



Steadfast

In the Word and Faith



Published by the Evangelical Lutheran Congregations of the Reformation
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Vol LV

March – April 2020

No 2

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What Luther Says About —

Law of God

The Law of God in the Ten Commandments. In the Ten Commandments we have a summary of divine teaching. They tell us what we must do to make our whole life pleasing to God; and they show us the true fountain from which; and the channel in which, all good works must flow. No deed or conduct can be good or pleasing to God unless it is in accord with the Ten Commandments, however great and precious it may be in the eyes of the world. (SL 10, 85)



God Is Not Subject to the Law. To God the current saying does not apply: *Legem patere quam tuleris*: Put up with the law which you have made. God is not subject to the Law and often does what is contrary to it so that we may revere His works, wisdom, counsels, and marvellous judgments and may walk before Him in humility. (SL 2,1862)

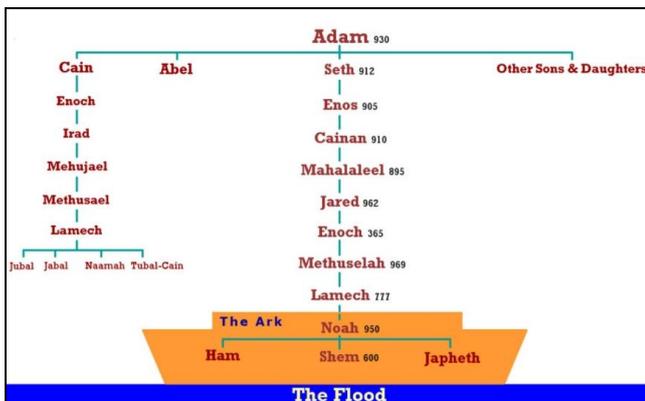
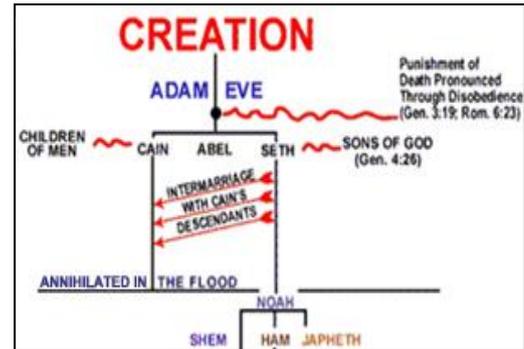
God Is the Law. God has given me prescriptions as to how I am to live and how I am to serve Him. Then I imagine that He also ought to live in that way. He lays down the Law here below but does not apply it to Himself above. It behoves no one except God to give laws and directions as to how we are to live and be pious; but I am not to lay down any law to God as to how He may rule the world or human beings. Therefore, think whatever you please, what God does is nonetheless right...A man is in danger of becoming foolish in his treatment of this subject if he does not take his reason captive, does not allow all such notions to be driven out of his head, and does not rest on the consideration that no one is to measure God or prescribe laws to Him, because God is entirely 'exlex' (outside the Law), as they say. But one simply cannot persuade reason to take this view; nor can one rid it of the wretched, confounded speculating or searching about these sublime, incomprehensible affairs which always asks: Quare? Cur? Why?...But every heart which can say: Dear God, handle the situation according to Thy good pleasure, I am satisfied, cannot perish. But the others must go to ruin. (SL 3, 812 f)

Did Angels Really Cohabitate with Human Beings before the Flood?

Gen 6:1–2 reads: “¹And it came to pass (now it occurred), when men (people) began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, ²that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair (beautiful and desirable) and they took them (for themselves) wives of all which they chose (of all whom they desired because they were charmed by their beauty).”

