



Steadfast

In the Word and Faith



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What Luther Says About —

The Human Life



Life Has Its Lights and Shadows. Evil and good, sadness and joy must alternate, just as summer and winter, sunshine and rain, and a good and evil year follow each other. Now we are sad, then we laugh again, soon we are again depressed. Therefore think of this, and be reconciled to the fact that so it must be in everybody's station: God has loaded him with a little of the sweat with which He burdened Adam. If a man is to bear this lot with patience and not be turned into a rascal by it, he will find the task bitter and difficult enough. (SL 8, 694)

Most Men Rush on Heedlessly to Their Graves. The life of the world is nothing but a progress toward death; indeed, it is like the progress of people who rush toward the grave backward; for they revel and riot and are unmindful of death until they suddenly drop into it. (SL 8, 1176)

Rules for a Thrifty Life. He who is diligent in the smallest task is also diligent in the great one. He who does not regard the penny will become owner of no dollar. He who fools away an hour will, I dare say, fool away a day. He who despises the small will not get the great. He who despises the crop will not gift the chicken. Jesus Sirach: "He that contemneth (regards with contempt, GLW) small things shall fall little by little" (Ecclus.19:1). Proverbs 18:9: "He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster." *Sera parsimonia in fundo*: Saving is too late when everything is gone. *Parsimonia magnum*: A penny saved is of more value than a penny paid out. He who thinks little of the ABC's will never be a man of great learning. He who does not want to get along with a thousand dollars will not get along with ten thousand either. *Fronte cap illata est, post haec occasio calva*: In front opportunity has hair, but it is bald behind. (W-T 4, No. 4801)

The Right of Self-Defence. What if a murderer were to attack me in the woods or a wicked fellow were to attack me on the street with the intention of harming me and I had no opportunity to seek help from the government? Should I let myself be harmed and killed? Answer: No, for the government grants everybody the right to defend his body and life against violence and wantonness.

That is why government handles such folk roughly and dispatches them summarily if it lays its hands on them. But, except for this solitary situation, the rule is: He who takes the sword will perish by the sword. (SL 13 a, 376)

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Devotion — John 16:23,24 – Part 4

(Continued from May – June 2019)

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 (John 16:23,24).

The Joy of the Christian:

When we trust the Lord's promise that, "whatever we ask the Father in His Name, He will give it to us," we can live with the confidence of Paul: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18). And with this same hope, which flows from peace with the Father through faith in Christ, we can learn to: "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:4-7).

"Peace with God" takes care of the PAST: God will no longer hold our sins against us. **"Access to God" takes care of the PRESENT:** we can come to our Father at any time for the supernatural enablement we continually need. **"REJOICING IN THE HOPE of the glory of God" takes care of the FUTURE:** the promise that one day we shall share in His glory! "Beloved, 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).

Let us thank God that we shall be satisfied when we wake up from the sleep of death in the likeness of Jesus! This ANTICIPATION (HOPE) of Heaven makes the cross bearing of our life on

earth endurable! "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness" (Psalm 17:15). The sorrows of time lose their weight when we think of the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory," (Our future HOPE). "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:17).

Dearly beloved of God, "Do not be grieved (joyless), for the JOY of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). **It is the certainty of our bright FUTURE HOPE that is the grounds for our PRESENT REJOICING,** and this hope-fueled joy enables us to live as lights "in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation" (Philippians 2:15). It was the joy of the Lord that filled the Apostles when, despite the persecution, imprisonment, and beating from the Jews, they not only rejoiced for being counted worthy to suffer for Jesus, but continued their work of preaching and teaching. "And when they had called the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the Temple and in every house they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:40-42).

Who enables us to radiate His JOY which is not natural (like happiness which depends on what happens) but is supernatural, independent of circumstances, whether good or bad? “And the disciples were filled with joy and with the **Holy Ghost**” (Acts 13:52). This great truth begs the question dear fellow children of the Most High God, “Are you rejoicing in hope today?” If not take a moment to meditate on Romans 5:1-2, “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed.” Ask God’s Spirit to renew your thinking and enable you to set your mind on the things above and not on the things that are on the earth. “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2).

And then comes the **JOY OF HOPE**—and that HOPE fixes its eyes on nothing less than the **GLORY OF GOD**. In Romans 12:12 Paul writes that we are to be “rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer.”

