole world, so that your doctrine will remain and penetrate everlastingly, though it will displease the devil and the whole world. That is the gift and the glory which My going away brings to you.' (Luther).

Note: 'It appears from these words of Christ that we Christians of the present time have more benefit from the work of the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, than the disciples had of the personal, visible presence of the Lord when He dwelt among them in the form of a servant' (Kretzmann).

In that day, with the coming of the revelation through the Spirit, there will no longer be need to ask the Lord any questions. Though the personal interaction between them and their Master had terminated, they would have the benefit and the certainty of a direct communion through the work of the Spirit. And solemnly Jesus assures them that their relation to the Father will be of a nature permitting them to go directly to Him with all their desires and needs, for their prayers will all be made in the name of Jesus. Since the atonement of Jesus has effected peace with the Father and has restored the believers to their position as children of God, they have but to refer to Jesus and His work, to appeal to His redemption, to be assured of the hearing of their prayers.

The work of the Mediator and Saviour had not been completed, and therefore the disciples had not prayed in His name. But now the road to the Father's heart will be opened, and they shall entreat,

they shall ask, knowing that they will receive, and thus have also the fulfilment of their joy. The efficacy of prayer depends upon faith in the Saviour as the Substitute of mankind, by whom we have free access to the Father.

In order to bring this truth home to the disciples still more strongly, the Lord frankly tells them that His teaching has been, to a large extent, in proverbial, parabolic sayings. But the hour is coming, after He will have entered into His glory, when He will speak to them without pictures or difficult figures, through the work of the Spirit. Then He will also teach them, announce to them plainly, what is meant by knowing the Father, by having the right understanding of His love and mercy. At that time prayer in the name of Jesus will be so strong, that there will not even be need of His special intercession for them.

This is necessary, as a matter of course, to establish the right relation between God and the believers.

Rom. 8, 34: **'Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen**

again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.'

But so great is the Father's love which has been evoked by the love of the believers in Christ and by their firm belief that He came into the world to reveal the Father, to be His Ambassador, that the Father will deal directly with His children and will grant their prayers. And this the disciples should once more be assured of: Jesus went forth from the Father and came into the world to carry into effect the plan of salvation for all mankind. And now He leaves the world and goes to the Father, thus signifying that the work which He intended to perform has been done. That fact establishes the relation between God and the believers, and renders all their prayers in the name of Jesus acceptable to Him. 1 John 5:14, 15: **'And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us; and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.'**

—T Winter.

Greetings to Fellowship Day 2019 from Bible Lutheran Church Los Angeles

Dear brothers and sisters of the ELCR,

The Bible Lutheran Church of Los Angeles sends you its warmest Christian greetings. We are deeply thankful to our Saviour for your fellowship and steadfast witness to the truth and purity of God's holy Word. We pray that God will continue to build you up and preserve you in the true Christian faith. May the Holy Spirit guide you into all truth, taking of the things of Jesus Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and showing you that which is profitable for your souls. May He enlighten the eyes of your understanding that you may know the hope of His calling, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and the surpassing greatness of His power that works within you. May He also comfort, encourage, and help you in all things, ministering to you the means of grace, that is, His holy Word and sacraments. May your lamps burn bright as you await the coming of the heavenly Bridegroom, abundantly supplied with that precious oil that flows from the golden pipes of the two olive trees, the Law and the Gospel.

We have had another blessed year here in Los Angeles, though necessarily filled with a fair measure of trials and sorrows. Chief among our sorrows has been the passing of But while we mourn the loss of their friendship and fellowship, we also rejoice that they have now finished the course and are forever in the loving arms of our Saviour, at rest, and awaiting the resurrection of their glorified bodies on that great day.

In our church services this year we have been carefully reading through Wilhelm Peters' *The Judge is at the Door*. This has provided much valuable instruction and encouragement. I cannot extol this wonderful book highly enough. It is one of a kind, a true exposition of the Book of Revelation rightly explained by a true orthodox Lutheran. Unlike most expositors, Pastor Peters draws his explanations internally from the Word of God. He lets the Word explain the Word. The truths brought forth are especially valuable to us in these last dark days as a guide and comfort for our faith. Furthermore our possession of this unique book testifies to God's love for us and His particular approval of our faith. He Himself has placed this book into our hands when we would need it most. We should not overlook His gift nor take it for granted. Rather we should be mindful of our blessing and make the very best use of it.