Context shows that True Believers and Unbelievers are referred to

In the first place, we follow the rule: “**The Context determines the meaning.**” The Hebrew for man is **Ha Adam** and it is “a word for humanity in general, both male and female.”¹ Genesis 5 focuses on Adam’s sons and the line of the **coming Saviour and the true Church**, but it still mentions “**other sons and daughters.**” **Dr Sarfati** correctly states: “Genesis 6 focuses on the *daughters* born to man—the Hebrew *ubanoi* (‘and daughters’...) emphasizes the female portion of humanity”(ibid). The expression “**and daughters were born unto them**” is added to prepare the way for Genesis 6:2. This is what the Hebrew scholar **Dr Leopold** states.²



The number of people greatly increased throughout the world before the time of the Flood. Conservative estimates based on the Bible suggest approximately 350 million people. Gen 6:1–2 occurred around 1536 years after creation, 120 years before the Flood. People lived long lives (over 900 years) due to the huge belt of water vapour surrounding the earth as it filtered out the ultra violet rays of the sun. The closer you are to Creation the higher the state of earthly culture, technology and wisdom. In spite of sin, excellent earthly conditions existed for farming and

and there were fewer diseases than today. **But the earth was filled with great wickedness and the true Christian Church grew smaller and smaller in numbers until at the Flood there were only eight true believers in Christ left.**

This is the first time in Scripture that the expressions “**the sons of God**” and “**the daughters of men**” are used. These are **collective terms** which refer to two special groups. Secondly, the definite article “**the**” before each expression refers to the aforementioned groups: the true believers of the **Sethites**; and the unbelievers of the **Cainites**. In the Hebrew “**the sons of God**” refer to people who are like God in the sense that they are **characterised by their Godly ways by faith in Christ**. True Christians are “sons of God” by virtue of conversion by faith in Christ.

¹ **The Genesis Account** Sarfati page 474.

² **Leupold**: “However, when it is remarked that ‘**daughters were born unto them,**’ that certainly cannot mean to describe something new: daughters had been born right along. However, this fact is mentioned **as having a bearing upon the situation about to be described.** Mark well that the bringing forth of daughters is being considered as taking place throughout all ‘mankind’ (ha’adham), for the lahem, ‘to them,’ **refers to the collective singular ‘mankind.’**”

Likewise **“the daughters of men”** refer to people who already exist in the sense that they are like human beings who are characterised **by their sinful ways** which dominate their lives. They are further described as people who refuse to be reproved by God’s Word or people concerning whom the Lord said, **“My Spirit shall not always strive with man” (Gen 6:3)**. The expression **“sons of God”** is used of the holy angels first in the Book of Job.

Word usage shows the same

In the Old Testament true believers in Christ are the children or sons of the LORD or the sons of God. In Deut 32:5 we read, **“They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of His children** (literally sons) [lit: “they are not His children, but their blemish”]: **they are a perverse and crooked generation.**” This text teaches: All the rebellious people did not really belong to the children (sons) of the LORD (Jehovah), but were properly considered a stain and a blemish upon the congregation of the Lord. We learn in Psalm 73:15, **“If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of Thy children** (lit sons).” This text teaches: In faith the Psalmist guards against blasphemous speech so that he does not give offence to the LORD’S children (lit sons), the true believers in Christ.

Dr Leupold correctly states: **“But who are these ‘sons of God?’ Without a shadow of doubt, the Sethites—the ones just described in chapter five as having in their midst men who walked with God, like Enoch (v22), men who looked to higher comfort in the midst of life’s miseries, like Lamech (v29), men who publicly worshipped God and confessed His name (4:26).** Such men merit to be called the ‘sons of God...,’ a title applied to true followers of God elsewhere in the **Old Testament Scriptures.** When the psalmist refers to such (Ps 73:15) as **‘the generation of thy children,’** he uses the same word **‘sons,’** describing them as belonging to God. Deut 32:5 uses the same word **‘sons’** (‘children,’ AV) in reference to Israel. Hos 1:10 is, if anything, a still stronger passage, saying specifically to Israel, ‘Ye are sons of the living God...’ Ps 80:17 also belongs here. We might word the case thus: **strictly speaking, ‘sons of God’ is a title applied to the Godly;** grammatically, the very expression ‘sons of God’ does not happen to be used in reference to them in that very form.”

Elsewhere also in the New Testament the expression “sons of God” refers to true believers in Christ. For example, Gal 3:26, **“Ye are all the children (lit sons = children) of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”**

Old Testament calls Holy Angels “Sons of God”

It is true that the expression **“the sons of God”** is used also in Scripture to refer to the **Holy Angels** as in Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7 and in Dan 3:25. The Holy Angels are like God and characterised by the fact that they are perfect creatures of God who are confirmed in their bliss, holiness and love to do the will of God. They bear the image of God in so far as they are perfectly holy and dwell in and participate in the glory, power, and blessedness of life in the presence of God. The Holy Angels are confirmed in their state of holiness and can never sin. Therefore how can the Holy Angels “marry” human beings and produce evil children?