In other words, “hope is the soil in which joy is rooted—the ground where joy grows.” Like a fish needs the environment of water to thrive, **JOY needs HOPE** to be alive in our heart. **A believer’s HOPE is fresh and full and focused on CHRIST JESUS**. “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God, our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, **which is our Hope**, unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God, our Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord” (1 Timothy 1:1-2).

Things may go really bad right now and yet not rob the Christian of JOY. JOY is the JOY OF HOPE. Christians set their hearts on how good it will be in eternal glory and in the presence of Christ after death.

This is why Christians can REJOICE in tribulation and not just in health and peace

and security. Tribulation drives the roots of JOY down into HOPE. The future JOY streams back into the presence and lightens every load. **When we are filled “With the JOY OF HOPE we can sing as we suffer!”** Our JOY and peace as believers arises chiefly from our HOPES. What is laid out UPON us is but little, compared with what is laid UP FOR us (in glory); therefore the more HOPE we have the more JOY and peace we have. We do then abound in HOPE when we HOPE for great things from God and are greatly established and confirmed in these HOPES. Christians should desire and labour after an abundance of HOPE, such HOPE as will not be ashamed! “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing” (1 Timothy 4:7,8).

There is a crown of life laid up for the Christian which the righteous Judge will give you. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life,” (Revelations 2:10). **But most beautiful of all promises is the knowledge that our Saviour, our Redeemer, our Brother, has gone to prepare a place for us, so that we might live with Him forever.** “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:4). With what hope should our hearts be filled as we look forward to the day of Christ’s return and hear those blessed words, “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (John 25:34).

Therefore, have patience a little while. Bear, your crosses. Hold up under the difficulties of the way, for the end is almost within sight! And so filled with God’s grace, enabled by His Spirit and for the glory of the Lamb we can declare: “Away dark thoughts! UP, faith and HOPE!” Not gloom but gladness, not dreariness but delight, for Jesus Himself declares: “Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Revelations 22:20).

—TJW



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

By Pastor Peters¹ 1890

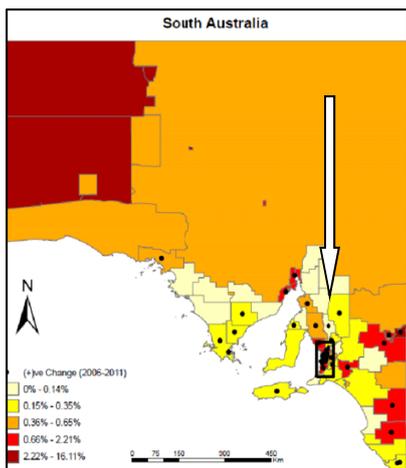
Thesis Four

(Continued from March – April 2019)

Thesis 4: Because the Evangelical Lutheran Church also stands in intimate fellowship with the one holy Christian Church, it is a church body, that is, a visible fellowship of people in whose midst the one holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, is certainly found.

It has been clearly and extensively demonstrated in our explanation of the preceding thesis that **the Lutheran Church is not the one true, only-saving Church**. At the same time we have learnt to know *this* following truth better: since the true Christian Church is nothing else than the congregation (communion) of the *true believers*, Christ's Body, His Kingdom, invisible, hidden, that which cannot be seen, it **must be accepted by faith**. Hence it will now be all the easier for us correctly to recognize *the position* which the Lutheran Church occupies in our Fourth Thesis.

Use of “church” in a wider or improper sense



It is impossible to understand Thesis Four correctly and properly if people forget or lose sight of the fact that **the Church in the true (proper, strict) sense is invisible**. For when people now use the word *church* in an **improper (wider)** sense as it is used today to refer to a **congregation or a church body of visible people**, then the concepts are easily confused. As an example, a similar thing happens when people in this country speak of the various colonies and simply name them according to their capital cities. It would be quite incomprehensible to those who **do not know** that when the word “Adelaide” is used in an **improper (wider)** sense people understand the whole colony of South Australia. When people hear that Adelaide now has well over 1000 miles of railroad, or that the harvest in the North of Adelaide is very good, or, on the other hand, it is very bad in the southern and western parts, they must of necessity come to the idea that even in the city of Adelaide wheat would be grown, which would be wrong and ridiculous. So it is with the expression **church** when it is used in the **improper (wider)** sense.