May God bless and keep you all, and grant you a joyful Federation Day.
God's blessings,

Pastor Wood and the Bible Lutheran Church of Los Angeles

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

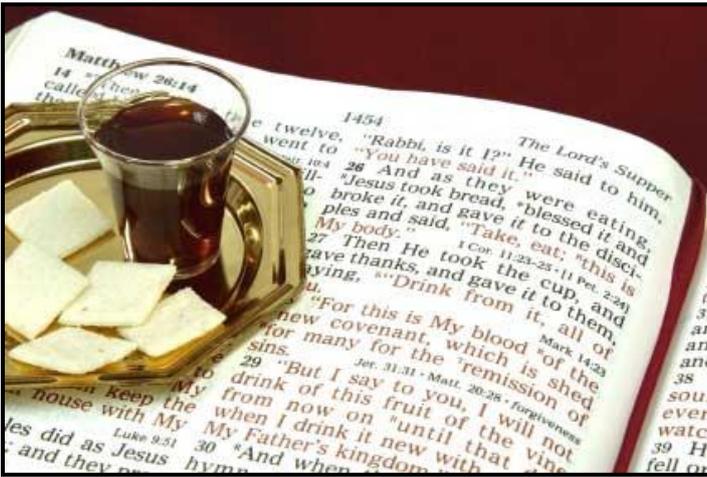
By Pastor Peters¹. By Pastor Peters . 1890

(Continuation of **Thesis Three** from *Steadfast* January-February 2019)



Thesis 3: That the true Lutheran Church belongs to the One Holy Christian Church we recognise from this: that it teaches the Word of God in its truth and purity and administers the Sacraments according to Christ's institution unadulterated.

THE DISTINGUISHING MARKS OF CHRIST'S CHURCH ARE THE PURE TEACHING OF GOD'S WORD AND THE RIGHT ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS.



Therefore **Luther** says: 'The Church is the daughter who is **born from the Word**; she is not the mother of the Word. **He who gives up the Word and hastens to put his reliance on people ceases to be the Church and becomes completely blinded.** Neither a large number nor power gives him any support, just as by contrast those who keep the Word, like Noah and his people, are the Church, **even though they are very few in number**, even only eight souls'² (S.L. I,554).

And again he states: 'The outward form and appearance do not indicate where Christ's Church is, but where the Gospel is preached in its truth



and purity and, where the holy Sacraments are administered correctly ... **there you will certainly find God's people and true Christians.** That is why you should not judge by the outward appearance but **judge by the Word.** If you judge by the outward appearance and not by the Word, you will certainly err. The reason is this: From the outside there is nothing extraordinary about a Christian in the presence of another person; indeed, a non-Christian and a heathen often lead a more moral life and more respectable outward appearance than some Christians. That is why the outward form and appearance can be deceptive. ----- Therefore you should learn to know where

the Christian Church is present and not look at the external form, but **at where the pure Word is present.**' (Sermon for Holy Christmas Day S.L. XIII, 2610-2611).

Our Lutheran Confessions also teach this in the Seventh Article of the **Augsburg Confession**: 'They also teach that there must be and remain at all times one holy Christian Church, which is the **congregation of all believers, among whom the Gospel (wider sense: entire Word of God, BLW) is purely taught and the Sacraments are administered according to the Gospel.**'³

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 Luther's works, American Edition: Lectures on Genesis (Vol. 2, p. 101). Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House.

³ From the German; translation taken from Dr. J. T. Mueller's Translation of Church and Ministry (by Walther), pages 68,69.) The following is from the **Latin** (*Triglotta* 47): 'Also they teach that one holy Church is to continue forever. The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered.'

[Translator's Note:

Pastor Kleinig states: **'The "Gospel" here means the entire Word of God...** It is here that much confusion has come into the Church. The unionists use this passage and claim (by using the word "Gospel" in the strict sense of the term) that the only thing necessary for unity in the Church is **not** the rule laid down in 1 Cor.1:10 (**"that ye all speak the same thing"**), but merely agreement in the main doctrine of Holy Scripture. ' (Theological lectures Tape A Side 1).