The evil angels are never called **“the sons of God.”** While the evil angels, as we see in the New Testament, have the power by the permission of God to possess people bodily and spiritually, yet they too are fixed in number and cannot reproduce. But can this expression refer to the Holy Angels? The answer is a definite, **“NO!”**

Rule: “Scripture explains Scripture” shows Holy Angels are not meant

In the first place, we learn that Gen 6:2 says **“the sons of God” married**. Gen 6:4 says that there

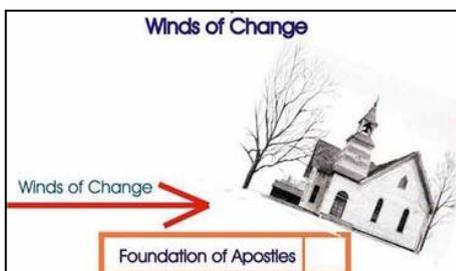
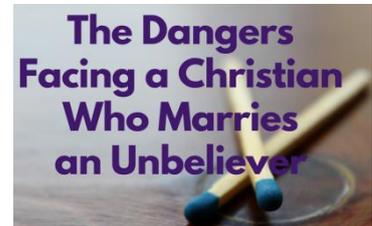
were **children** as a result of these unions. Therefore this expression must refer to **human beings**. We go to the principle: **Scripture explains Scripture**. In Matt 22:30 Christ Himself states, “**For in the resurrection they** (the Holy Angels) **neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.**” Angels are spirit beings. They cannot have sexual relations either with other angels or with human beings, nor can they reproduce. Therefore to teach that Gen 6:1–2 refers to evil angels intermarrying with human beings before the Flood is wrong and anti-Scriptural. **Keil and Delitzsch** state: “(To take a wife) is a standing expression throughout the whole of the Old Testament for the marriage relation established by God at the creation, and is never applied to $\pi\omicron\rho\nu\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$, or the simple act of physical connection. **This is quite sufficient of itself to exclude any reference to angels.**”

But the words of Gen 6:2 decide the matter, “**the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair** (beautiful and desirable) **and they took them** (for themselves) **wives of all which they chose** (of all whom they desired because they were charmed by their beauty).” **Dr Leupold** states: “The closing words, ‘whichever they liked best,’ help to clinch our interpretation, for **they indicate that the controlling factor was the chance fancy of the moment, rather than sound judgment which weighs the moral character and the suitability of the one chosen.** Literally translated this expression would be: ‘from all whom they chose.’ The (Hebrew word) ‘**min**’ here used is the ‘**min of explanation,**’ which does not mean selecting some from ‘all’ but carries the force of ‘whichever.’”

Some distort Scripture further and falsely try to find a New Testament reference to these angel marriages. They point to 2 Pet 2:4 and to Jude 6, but neither of these passages refer to anything **other than the original fall of the angels**, as Dr Keil has adequately shown.

“Sons of God Marrying the Daughters of Men” refers to intermarriages between Believers and Unbelievers

Dr Kretzmann states the true meaning of Gen 6:2 as follows: “In fifteen centuries a most remarkable increase of the human family took place, and it became increasingly difficult to maintain the discipline which the Lord desired. The men belonging to the tribe of Seth permitted carnal considerations to influence them in the choice of their wives. The daughters of men, those that lived only for this world and made the enjoyment of all that this world offers their end and goal, very naturally made the development of mere physical beauty their aim. This beauty proved the snare which captivated the sons of God, the men from the generation of believers. They took wives to themselves of all that they chose, **no longer as pious helpmates in a marriage in chastity and honour, but for the mere gratification of their sensual desires.** Thus the corruption of the Cainites was brought into the Church of God before the Flood.”