When you hear people speaking about the Lutheran, Reformed, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, English, Churches, etc., and they do not know or forget that the word **Church** in the **true (proper, strict) sense is invisible**, then they of necessity get the false idea about the Church, that it is either no longer **ONE**, and he cannot confess his faith with joyful confidence (in the Apostles' Creed): “I believe in **One holy, Christian Church**.” — Or, on the other hand, they regard the different churches as if they **differed only in name**, but basically they are of one mind in this that no essential *difference* exists between them, and therefore it is **completely unimportant** what people think of these differences in doctrine. They think that as long as they outwardly belong to some visible church body, they are also a

¹ Pastor Peters (1850-1925) studied at Hermansburg, 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)].

member of the Christian Church. **But neither is right.** In such a case we are speaking about the church in an *improper (wider) sense*, just as we speak in an improper sense about Adelaide when by this name we do not understand the city but the whole colony. But because Adelaide is the capital city of the whole state, because here is the seat of the provincial administration, because here lives the representative of the Queen, under whose protection the whole stands, because it is the central point of the colony from where the prosperity flows for the whole state due to the wise government, **the whole colony is (improperly) called “Adelaide,”** although it is actually not just Adelaide in itself, but only includes Adelaide as the capital city. Similarly, it is the same with the expression “*church.*”

Where the true Church—the congregation of the true believers in Christ—is found, in which Christ dwells as King of His subjects and rules through His Word and Sacraments, His blessings flow which also benefit those who do not really belong to her. For this *reason*, we *also* call those congregations who gather around God’s Word, outwardly hear the same and follow it, the name “*church,*” because among this group of people the **Church** (Invisible Church, the true Christian Church, BLW) is certainly found, which one cannot see with physical eyes. Likewise, just as all the inhabitants of South Australia are indeed simply called “Adelaide,” although they may live far from Adelaide proper, and none of these citizens are yet inhabitants of the city: they are called this simply for the sake of the capital city of their state. Hence, also in this sense, the word “church” is an improper designation, and by it is understood to mean only a visible church body, in the midst of which is the **Church**, that is, a *fellowship of churches*, as we are accustomed to say.

However that it is certainly not wrong, but that we are fully justified in using the term “church” in an improper (wider) sense also for “church body (community)” or “religious party,” we see from **God’s Word**. It tells us so clearly that the **Church** in itself does not include any hypocrites, any unbelievers, any public sinners, but that the Heavenly Vine-grower, **Christ**, will cut off every branch from the vine, which does not bear fruit, that is, separate it from the vine and will take it away (John 15). So no unbeliever belongs to Him, even though he is outwardly a member of a visible congregation of Christians who adhere to the Word, and call themselves by the name of the word “church.” This is the case in spite of the fact that in such a visible congregation there are only a few members of the true Church or those who belong to the elect, as Christ testifies, when He states, “**Many are called but few are chosen**” (Matt 22:14).

In this regard already **Augustine** says: “It is the way of Scripture to speak of a part as of the whole. Thus the Apostle praises the Corinthians in the first parts of his epistle (letter) as though all were such as deserve praise, as were some. Afterwards in some places of the same letter he reproves them as though all were culpable, though only some were such. He who diligently understands this way in which Scripture speaks, which is frequently found in the whole Bible, will be able to explain many things that are seemingly contradictory.” (Ep.59 ad Paulin) [See also Dr Walther “**Church and Ministry**” p86 (German: “**Kirche und Amt**” p76)].

In these words Augustine, therefore, points out that Paul nevertheless uses the title of honour “**church**” to cover the visible congregations in which also manifest (public) sinners found themselves as occurred at Corinth, as well as those who are weak in understanding, wavering and erring, as among the Galatians. For he directly calls the Corinthians whom he has admonished for the abominations and sins which appeared among them: “**The Church of God which is at Corinth,**” “**sanctified in Christ Jesus,**” “**called to be saints**” (1 Cor 1:2). Indeed, Christ Himself always calls the Twelve His disciples even though Judas turned out to be the “lost child” among them, of whom Jesus knew that he did not belong to the elect. When in Matt 18 Jesus speaks about the admonition to be given to the sinner, He finally says that if no repentance follows: “**Tell it unto the Church**” (Luther: local congregation). If as a result of the last admonition of the congregation he does not repent, then he is to be regarded as a heathen and a tax collector².