Dr Walther states: 'But someone might ask, 'But why does the Augsburg Confession then say in Art. VII that the Church is the communion of all believers in whose midst the Gospel is preached *in its purity* and the holy Sacraments are administered according to the Gospel?' To that question **Gerhard** replies: 'Definitions, rules, and canons must be derived from the ideal (from the highest pattern).'

'It would have been very wrong if our fathers had tried to give us the definition of a corrupted church in the Augsburg Confession. That would have exposed them to the suspicion that it was not their intention to preach the Word of God in its purity. However, **since it was their intention to give us a definition of the Church in Art. VII of the Augsburg Confession, they had to describe the Church in its most perfect form.**

'Prior to the drafting of the Augsburg Confession, **the Lutherans did not claim that they alone were the Church,** but the point of contention was whether the Roman or the Lutheran church was the true (visible, BLW) Church. Their conviction that only the Lutheran church was the true (teaching, BLW) Church is what they put into writing in this Art. VII. Thereby they wanted to say: 'We do not deny that the Church is present among you, for the Antichrist can be seated only in the temple of God; but we do deny that you are the *true, the pure* Church; **you are a corrupted Church.** We, on the other hand, are the pure (teaching, BLW) Church. Admittedly, **we are not entirely pure in our daily lives,** but here that is not the point. So far as purity of life is concerned, we gladly humble ourselves before the whole world; nevertheless, we insist that **our doctrine is pure and that we administer the Sacraments properly.** '

'Therefore we should use this quotation of Gerhard's **in opposing those who try to use Art. VII of the Augsburg Confession to justify their false doctrine of the church.** Also, just from the fact that Art. VII of the Augsburg Confession uses a definition of the Church that is based on the 'ideal', we can see and recognize what is missing in a heretical church.

'To shed more light on this point, another quotation from **Gerhard**, as listed on [p. 37 of Mueller] was anticipated:

'As the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments are the marks of the Church in an absolute and strict sense, so the pure preaching of the divine Word and the legitimate administration of the Sacraments are the marks of the pure and uncorrupt Church. As the Church distinguishes itself from secular communions, which are outside of the Church, by the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments, so it distinguishes itself from the heterodox communions, which are within the church, **by the pure Word and legitimate administration of the Sacraments.'** (*Locus de ecclesia*, par. 131; cf. Baier, *Compendium*, Part III, ch. XIII, p. 654) (*Essays for the Church*, Walther, I, 111,112. Bolded emphasis added.)]

In the *Apology*⁴ it is also stated about the Church after it has been described as an Invisible Church: 'This same Church has also its **outward marks** by which it can be recognized, namely, where **God's Word is found pure and where the Sacraments are administered according to it; there surely (certainly, BLW) is the Church; there are Christians, and this Church alone is called in Scripture the Body of Christ.**'⁵

See Dr. J. T. Mueller's excellent article: 'Notes on the "Satis Est" in Article VII of the Augustana' found in CTM 1947 pages 401-410.

⁴ Defence of the Augsburg Confession.

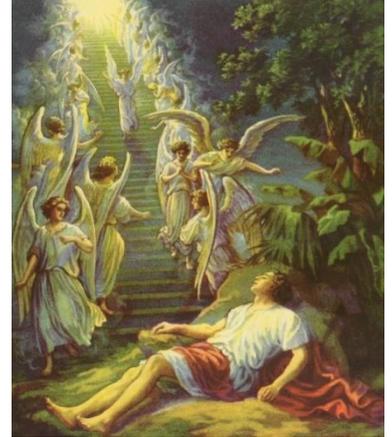
⁵ From the German of the Apology. Translation taken from Dr. J. T. Mueller's Translation of *Church and Ministry* (by Walther), pages 69.) The following is from the **Latin** (Triglotta 227): 'But the Church is not only the fellowship of outward objects and rites, as other governments, but it is originally a fellowship of faith and of the Holy Ghost in hearts. [The Christian Church consists not alone in fellowship of outward signs, but it consists especially in inward communion of eternal blessings in the heart, as of the Holy Ghost, of faith, of the fear and love of God]; which fellowship nevertheless **has**