Luther himself refers this to the dangers of mixed marriages: “The true meaning of the passage is that **Moses designates as sons of God those people who had the promise of the blessed Seed.** It is a term of the **New Testament and designates the believers**, who call God Father and whom God, in turn, calls sons. The Flood came, not because the Cainite race had become corrupt, **but because the race of the righteous who had believed God, obeyed His Word, and observed true worship had fallen into idolatry, disobedience of parents, sensual pleasures, and the practice of oppression.** Similarly, the coming of the Last Day will be hastened, not because the heathen, the Turks, and the Jews are ungodly, but because through the pope and the fanatics **the**

church itself has become filled with error and because even those who occupy the leading positions in the church are licentious, lustful, and tyrannical.”³

Why this is important

These **mixed marriages** and the **terrible falling away from the true faith and God’s Word** were also serious and grievous causes of the corruption of the true Church and the Lord’s reason for bringing the worldwide Flood. **Dr Delitzsch** writes: “The connection of Gen 6:1–8 with Gen 4 necessitates the assumption, that such **intermarriages** (of the Sethite and Cainite families) did take place about the time of the Flood (cf Matt 24:38; Luke 17:27); and the prohibition of mixed marriages under the law (Ex 34:16; Gen 27:46; Gen 28:1) also favours the same idea.”

Luther applies this to us in these last days: “This is intended to **produce dread in all of us**, because even those who were born of the most excellent patriarchs began to be conceited and depart from the Word. They gloried in their wisdom and righteousness...”

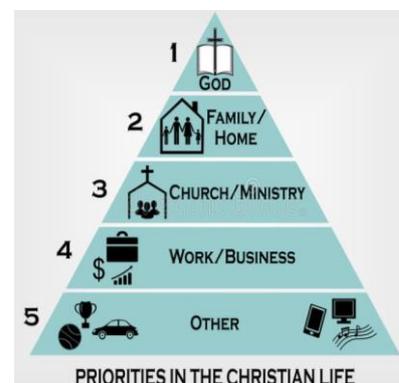
“Therefore let no one glory in his gifts, however great they may be; **the greatest gift is to be a member of the true Church**. But beware of becoming haughty on this account; for you may fall, just as Lucifer fell from Heaven (Is 14:12) and as we hear in this text that the sons of God fell into carnal pleasures. **Therefore they are sons of God no longer; they are sons of the devil, who have fallen from both the First and the Second Table at the same time....**”

“While **his** (Noah’s) **example shines brightly and his saintliness fills all the lands, the world becomes worse day by day**; the greater Noah’s saintliness and chastity is, the greater the world’s madness becomes through lust. These are the initial stages that always precede destruction. **When God raises up holy men full of the Holy Spirit, to instruct and reprove the world, the world, intolerant of sound doctrine, indulges in sins with greater zeal and continues in them even more persistently**. This was what happened at the beginning of the world, and we see that the same thing is happening now at the end of the world.”⁴

Christ Himself teaches us that the conditions that existed before the time of the worldwide Flood would again come upon the earth **before His coming on the last day**. In **Matt 24:37–39** we read: “³⁷ **But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.** ³⁸ **For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,** ³⁹ **And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.**”

The Lord’s words, “**marrying and giving in marriage,**” are not meant to disapprove of the holy estate of matrimony in itself, but they throw a spotlight upon conditions of the present time. For instead of understanding the holiness of the wedded estate, and seeking and entering into it in true reverence to the Lord, people in our days abuse the sanctity of marriage and the Christian home.

One of the ways Satan is destroying the true Christian Church is **through corrupting the doctrine of Christian marriage and the Christian home**. He knows that **the home is the basic unit of society and especially of the Church**. If Christian homes are solidly



³ Dr Stoeckhardt writes: “Here (Gen 6, BLW) we hear of the preparation for and of the announcement of the great flood, because sin and wickedness had increased on the earth. Also the generation of the righteous turned away from God, the children of God mingling with the daughters of men, desiring and taking the wives from the godless.”

⁴ Luther’s Works. American Edition Vol 2 pages 7–13 selected.

built on Christ's Word and Jesus the Saviour dwells there in true faith then the church will be strong. Through mixed marriages where God's Word and the Christian faith is no longer found any more, through corruption of marriage itself where immorality prevails, sinful divorces multiply, children grow up without Godly parents, children are no longer taught God's Word and the great majority of homes are ruled by Satan, no wonder the world is in the mess spiritually that it is. No wonder we are close to the time when Christ is coming again on the last day.