² Matt 18:17. He is to be regarded as a notorious sinner. **Kretzmann** states: “The former brother must be declared to be as a heathen man and a publican, as **one that is outside of the Christian Church.**”

So here He can obviously only be talking about the “church” as a visible congregation. Of this Jesus speaks in such a way as if it were nothing but saints, even though among those whom the congregation (church) are to exclude are hard hearted sinners, such who are still certainly and can be only those who inwardly do not belong to Christ and His Church. When Paul says in 1 Cor 10:32, “Give none offence (do not give offence to anyone), neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God,” then by this expression, the “church” or congregation “of God,” He also clearly means the visible congregation.

Therefore our Confessions also say: “And when Christ says, Matt 13:47: ‘**The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net;**’ and, it is ‘**likened to ten virgins,**’ (Matt 25:1-5); He does not mean that the wicked are the Church; but simply shows **how the Church appears in this world.** He therefore says that **the Church is like these,** etc; that is, **as among a mass of fish, there are good and bad ones promiscuously; so the Church here below is concealed among the great body and multitude of the ungodly;** and He desires that the pious be not offended. Again, He would have us to know **that the Word and the Sacraments are not without effect, although the ungodly preach, or administer them.** Thus Christ teaches us, **that the ungodly, though in the church according to external fellowship, are still not members of Christ, nor the true Church; for they are members of the devil**”³. With the small word “like” Christ also shows (Matt 13:47) that the Church, although in its proper (strict) sense it is completely holy and pure (for Christ's sake), yet **here on earth** it has the **appearance** as if it were a mixed group (heap), that is, like a net in which good and bad fish lie mixed together.



Finally **Luther** writes: “In order that this article (of the holy Christian Church) might be understood better and more clearly, the reader must remember that Scripture speaks of the church in a twofold way. For in the first place it in a general way calls “church” [those] who **publicly confess the same doctrine and administer the same Sacraments,** though there are mingled with them many hypocrites and wicked [persons], as Christ says: ‘**For many are called but few chosen**’ (Matt 20:16); again: ‘**He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned**’” (Mark 16:16). The last part of this sentence shows that some are baptized and yet do not believe. For this reason they are condemned, as the parable of the Wedding Feast also teaches (Matt 22:11-14). For all the guests were indeed called, but not all had on a wedding garment; hence they were cast out into outer darkness.

“But also the parables of the Net of Fish and of the Good Seed and the Tares (Matt 13:24-30, 47-50) depict and present to us such a church in which there are good and evil (persons), and there always are more evil than good persons as the passage attests: ‘**For many are called but few are chosen**’ (Matt 22:14). Nevertheless in this mixed multitude there are always some **elect**, that is, such as **receive and hold God’s Word** in true faith and (so) receive the Holy Spirit; for the ministry of the Word is never without benefit and fruit. This true, pure little flock Scripture also calls ‘the Church’; it also properly deserves the epithet ‘holy’” (Exposition of the Prophet Joel [1545]; VI, 2398 f. [St. Louis Ed., SL; VI, 1628 f.; quoted from Mueller, p. 80 translation of Walther **Church and Ministry**]).



Tares - Darnel

Wheat

—BLW

(Pages 23-27. Italicised emphasis is Pastor Peters; bolded emphasis added. To be continued.)

³ See Triglotta, p233 for another translation of this.

Translator's note:

In his excellent series of Essays on **The True Visible Church** Dr Walther states in this connection: **“Thesis III: ‘In an improper sense Scripture calls also those visible communions “church” which, though consisting not only of believers or such as are sanctified by faith, but having also hypocrites and wicked persons, nevertheless teach the Gospel in its purity and administer the holy sacraments according to the Gospel. Matt 18:17; 1 Cor 1:2; Rev 3:7.’**

“But now the question may arise: ‘How is it that the Bible so often speaks of the church, not as an assembly of nothing but saints but as an assembly of people who obviously are not all holy?’