Also **St. Augustine** already (354- 430; Bishop at Hippo Regius in north Africa)⁶ had written in his book *'The Unity of the Church'* in Chapter Two: 'Between us and the Donatists⁷ there is a controversy concerning the place where the Church exists. What, then, are we going to do? Shall we seek it in the words of Donatus (**Pastor Peters**: Bishop at Carthage (died 355), after which the sect took its name) or in the words of the Head of the Church, our Lord Jesus Christ? I judge that *we should seek it in the words of Him who is the Truth and who knows His Body best; for He knows who are His own.*⁸'

Because, then, we now have so richly these certain distinguishing marks of the true, only saving Church in our dear Lutheran Church, namely, **the pure Word of God and the unadulterated Sacraments** (as the Confessional writings of the Lutheran Church's so clearly prove, as we shall see further later on), then we also know for *certain* that the true Church is (also) to be found here, that here the door is open to us, through which we poor sinners can enter to heaven and we can exclaim with Jacob: **'Certainly the LORD is in this place!'**⁹ --- Thus we have not only the testimony of our Church, but the clear, infallible distinguishing marks *that it* (in so far as true Lutherans believe in Christ, BLW) *really belongs to the true Church.*

(Pages 21-23. Italicised emphasis is Pastor Peters. Bolded emphasis added. Next time we deal with Thesis 4.) To be Continued. BLW.



Lord's Prayer – Sixth Petition

The sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer instructs us to pray, 'And lead us not into temptation'. Luther says, 'God indeed tempts no one; but we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us, so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us nor seduce us into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice; and though we be assailed by them, that still we may finally overcome and obtain the victory. (*Luther's Small Catechism*, 1943, p. 164).

The word '*temptation*' has a two-fold sense. It can refer either to an act of testing (trying) or to an enticement to evil. God tests us with trials for our own good. Satan tempts us to evil for our hurt. The Greek word for '*temptation*' is '*peirasmon*'. It is translated into Latin as '*experio*', from which we get the English word '*experiment*'. The word '*peirasmon*' refers to trying something with the purpose of discovering something – whether the thing being tested is good or bad, strong or weak, etc. And it is true that sometimes the tester knows the outcome himself, but still

conducts the experiment for the sake of the knowledge of others. So God often tests His children, not because He doesn't know the outcome of the test, but because He wants that person to learn something from the test, or perhaps wants to demonstrate something for the sake of others (i.e. Job's sufferings). Thus, James says, 'My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations (*peirasmon*)' (James 1:2). These temptations or testings are meant for the Christian to gain self-knowledge, and often the Christian comes out of the test stronger or humbler than he was before the test.

In this sixth petition the word '*temptation*' is used, not in reference to testings to good, but to temptations to evil. 'Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man.' (Jam. 1:13). These temptations to evil come from the devil, the world, and the flesh. 'The devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. (1 Peter 5:8). Because he tempts with the malicious intention and expectation of causing one

outward marks so that it can be recognized, namely, the pure doctrine of the Gospel, and the administration of the Sacraments in accordance with the Gospel of Christ. [Namely, **where God's Word is pure, and the Sacraments are administered in conformity with the same**, there certainly is the Church, and there are Christians.] And this Church alone is called the body of Christ, which Christ renews [Christ is its Head, and] sanctifies and governs by His Spirit, as Paul testifies, [Eph. 1:22](#) sq., when he says: **'And gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.'**"

⁶ Modern-day [Souk Ahras, Algeria](#).

⁷ **Pastor Peters** has the following note: "The Donatists were a sect in the Fourth Century which taught that the Church, that is, the Visible Church, must be pure in life and all unworthy members must be mercilessly expelled."

⁸ Translation taken from Dr. J. T. Mueller's Translation of Church and Ministry (by Walther), pages 76).

⁹ Gen.28:16.

harm, he is himself called ‘the tempter’ (Matt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5). The world, too, seeks to deceive us and seduce us into unbelief. ‘Woe unto the world because of offences! For it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!’ (Matt. 18:7). ‘My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.’ (Prov. 1:10). **Finally, our own flesh opposes us, our old man in Adam, who was born from below and loves the things below.** James testifies, ‘But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.’ (James 1:14).