Let us meditate on how Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it (Eph 5:25). Let us reflect deeply in the power of Christ's death and resurrection on how lovingly Christ instituted the Christian home and how He desires to bless it. Then may the Lord move us to confess to Him the many times we have failed to let Christ dwell richly in our hearts and homes and how foolishly we may have entered marriage. As we look alone for pardon and forgiveness in cross-crowned Calvary, let us crave only to have Christ and His Word rule our homes and our Church, in the words of the hymn:

“O blessed home, where two in heart united,
In holy faith are clinging unto Thee;
Where both, to Thee a joyful service bringing,
Hear and obey Thy voice most willingly.”
(ALHB 464v2)

—BLW

Devotion — Luke 22:39–44

And He came out, and went, as He was wont, to the mount of Olives; and His disciples also followed Him. And when He was at the place, He said unto them, “Pray that ye enter not into temptation.” And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done.” And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when He rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow, And said unto them, “Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.”

During the First World War a French officer fell wounded in front of the trenches. The enemy's artillery was bursting all around him where he lay, entirely unprotected. Seeing his danger, a private crawled out of the trench, dressed the officer's wounds as best he could, and lying down beside him, whispered in his ear: “Don't worry, I'm between you and the shells. They

must touch me first.” What a beautiful picture of our Saviour who, on Calvary's cross, placed Himself between us and the wrath of God's justice and then assured us: “Do not fear! I am between you and the strokes of God's wrath. They have struck Me first.”

Jesus is the eternal Go-Between. He is the Mediator between God and men. By His sinless life and by His holy, innocent suffering and death in the sinner's stead He has taken His place between us and the stern demands of God's consuming justice.

The Passion story is the best Lenten sermon—the entire Gospel is a sermon about the crucified Christ. Especially, the history of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, as the Holy Spirit inspired the evangelists to write it, is the great Word of Reconciliation, the heart and centre, as it were, of the Gospel. It is a great and holy story.

The enemy Christ faced in His Passion was the most powerful, cunning and evil ever: the power of sin and the devil. It was to be a violent, vicious struggle, the depths of which we cannot fathom. Suffice it to say that if Christ were not true God

as well as true Man, He could not possibly have endured this conflict. The beginning of this struggle occurred in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Space in the cities of those days, particularly Jerusalem, was limited, as all the inhabitants had to fit inside the limits of the protection offered by the city walls. The rich inhabitants would often have gardens outside the city walls to which they could retire. Verse 39 brings out that this was the custom of Jesus, to retire here in particular for prayer with His heavenly Father away from the noise and the distractions of the city. Jesus knew the terrible struggle He was about to face. The intensity of the struggle He faced is brought out in the word “agony” in verse 44, a struggle, a contest, of trembling anxiety produced by fear. Jesus also knew, as John tells us, that Judas knew He would be there, and that he would come with the temple police to arrest Him. Consciously and deliberately, Christ goes to the Garden, knowing what He would there face. He willingly went there, taking the bitter cup to His lips. He brought to God a willing sacrifice.

In this hour, according to His human nature, He craved the company of His disciples. He needed them to watch and pray with Him, lest “they enter into temptation.” Yet, the enormity of the trial He faced was so great that they could not bear it with Him, He must face it alone. The word *withdraw* literally means from the Greek *to tear*. Such was the great fear of our Lord that, though desiring their company, He had to forcibly tear Himself away from them. The trial He would face was so great that the disciples themselves, though some distance away, were overcome by sleep by the sorrow and deep anguish of it. They did not possess within themselves the strength to face this test.

Prayer, though never out of season, is in a special manner seasonable when we are in an agony; and the stronger our agonies are the more lively and frequent our prayers should be. Now it was that Christ *offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, and was heard in that he feared* (Heb 5:7), and in his fear *wrestled*, as Jacob with the Angel of the Lord.

Jesus began to be sorrowful. He Himself told His disciples, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” As grief, care, sorrow, can break a person’s heart and prepare him for death, thus was Jesus. He also began to tremble. Terror mingled with sorrow. He became greatly afraid among the strange, evil spirits which arose and tortured Him. He had to exclaim with the Psalmist (22:14): “I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.” “For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me” Ps 40:12.