“There one must know that **in all human languages** it is customary to use a word, not in its most proper sense but in a **figurative, metaphorical, improper sense**. For example, I call a certain plant a flower; this is the proper understanding. But now I can also use this word improperly or figuratively in that I, for instance, say to a father about his little daughter: ‘You have a nice little flower in your garden.’ Now if the father did not understand this manner of speaking, he could think: ‘What is that man talking about? I have no little flower and no garden!’ But everyone who heard this would laugh at his lack of understanding, namely, that **he did not notice that the words are here taken in an improper, figurative sense**. Now since our Lord God in His Word speaks with us in human language, He often uses this form of speaking. **The sense of such improperly used words is, however, always a divine, spiritual, heavenly (one).**

“The first Scripture passage cited in connection with this thesis is Matt 18:17. On it [the following] was noted: “The church (*Gemeinde*) of which the Saviour is here speaking is not the communion (*Gemeinde*) of saints in the whole world. When it says: ‘**Tell it to the church,**’ **the local congregation evidently is meant, in which weeds are always present**. It is therefore right to call a multitude of people in one place who confess God’s Word a ‘congregation’ or ‘church,’ **for God Himself does this**; He gives the whole mixed crowd the name ‘church,’ because the church of God is in it.

synecdoche:
a figure of speech in which a part of something is used to represent the whole thing

Examples:



I have four **mouths** to feed at home.

Translation:
“I have four family members to feed at home.”

Mouths (the part) is used to represent *people* (the whole thing).

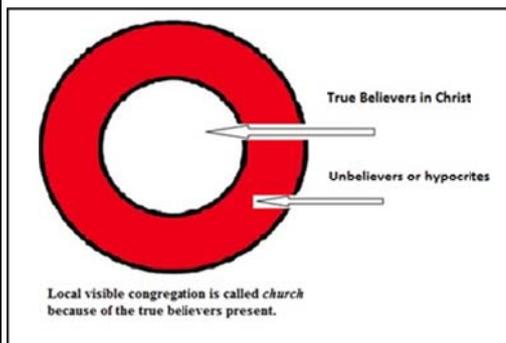
“In order to make this clear by other examples, the reminder was given: One calls a **fish pond** thus, for example, because the **fish are the most desirable or the main thing in this pond**, in spite of some croaking frogs. So it is with a **golden ring**, even though copper is mixed in with it. When speaking **in an improper sense and indeed synecdochally, we name a thing by the nobler, more desirable part**. Thus one calls a group consisting of hypocrites and Christians using the means of grace a **congregation or church**, not a group of *hypocrites*.

“Only **fanatics** who leave a congregation because there are perhaps some wicked people there, say they do not want to stay in such a congregation, for ‘after all, it is just a group of hypocrites.’ But when such a fanatic leaves the congregation, it is not [a case of] the child of God leaving the hypocrites, **but of the hypocrite leaving the children of God, because he is leaving the church. Whom else is such a person despising than our Lord Jesus?** For when [such a person] calls the whole group hypocrites, **he is also calling the children of God in this place hypocrites, yes, the Lord Jesus Himself**, for He takes what one does to those who are His as having been done to Him [Matt 25:40].

“The Lord Jesus wants to **have His own honoured**; therefore one should by no means scold a congregation—so that one does not scold the children of God who are in it. In a congregation **the nobler and more desirable part, for whose sake the local congregation is called ‘congregation’ or ‘church,’ consists of the hidden children of God**. So let there be ever so many hypocrites and other godless people in it and associated with it, **there are also saints and elect present there, who**

actually are the congregation—provided the voice of the church is still heard among them. Hypocrites indeed often speak God’s Word; but in doing this they are, although not themselves church, yet the mouth of the church, of the children of God.”

Again **Dr Walther** states: “As clearly as Holy Scripture teaches that the church **in its proper sense is nothing else than the invisible kingdom which Christ establishes inwardly in the hearts of men**, and that for this reason only those belong to His church in whose hearts He truly rules, **it nevertheless in many passages calls those visible communions ‘churches’ or ‘congregations’ that do not consist only of true believers but also contain some who do not believe**. Thus Christ, when speaking of the **last degree of church discipline**, declares: ‘**If he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector**’ (Matt 18:17). Here evidently **He means not the invisible communion of all believers, scattered throughout the world, but a visible local congregation in which God’s Word is being taught, yet in which there are also some who are not Christians**.