This word ‘lead’ or ‘carry’ (Gk. ‘*eisphero*’) into temptation is the key to understanding the meaning of this petition. Why does the Lord use this word? Are we to conclude that, apart from our prayer, God would *actively* lead us into enticements to sin? May it never be. God is the author of every good and perfect gift and tempts no one to evil (James 1:13, 17). So how are we to understand this petition? Scripture speaks of temptation as an active and very strong power and our flesh as exceedingly weak in its ability to resist. At many points our flesh is to temptation as dry tinder is to fire. We mustn’t underestimate the very real danger of our vulnerability. In the night in which He was betrayed Jesus warned His disciples, ‘Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ (Matt. 26:41).

God leads people into temptation in the same way as He hardens hearts. Both are done in a *passive* sense. In its own nature, left to itself, the human heart is as hard as rock, ‘deceitful above all else’. God must apply His grace and truth to soften the heart. However, if His work is regularly resisted and despised, He may withdraw His softening agent and allow the heart to return to its native hardness. It is in this *passive* sense that He hardens hearts (cf. Isaiah 5:1-7). The same can be said of His leading one into temptation. Where there is pride and presumption God sometimes withdraws His protecting hand from temptation and allows a person to be ‘seized’ or ‘overcome’ by it (1 Cor. 10:13). For all true Christians He does this for their good and for their instruction. For the unbelieving, however, He does so as a judgment and unto their further destruction. ‘But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own

hearts’ lust: and they walked in their own counsels.’ (Psa. 81:11-12).

Martin Chemnitz writes, ‘[Paul] says that men fall into temptation as if it were a snare. ‘But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition’ (1 Tim. 6:9). Pray that ye enter not into temptation (Luke 22:40), lest unknowingly you are surrounded by temptation that may overcome you, may even drown you. From this it is clear that we are led into temptation when we are left to ourselves, destitute of the help of God. Then we are driven, plunged, thrust down, or cast head first into the skills and mighty assaults of the devil’s temptations... We must remember that we fight not with flesh and blood, but against the powers of darkness and spiritual deception (Eph. 6:12). Because the deceptiveness of temptation far exceeds our strength, there is great danger in underestimating its power lest we give in to temptation, are overcome by it, and so drown in perdition... We pray that our heavenly Father would not cast us off and deliver us to the lust, to the treasons, and to the power of this Tempter. We pray that He would remove and temper the temptation and not allow us to be tempted past that which by His grace and gift we are able to bear (1 Cor. 10:13)’. (Martin Chemnitz, *The Lord’s Prayer*, p. 84-85).

So then, in the sixth petition of the Lord’s Prayer, we pray two things. First, we pray that our heavenly Father would guard and keep us, so that temptation to evil would not come upon us. And secondly, we pray that He would strengthen and preserve us when He permits temptation to come. ‘Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.’ (James 1:12).

*Into temptation lead us not;
And when the Foe doth war and plot
Against our souls on every hand,
Then armed with faith, O may we stand
Against him as a valiant host,
Through comfort of the Holy Ghost.
(M. Luther, 1539) S Wood*

Judge Not; Condemn Not

When the voluptuous wife of Potiphar had failed in her attempts to seduce the God-fearing Joseph, she sought revenge for having been spurned by this young Hebrew alien. When Joseph fled from the temptations and wiles with which that

wicked woman endeavoured to ensnare him, with the memorable words: ‘How, then, can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?’ she cried aloud, thus arousing the other servants, and the garment she had torn from fleeing Joseph she laid beside her, and her husband she told a flagrant falsehood.

Potiphar had Joseph cast into prison. After several years of imprisonment this innocent person was

released, not because his innocence had been established in the meantime, but by divine guidance.

The circumstantial evidence of Joseph's garment lying beside his wife, together with the falsehood of that woman, were deemed sufficient reasons by Potiphar to condemn Joseph and to punish him severely.

Joseph had proved himself a trustworthy and faithful servant, and was entitled at least to a hearing. Most probably he would have been able to throw some light on the affair, and could have exculpated (show that he was not guilty of wrong, GLW) himself.

Many of the novels and other works of fiction of all ages have for a background to the story this feature, taken from actual life, that from the flimsiest evidence suspicions are aroused between individuals.

Upon slight and insufficient grounds suspicions can be aroused between husband and wife, between betrothed persons, between employer and employees, between friends, between members of a congregation, etc.; and when once such suspicions have been aroused, an estrangement quite frequently follows.