Truly it could be said of Christ: “We did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.” He had to cry out with Jonah, “All Thy billows and Thy waves passed over me. Then I said, I am cast out of Thy sight.” He lay on the ground like a worm and not like a man; He lay there like a sacrificial lamb on the altar of the earth. He humbled Himself to such depths of human weakness and helplessness. All the woes which seize the human heart He tasted in all their severity.

—TJW

Letting Scripture Speak for Itself – Part 1

The Word of God is the one and only true source and standard of our Christian faith. It alone creates and sustains faith. It alone arbitrates between truth and error. It is the one trustworthy record by which we can apprehend the things of the Kingdom of God. The Word is to faith what light is to the natural eye. Without it, we are in great darkness, utterly blind and ignorant of God and His salvation. Luther writes, “For this is the Scripture, which makes fools of all the wise and prudent and is open alone to the lowly and simple. Therefore give up your pride and haughty spirit and regard Scripture as the greatest and most precious sanctuary and the richest mine, which can *never be fully exhausted*” (St L XIV, 3f). Like the star of Bethlehem, the Word of God shines in a dark place and leads wise men to the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us truly love and value it as our greatest treasure.

Over the next few issues of Steadfast I would like to put aside all human words and opinions and just let the Scripture speak for itself. I do this for two reasons. First, I believe you will sense something of its divine power as you hear how clearly and beautifully the Word of God sets forth its own teachings. The correct emphasis of each point is readily recognized in Scripture's use of word order, synonyms, and repetitions. Secondly, I believe that this presentation of God's Word provides a unique tool for witnessing to unbelievers and errorists. Here is nothing but the Word of God offering its own teachings. The plainness of the text is left with the reader. If one rejects that Word, they reject not the word of man, but the Word of God Himself. Thus, their unbelief is without excuse. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" Luke 16:31.

Here is a short example of letting Scripture speak for itself on the **doctrine of the Word of God**. Hopefully this will give you an idea of the other doctrines yet ahead in Steadfast dealing with the doctrines of the atonement of Christ, salvation by grace, baptism, church fellowship, election, etc. You will find these most effective if you read the Scriptures slowly (even out loud if possible), and note the order and relationship of the verses to one another.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.

In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.

Sanctify them through thy truth: Thy word is truth.

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

2 Tim 3:16–17; Rom 15:4; 2 Pet 1:20–21; John 20:31; 2 Tim 3:15; Rom 10:17; Psa 119:105; Psa 119:130; Psa 19:10–11; Heb 4:12; Psa 19:7; Prov 8:8–9; 1 Thess 2:13; 1 Pet 2:2; Tit 1:2; John 17:17; 2 Tim 4:2; 2 Tim 4:3–4; 1 Pet 1:25; Acts 20:32.

—S Wood

A note from the Federation Chairman

Dear Fellow Brethren and Sisters,

With the Editor's kind permission, and with particular reference to the current pandemic, I felt it appropriate to share with you some Biblically based thoughts pertinent to the situation we now find ourselves in. I humbly acknowledge that the thoughts expressed herein are not new to any of you, but sometimes it may be helpful to be able to reflect on something that someone else has said or written, and thereby be strengthened accordingly. This is my sole purpose in sharing these few lines with you—that by God's Grace, they may help impart comfort, reassurance, hope and faithful trust in the Lord and His undying Love.

There are probably none of our members who have not been impacted in some way by the current situation, either to a greater or lesser extent. Due (to a large extent) by the restrictions placed on us, both our temporal and spiritual lives have been greatly affected. As God's children we know of a certainty that He is in total control, and that through these difficult times, He wishes and indeed promises only to bless us in Christ. For our reassurance He has given us such passages as Romans 8, Isaiah 43:1–2 and three chapters later in Isaiah 46:4 then Isaiah 49:15–16 etc. It is not always easy (I know from experience), to maintain the faith during troubling times. It may be loss of income, employment, or a host of other trials, but our Father in heaven again reassures us and says, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" Hebrews 13:5. His Love for us in Christ is undiminishing and so He tells us again in Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil," and in Isaiah 54:10: "my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Even in the current circumstances, He has in His great Love to us provided for our spiritual needs through other means (live-streaming etc) and will, when His purpose has been accomplished, also grant us to be able to come together again and as His family, thank and praise Him for His loving kindness.