“Similarly St. Paul calls **those inhabitants at Corinth** who were gathered into a visible communion of baptized members ‘**the church of God which is at Corinth**’ (1 Cor 1:2), though the apostle reproveth them in the same letter for having in their congregation some who were manifest non-Christians and some who erred in the faith (1 Cor 5:1-6; 15:12; 2 Cor 12:21). Such visible communions are called churches only in an **improper**, namely, in a **synecdochic sense**. That is to say, **the whole is called after the part which properly deserves the name, according to the**

principle: *A portio parte fit denominatio*, which means, the name is accorded because of the better part. Thus we call a ring golden, though it contains also copper, and an acre is called a wheat field though also weeds grow upon it.” (Essays For The Church, Walther, Vol.1, p103-104)

The Lord’s Prayer—Part 9 – Doxology

The Lord’s Prayer concludes with a doxology, instructing us to pray, “For Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.” Some have questioned whether this doxology actually belongs to the Lord’s Prayer as it is not found in Luke’s Gospel nor in Latin copies of Matthew’s Gospel.

However, all Greek copies of the Gospel of Matthew consistently show it as original. The Syrian translations also include it and it is referred to by some of the early church fathers. The apostle Paul also seems to have it in mind in 2 Timothy 4:18, “And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly Kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” The doxology also very properly concludes the whole Lord’s Prayer, especially appealing to God as to His promise and office. It gives the reason why we ask these things of God and trust that He will give them to

us. We also find the same thoughts in 1 Chronicles 29:11 where David blesses the Lord, saying, “Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as head above all.”

The word “for” indicates the reason why we have made our petitions to God throughout the Lord’s Prayer. We say that we have requested all of these things for or because, “Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory.” We pray the Lord hear our prayer, “For Thine is the Kingdom,” that is, God is the King of the Kingdom to which we belong. It is only proper that His Will should be done for the benefit of His citizens in that Kingdom which rightfully belongs to Him. This Kingdom is not to be understood as God’s universal kingdom of power nor His Kingdom of glory in heaven, but

rather that Kingdom of grace, where Christ rules in His Church. We ask for the blessings which belong to that Kingdom. We are at war with great enemies that seek our eternal hurt—the devil, the world, and the flesh. Of ourselves we surely would perish, but we look to our King, the Lord Jesus Christ to grant us strength and victory. As Luther taught us to sing, “With might of ours can naught be done, soon were our fall effected; But for us fights the Valiant One, whom God Himself elected.” The Psalmist writes, “If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us: then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us: then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul: then the proud waters had gone over our soul.” (Psalm 124:2-5).

The words “and the power” teach us that God is in complete control of all these things we ask of His hand. Though the powers of the devil, the world, and our flesh are great, the power of God is infinitely greater. “Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4). Jesus said, “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18). God is not only willing, but also able to give us those things that we have requested of Him in the Lord’s Prayer. “God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God” (Psalm 62:11).

By the words “and the glory” our faith presents to God the end for which we pray. “All Thy works shall praise Thee, O LORD; and Thy saints shall bless Thee. They shall speak of the glory of Thy Kingdom and talk of Thy power; to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His Kingdom.” (Psalm 145:10-12). We desire only the glory of God. If God will hear our prayer and grant us those things that we ask according to His commandment and promise we are certain that

this shall bring glory and praise to His great Name. “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever” Amen. (Revelations 5:13).

We conclude the Lord’s Prayer with the word “Amen.” This was originally a Hebrew word, derived from a verb that means to believe and to trust. It also comes from the words for faith and truth in the Hebrew tongue. Mary perfectly captured the meaning of this word when she was told by the angel Gabriel that she would be the mother of our Saviour. She responded, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word.” (Luke 1:38). Luther says, “All depends upon this, that we learn also to say Amen, that is, that we do not doubt that our prayer is surely heard, and what we pray shall be done.” (Concordia Triglotta, *The Large Catechism*, p731). “Finally, mark this, that you must always speak the Amen firmly. Never doubt that God in His mercy will surely hear you and say ‘yes’ to your prayers. Never think that you are kneeling or standing alone, rather think that the whole of Christendom, all devout Christians are standing there beside you and you are standing among them in a common, united petition which God cannot disdain. Do not leave your prayer without having said or thought, ‘Very well, God has heard my prayer; this I know as a certainty and a truth.’ That is what Amen means.” (Luther’s Works, Vol 43, p198).

Amen; that is, So let it be!
Confirm our faith continually,
That we may doubt not, but believe
That what we ask we shall receive;
Thus in Thy name and at Thy word
We say: Amen; O hear us, Lord!
(M. Luther, 1539)

—S Wood

The Deity (Godhead) of Our Saviour

Is our Saviour Jesus Christ really True God? The answer to this question is of VITAL IMPORTANCE. If He is not true God, then we are certainly not redeemed. Then His work of Redemption was a **failure**. Why? In the first place, His work of Redemption consisted in this **that He crushed the Serpent’s head** (Gen 3:15). In other words, it was His assigned task to free mankind from the power of Satan, and to destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. (Heb 2:14).