Much worry and sorrow would be avoided if, in general, people were more careful in their criticisms, if judgment would be suspended until actual knowledge about the actions concerned were at hand, This

HASTY JUDGING AND CONDEMNING

however, is not only practised in trivial matters or when individuals only are concerned, but also in important affairs.

When the battleship *Maine* had been blown up in the harbour of Havana, the press of our country incited the easily aroused sentiments of the people to fever heat, and President McKinley and Congress were hounded into declaring war with Spain.

After the smoke of the muskets and cannon had passed away, and the din of the battle had subsided, the explosion of the *Maine* was carefully investigated, but its origin is as much a mystery today as ever.

And how hastily did many persons, even in high political stations, in the severest terms denounce the acts of the German submarine, and of German warfare in general, in the *Lusitania* episode, though even now, at this time of writing, it has not been definitely established whether or not the *Lusitania* was an armoured or an unarmoured vessel. (Note: This was in 1915. It has now been established that the *Lusitania* was carrying war munitions, but was not technically armed. GLW.)

As the evil of hasty and sinful judging and condemning is so common and, at the same time, so

productive of mischief and harm, it is needful to be reminded of Christ's exhortation: 'Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned.'

In this and in similar passages of Scripture there evidently is *no intention to interfere with the duties of parents toward their children, or of judges in the courtrooms, or of Christians in judging doctrines, and condemning false prophets.* Carefully read Luke 6:36-42, and Rom 2:1-4, and you will readily see that in these passages all hasty, uncharitable, and unduly severe judging and criticizing is forbidden.

In common parlance such hasty and harsh judging and condemning of our fellow-man and his doings is commonly known as 'knocking'. But no matter what you may call it, the sin remains the same. How quickly we notice the

FRAILTIES AND WEAKNESSES

of our fellow-men! How quickly we behold the mote in the eye of our neighbour! How quick are we also in passing adverse criticism upon him for his real or imputed failings!

We resent it immediately if some one points out our mistakes and shortcomings, and we get 'miffed' when we are told about them. We do not want our own failings mentioned, not even noticed; but those of our fellow-men we exaggerate into grievous faults. Trivial shortcomings we distort into serious wrongs; we make mountains out of mole-hills. Our personal inclinations, our likes and dislikes, strongly influence and bias our judgment of our fellow-men; we fail to be just and fair toward them.

'Judge not' – 'condemn not', Christ says *i.e.* we are not to be severe and unmerciful in judging our neighbour, but should rather charitably cover his faults and frailties.

'Charity shall cover the multitude of sins.'
(1 Peter 4:8.)

In every Christian congregation it will happen that a member who has been held in high esteem, who has to all appearances led a good and Christian life, has committed a

GRIEVOUS SIN

has given grievous offense to his fellow-Christians and to the world.

The sin, regrettable as it is in itself, having become public it cannot be, and is not, ignored by the congregation and fellow-Christians. In all propriety the sinning brother has been told about his offense, and the Word of God was applied to his particular sin. The sinning brother, let us take it for granted, has acknowledged his wrong, yes, even before anybody had spoken to him about it, he knew that he had given

offense, and was sincerely contrite and humbly penitent on account of it. In proper order, according to Christ's instructions, the matter has been handled by the pastor and the congregation, and the sinning brother again is a member in good standing.

The undeniable fact that the brother has grievously sinned is in no wise an evidence that he is at present, has been in the past, insincere in his Christianity, nor has anybody a right to judge his previous conduct as sham, nor to condemn him as having been a hypocrite.

But what is our common experience? Instead of heeding the apostolic injunction: 'Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye, which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ,' — instead of heeding this exhortation, so many Christians will not be satisfied in judging the fellow-Christian's sin as it properly should be judged, but will condemn him completely as one who is insincere and hypocritical.

Scripture says 'Judge not' — 'condemn not.' Let us, therefore, guard against being harsh and critical toward our neighbour, and fault-finding.

What grievous sins were committed by David and Peter! Though in each case the sin was by no means ignored by the Lord, we know that David as well as Peter, previous to their fall and subsequent thereto, were true children of God.

If, however, it is wrong and sinful to be harsh and hasty in criticizing and judging our neighbour's frailties and sins, there certainly can be no reasonable excuse offered for finding fault with our fellow-man for actions and qualities that are indifferent or even praiseworthy.