Finally, just a few words on the blessings that have already been granted through this difficulty. Again I speak personally, perhaps many of you feel the same, but already it has deepened the awareness of what a rich blessing it is to be able to worship together in God's House each Lord's day, and has brought a wholesome longing to be granted that blessing again. Then also, I have been greatly heartened and encouraged by the loving help that has been shown within congregational life. In particular, younger members coming forward to help and assist older members to facilitate the participation in services through the internet, phone etc. Can we not say that all these and many other positive outcomes are but gracious blessings from our Heavenly Father on our dear church?

So let us not be overwhelmed by these events, but trusting in our Saviour take all our cares to Him, and leaving them with Him, be at peace, knowing that what the Psalmist writes in Psalms 115:12 applies to us: “The Lord hath been mindful of us: He will bless us.” Praise be to the Lord.

In Jesus’ name, your brother in Christ,

Law and Gospel

To many people it is perplexing when, in the Bible, they find that in one place God speaks to them so kindly, so fatherly, so graciously, that they cannot but feel the goodwill of their Father in heaven towards them, and that then again they meet only stern demands and hard exactions, coupled with threats of God’s wrath and damnation. They naturally enquire, which words pertain to them, the kind, fatherly, words, or the hard, threatening ones. They ask: Are we to trust in words such as these:—“With everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer?” (Is 51:10), or must we appropriate to ourselves such words as these:—“Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all,” and:—“The soul that sinneth, it shall die”?

In order to understand the Bible, we must know that it contains two distinct doctrines, the **Law and the Gospel**. Of these two distinct doctrines our Saviour is speaking when He says:—“For the Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). In the Law we have the revelation of God's holy will telling us what we should be, what we should do, and what we should not do. God is holy, and it is His will that His creatures should be holy. Accordingly, He created man in His image, and men, like all other things created by God, was beheld to be very good. The fall of man did not alter the will of God that man should be holy. In His Law God still proclaims His will to man, telling him what he should be, what he should do, and what he should not do.

When God created man, He created him with a natural knowledge of the Law. His conscience bore him witness as to what was right and what was wrong, as to what God required and what He had forbidden. God wrote His Law into the heart of man. This writing in man's heart was by the fall almost obliterated, but a little of it still remains, as we see in the case of the heathen, of whom St Paul says:—“That having not the (written) law, yet doing by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves: and show the work of the law written in their hearts” (Rom 2:14–15). Yet this natural knowledge of the Law, remaining after the fall, is but rudimentary and fragmentary. However, that man should have a perfect and clear knowledge of His Law, God repeated the same on Mt Sinai, when He proclaimed it through Moses, having written it on two tables of stone and expressed in ten commandments. These ten commandments we know now-a-days as the MORAL Law.

Through Moses God also gave other Laws unto Israel, commandments which He had not written in the heart of man at the creation, and of which man therefore could have no natural knowledge. These Laws related to forms of worship and political statutes for the people of Israel. Since the advent of Christ they have been abolished. In the Old Testament, therefore, we find many commandments such as refer to meats, and holy-days, and sacrifices, which do not in the least concern us Christians of the New Testament. We are under no obligation whatever neither to the ceremonial nor to the political Law, God's holy will for us is expressed solely in the Moral Law. The sum of the whole Moral Law is, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” “Therefore, love,” says St Paul, “is the fulfilling of the Law” (Rom 13:10).

The Law shows us our duty towards God and our neighbour. Our conscience tells us that we have not complied with these duties. “Therefore by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom 3:20). The Law says to us as it were, “These are the things you should have done, you have not done them, therefore you

are under God's wrath and condemnation, for the wages of sin is death." Such is the Law. The Gospel, on the other hand, is the glad tidings of the grace of God in Christ Jesus. The Gospel tells us that God sent His Son into the world to redeem those who were under the curse of the law, and that Jesus, came to seek and to save that which is lost. It tells us that:

There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

Therefore, in our Bible reading we must carefully distinguish between Law and Gospel. This is not always so easy a matter, as it may appear to be. The Bible is not divided into chapters of Law and chapters of Gospel, for in one single chapter we often find both Law and Gospel. Wherever God says that our attainment of salvation shall be subject to the condition that we render unto Him a perfect obedience, as when we read, Matt 5:8—"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," or, wherever God threatens us with His wrath and punishment, there we have the Law by which no man can, or is intended to be saved. But, wherever we read of the Saviour and of the salvation which He brings, of the grace of God by which to him that believeth all sins are freely forgiven, there we have the joyful Gospel.