Now who is the devil? Ezekiel 28:12-17 and Isaiah 14:12-15 tell us enough about Him to make us realise that as the “anointed cherub that covereth,” that is, the chief of Cherubim, the highest order of created angels, he stood next to the LORD Himself. Then he fell. “Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by the reason of thy brightness” (Ezek 23:17). “Thou hast said in thine heart...I will be like the most High” (Isa 14:14).

Because of his power and wisdom (subtlety), he was the “strong man armed” (Luke 11:21) who could be overcome only by a stronger one. And there was only one stronger, the LORD Himself. That is why the Redeemer of the captive human race of necessity had to be the LORD from heaven.

Satan knows only too well that if we base our hope of redemption and salvation on God Himself and put our trust in Him, then his case is lost; all doubts that he endeavours to instil into our hearts and minds concerning the validity and efficacy of our redemption must fail, for:

“Who trusts, in God’s unchanging love
Builds on the Rock that naught can move.”

For this reason the devil has done his utmost to spread the false teaching that Jesus Christ our Saviour is NOT True God, but, at best, a creature inferior to God.

In the early Church he found a prophet who in a very subtle manner endeavoured to show that Jesus Christ was not True God. This man was Arius of Alexandria, a highly educated scholar, an able preacher, a man who outwardly lived a holy life—a very real wolf in excellent and most deceptive sheep’s clothing—and who brought the Christian Church of the fourth century to the crossroads. Had Arius succeeded, the Church of God would have ceased to exist.

However, Christ had said concerning His Church: “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it,” and so after anxious moments and bitter struggles, the Church at its first General Convention at Nicea in 325 A.D. condemned the teaching of Arius as heretical, and set up the excellent statement of Faith known as the Nicene Creed (Hymnbook, p14) and which emphasises particularly the Deity of Christ.

Since that time Satan has repeated his attempts to rob Christ of His Deity. Especially since the Reformation the old heresy of Arius has been resurrected time and again. The so-called Unitarian Church rejects the Deity of Christ; the Secret Societies (Lodges) do the same; modern liberal theologians speak piously about the “Divinity” (God-likeness), of Christ but deny His Deity (Godhead); one of the most aggressive of present-day sects, the self-styled “Jehovah’s Witnesses” vehemently deny Christ’s Deity, claiming that Scripture nowhere teaches that Jesus Christ is True God.

(At this point let us remember that whoever denies the Deity of Christ is definitely **non-Christian** and his teaching of salvation is, without exception, the false and deadly doctrine of “salvation by works”).

But is it true, as the “Jehovah’s Witnesses” claim, that the Scriptures do not teach the Deity of Christ? Let’s have a look at a few Bible passages:

1. **Jer 23: 5–6:** (The Branch is of course Jesus.) “His Name shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS”. The Hebrew reads: JEHOVAH *TSIDKENU*. And JEHOVAH is the very Name of God Himself, and cannot be transferred to any CREATURE of God.
2. **Luke 2:11:** “A Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” (The Greek text reads: “*hos estin christos kurios*.” But “*kurios*” is the **Greek** for the **Hebrew** word “Jehovah,” a term applicable only to GOD).
3. **John 1:1-3:** Note the phrase “The Word was God.” (Greek: “*theos een ho logos*.” The term “logos” (Word) is peculiar to St John, who applies it to Christ.) This passage really proved a nut to crack for the “Jehovah’s Witnesses,” so they translated it in their Bible: “The Word was **a god**.” But by doing so they **falsified deliberately** the **Greek**

grammatical construction of the sentence. One of the **vital rules** of Scripture exposition is: **“Theology must conform to the laws of grammar.”**

In the above passage the verb “*een*” (was) is intransitive. But intransitive verbs do not take **objects**; rather do they take **predicative nominatives** which refer back to the subject. However, predicative nominatives do **not** use a **definite article**. The subject in this case is “*ho logos*” (the Word). To place the definite article “*ho*” **before “*theos*”** (God), the predicative nominative, as the “Jehovah’s Witnesses” claim, **must be done** if the text is to read “The Word was God,” is to do violence to the laws of grammar, and violating the laws of grammar **produces a false theology**. Incidentally, violating in Scripture the laws of grammar is **a favourite trick of the devil**. So, for example, the “new” interpretation of Romans 16:17, which makes this text refer primarily **only to non-Christians**, is brought about by a violation of the grammar of the Greek text. Also, the contention that the word “day” in Genesis 1 means not an ordinary day, **but an indefinite period of time**, rests on a violation of grammar.