But so great is the envy and uncharitableness of natural man that we are prone to

IMPUTE FALSE MOTIVES AND PURPOSES

to our neighbour for his good actions.

Though, according to the testimony of Jesus, 'among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist,' the people nevertheless said of him, 'He hath a devil.'

Though Jesus was without sin, it was said of Him that He was 'a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners,' and all sorts of sins and wicked motives and practices were imputed to Him.

It does not by any means require great intelligence to arouse suspicion against other persons; on the contrary, the biggest dunce can attain success therein. Without having sufficient knowledge about the other's aims and purposes, any

evil-minded person can cast slurs and speak disparagingly of another person.

In the other's carefulness in handling his money the evil-minded person can see nothing but avarice and close-fistedness; if one is careful in his attire or retiring in disposition, it is sure evidence to him of proudness and haughtiness, and, if, on the other hand, he is of a lively disposition, he is too noisy and too forward.

This putting an evil construction on everything is a great nuisance in many congregations, especially in small congregations, and quite often is a great obstacle to growth.

If a member is diligent and zealous, and gives of his time and ability to assist in one or the other branch of church-work, or gives liberally of his means for the support of the congregation or for synodical purposes the 'knocker' is at hand with his hammer and says, 'He wants to show himself; he wants to be prominent; he wants to rule.'

The *pastor's* position looks like a sinecure (an easy cushy job, GLW) to many church-members. They know very little about the many duties — too many to enumerate here — that the pastor must perform; they have only an inkling of the multiplicity of tasks that continually confront him, and that his work, like that of a housewife, is 'never done'.

The pastor, who in all uprightness endeavours to perform his duties as faithfully and as conscientiously, in accordance with the demands of God, as possible, and who is continually aware, on the one hand, of his accountability to God, and on the other hand, of the utter impossibility to give satisfaction to all the members, much as he would like to, is indeed fortunate if he can turn a deaf ear to the many imputations and unfair criticisms concerning his work and his person.

FIRST CONSIDER YOUR OWN FAULTS.

Aside from the fact that all hasty, severe, and harsh judging and criticizing of our fellow-men is forbidden in Scripture, several other reasons are mentioned that should induce every Christian to avoid it.

A sage of antiquity has remarked, 'I have not yet seen one who could perceive his faults, and inwardly accuse himself.' It is, indeed astonishing to behold the inability to see one's own faults and frailties, and the acumen with which we detect the faults and shortcomings of others.

Christ refers to this when He says: 'And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceives not the beam that is in thine own eye?'

It stands to reason, before judging and condemning another for his actions, one should diligently search for one's own faults and frailties. Christ pertinently says: 'Thou hypocrite, cast out first

the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.'

The scribes and Pharisees once brought to Jesus a woman taken in adultery, and asked Him concerning the sin and the woman, whether or not she should be stoned according to the laws of Moses. Being importuned for an answer, Jesus said to them: 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.'

Christ did not condone the sin. The accusers, however, these self-righteous scribes and Pharisees, when forced to examine themselves, no longer felt like raising their voices in condemnation against the adulteress, but guiltily, 'being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one.'

Likewise, if we are tempted to judge and to condemn others for their actions, let us hold an introspection, and let us behold the beam in our eye: let us look for our own shortcomings, faults, and sins: Let us also remember how it has hurt our own feelings when others did us injustice by fault finding, harsh criticisms, and judging rashly.

If we do this sincerely, I throw (believe, GLW) we shall no longer have a great desire to speak evil of our neighbour, to criticise him harshly at the least provocation.

Let us follow the old rule to be strict against ourselves and gentle toward our neighbour.

'Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whoever thou art, that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself: for thou that judgest doest the same thing.' (Romans 2.)

'BE YE THEREFORE MERCIFUL.'

It has often been stated, and a little observation will convince one that the statement is not without foundation that, that gratitude is one of the least developed virtues.

If we devote a few moments to meditate and reflect deeply upon the divine grace and mercy, we shall be impressed with the fact that, indeed, we are ungrateful persons: for in spite of the fact that all our sins have been forgiven, we will still cavil at our neighbour's shortcomings.