By the Law God would show us that we are not, as we often imagine ourselves to be, good, holy, and perfect people, but rather that we are sinners of the deepest dye, deserving God's wrath and eternal punishment. The contemplation of the Law must wring from our souls the fervent prayer, God be merciful to me, a sinner. But when our mind dwells on the Gospel, we must be able to say:—"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath clothed me with the garment of righteousness and salvation, and hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Is 61:10).

Lord, grant that we e'er pure retain
The catechismal doctrine plain,
As Luther taught the heavenly truth
In simple words to tender youth.

That we Thy holy Law may know
And mourn our sin and all its woe,
And yet believe in Father, Son,
And Holy Spirit, Three in One.

—O Nichterlein, *The Australian Lutheran*, Feb 1914, p1-2

Notes and News

Hospital: Since the last *Steadfast*,
have been hospitalised. May they find comfort in the following passage:

Read: Matthew 5:38-48

VERSE 45: "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

GOD OF LOVE, tender, compassionate, and forgiving, how canst Thou be so good to those who have disobeyed Thy commandments, who have rebelled against Thee, who have trampled Thine honour in the dust? What mercy is Thine, that Thou hast not destroyed this world and all our human race! Daily we see the proofs that Thy fatherly goodness doth encompass us all, whether we be Thy children through Jesus Christ, or whether we be estranged from Thee in unbelief and worldliness. The lands of this earth abound in proofs that Thou hast not withheld Thy bounties from the sons of men; that, while

Thou dost hate sin with a hatred which cannot yield, yet Thou dost yearn for the soul of the sinner, vile though he may be. It was when the world still lay in unbelief and rebellion that Thou didst exercise the love which sent Thy best Gift; Thy Son, to offer Himself a Ransom for the guilt of the sinners who would not own Thy sovereignty. We know Thou dost desire that we, as we have redemption through Thy mercy shall deal mercifully with those of our fellow men who have done us wrong. Speak to these wicked vengeful hearts of ours, and make them forgiving, and considerate. Remove the evil hatred from our natures. Grant us patience and gentleness even though we be provoked by a brother's most hateful wrong doings. Make us true followers of Jesus' perfect example. Amen.

(Moments with God, p23)

On _____ in _____
 confessed _____ faith in the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and was confirmed by Pastor Tim Winter. The text for the Confirmation service was based on the words of 2 Chronicles 17:7, "Be ye strong, therefore, and let not your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded." May the Lord in His grace and mercy ever keep _____ in the Christian faith and preserve him from all the attacks of the devil, the world, and the flesh.

–TJW

The family and friends of _____ met at _____ on _____
 for a celebration to honour _____ Pastor Gavin Winter conducted a devotion on 2 Samuel 22:2–3, "And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; The God of my rock; in Him will I trust." May the Lord continue to care for this precious child of God as _____ walks _____ way through this vale of tears to eternity.

On _____ was welcomed into _____
 membership _____ had undergone about three years of instruction under Pastor Gavin Winter. We ask the Lord to be with _____ and keep _____ in the true Christian faith, and at all times faithful to His Word.

–GLW

Under one hundred people (in accordance with _____ government regulations), _____ met at _____
 to celebrate the joyful occasion of the wedding of _____
 Both are members of _____ and _____



chose Romans 12:16 as the basis for their married life together. It reads: "Be of the same mind one toward another." In stressing the vital importance of Christian marriage and the Christian home in these days when both are under vicious attack by Satan, Pastor Bryce Winter dealt with the power of the Christian Marriage. He emphasized that a Christian husband and wife are to be united in Christ, united in His Word and united in Christian love and humility. Pastor Tim Winter officiated in marrying the couple. We pray that the Lord would:

"Grant them the joy which brightens earthly sorrow;
 Grant them the peace which calms all earthly strife,
 And to life's day the glorious unknown morrow
 That dawns upon eternal love and life."

–BLW