Some further texts which assert the Deity of Christ:

- **John 5:23**: Note the “even as” (Greek: *kathoos*) meaning “in the same manner as,” “just as;” “honour,” (Greek: *timao*) means “revere,” “venerate.” In this passage the Son, Jesus Christ, claims the same honour as is due to God the Father, thus making Himself equal to the Father.
- **John 10:30**: Note the “one.” The Greek word is “*hen*,” meaning “of the same essence.” The “Jehovah’s Witnesses” twist this into “of one mind.” But verse 28 and 29 make it quite clear what Jesus was referring to. He there declares that He has the same **almighty power** as His Father has, that He and His Father possess the same divine attribute, namely **almighty power**. “No one can pluck them out of My hand nor My Father’s hand because I and My Father are **essentially one**.”
- **Col 2:9**: So clear that it requires no comment.
- **1 John 5:20**: Note the “this” in the last sentence. The Greek word is “*houtos*” meaning “this person,” namely Jesus Christ. No other comment is necessary.

(To be continued)

—F G Kleinig

Notes and News

Hospital: Since the last *Steadfast*, _____ and _____ spent some time in hospital. May they find comfort in the following passage:

Read: Matthew 5:5-15

VERSE 13 – “Go thy way; and, as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.”

JESUS, beloved Helper in need and distress, how light our burdens grow when Thou dost come to brighten our lot with Thy loving-kindness and gentle compassion. How dare we permit the thought to arise in our minds that we are ever bearing sorrows unremembered by Thee? Thou wast always ready to hasten to the side of those who, when Thou wast upon earth in our visible flesh, cried to Thee in their troubles. It was not their persons, or their merits, or their deeds, for which Thou didst have respect. It was their need, their dependence upon Thee, which moved Thee to impart Thine aid to them. Nor did the bodily blessings Thou didst bestow form the whole abundance of Thy favour; for Thou didst bring, health and strength for the soul whenever Thou didst bring healing to the body. What wonder that men could trust Thee? What wonder that they could have faith in Thee? We ask Thee now to fill our hearts with faith, with faith so strong that we may have consolation in every new grief which may visit us. We cannot by our own reason or strength come to faith in Thee; nor will our

faith endure if Thou dost not watch over it. Blot out the remembrance of all our transgressions, and favour us with the gift of unafraid faith, unafraid beneath the crosses which we must bear, unafraid in the hour of death, unafraid before the judgment seat of God; and let our faith always be so pure that it will glorify Thy holy name among men. Amen. *(Moments with God , p19)*

Sunday School Teachers' Conference — Kilcoy: The 2019 ELCR Sunday School Teachers' Conference was held on 1 June 2019, at Kilcoy. Twelve people were present to receive the benefit of instruction from our Pastors, and example and experiences from their fellow Sunday School teachers. Pastor Bryce Winter conducted the opening devotion, basing his words on Heb 12:4-11. He dealt with the topic, HOW IS THE CHRISTIAN TO VIEW GOD'S CHASTENING. presented on video the demonstration lesson, dealing with the story, *God Calling Samuel*, after which Pastor Bryce conducted a discussion on it. Pastor Tim Winter then addressed the gathering on the topic, *Jesus, the Master Communicator*. Pastor Gavin Winter then read and explained a paper covering *The Aims of SS Teaching*. The day concluded with discussion on topics related to Sunday School teaching, including experiences our Sunday School teachers have had. The day was very productive for all.

All depends on our possessing
 God's free love and grace and blessing,
 Though all earthly wealth depart;
 He who trusts with faith unshaken
 In his God, is not forsaken,
 But maintains a dauntless heart.

He who hitherto hath fed me,
 And to many a joy hath led me,
 Is and shall be ever mine;
 He who did so gently school me,
 He who still doth guide and rule me,
 Will not leave me now to pine.

(Hymn 374 v1-2)