Each and every one of us can find his counterpart in the unmerciful servant, to whom a debt of ten thousand pounds had been forgiven: for

all the many sins, both large and small, of each of us that is in Christ have been washed by the blood of the Lamb, and they have all been cast into the depth of the sea. (Micah 7.)

Though each of us is constrained to confess with the Psalmist: 'If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?' we, nevertheless, have the divine assurance that the Lord has forgiven all our iniquities and has healed all our diseases.

Because we have come to a knowledge of our sins and of the grace of God, we rejoice that, 'though our sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'

But, though our many and grievous sins have been forgiven by our heavenly Father, we are given to judging and condemning our fellow-man unmercifully; we criticize him severely, and exaggerate his errors and mistakes.

Let us heed in this connection the warning words of Christ: 'For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.' We shall be repaid in the same coin.

'Be ye, therefore, merciful, as your Father is merciful,' or, as the Apostle Paul says: 'and thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgement of God. Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering?'

Let us, therefore, as true children of God, *obey* this injunction: 'Judge not; condemn not.' Let us be careful not to pass judgment at all until we are fully competent to do so. Let us guard against being unkind, harsh, or even unjust in our criticisms. Let us act toward our neighbours not only as we want them to act towards us, but let us emulate the example of our heavenly Father, who has forgiven us our sins, and even as He was merciful, let us be merciful also.

Oh, let me never speak
What bounds of truth exceedeth;
Grant that no idle word
From out my mouth proceedeth:
And grant, when in my place
I must and ought to speak.
My words due power an grace;
Nor let me wound the weak. M. Brueggmann.
(*The Lutheran Witness, 1915, pp 291-293.*)

Report of 2019 Fellowship Day, Woombye

The annual Fellowship Day of the ELCR was held on March 31 at 10.00 am. Pastor Tim Winter took the Confessional address, based on John 1:29. Pastor Gavin Winter preached the address, based on Eph 2:10, 'For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.' Using as his theme WE ARE GOD'S HANDIWORK CREATED UNTO GOOD WORKS, the preacher answered two questions, I. How are we God's handiwork? and II. Unto what should this

encourage us? Offering for the day amounted to _____ After the address, a special memorial address was given by Pastor Bryce Winter in connection with the recent death of _____

After a community lunch, the essay was presented by Pastor Bryce Winter on the topic, The Doctrine of the Perfection and Sufficiency of Scripture and its Application to our Lives. This provided much instruction for those who attended. The essayist dealt with a Definition: The divine perfection, or sufficiency, of Holy Scripture is that property by which it teaches everything that people must know to obtain salvation, everything that is necessary for the Christian faith and life. As well he provided Scripture Proof, spoke of its Importance, as well as the Practical Application of This to our Lives.

Anyone desiring a copy of the essay, or an audio of the day's proceedings, please contact the editor.

Notes and News

Hospital:

_____, have spent time in hospital over the last couple of months. May they find comfort in the following passage.

Read Genesis 18:1-10

VERSE 1 — The Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre, and he sat in the tent door.

LORD GOD, Thou dost say, in Thy holy Word, that Thou art not a god who is far away. Thou wouldst have us know Thou art near us; that, no matter where we may roam. Thou art still with us; no matter where we dwell, Thou hast not forsaken us. Oh, the blessedness of the thought of Thy nearness. How dear to our hearts is the knowledge that, even if we are but weak mortals, even if we are not worthy that Thou shouldst come under our roof, Thou dost deign to visit us and dost delight in granting us Thy companionship. There is no land where Thou art not. There is no far journey on which Thou dost not accompany Thy children. There is no fireside at which Thou art not willing to sit within the family circle. With Thy presence Thou dost make our home sacred. How different our homes would be if Thou wert not there. How different wedded life would be if Thy companionship were absent. How different fatherhood and motherhood would be if Thy didst depart. Thanks be to Thee because Thou art the God of our households. Grant that we may realize Thy presence with us, and always live as before Thee. Keep from our homes the blight of discord, the gloom of sorrow, the wolf of poverty, the pain of distress. Help us keep erect the family altar, about which we gather daily to worship Thee. Make Thy Son, Jesus Christ, the Head of our household, and let us enjoy His visitations day by day. We ask this, confiding in His love. *Amen. (Moments, p. 17.)*

