



Steadfast

In the Word and Faith



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What Luther Says About —

Law of God



Precisely What Are the Law and the Gospel? According to the apostle, Rom 1:1–3f, the Gospel is the message about the incarnate Son of God, who was given us without our merits for salvation and peace. It is the Word of salvation, the Word of grace, the Word of comfort, the Word of joy, the voice of the Bride-groom and the bride, the good Word, the Word of peace, as Isaiah says: “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good” (52:7). But the Law is the Word of perdition, the Word of wrath, the Word of sadness, the Word of pain, the voice of the Judge and the accused, the Word of unrest, the Word of malediction – for, according to the apostle, the Law is the strength of sin (1 Cor 15:56), the Law works wrath (Rom 4:15), and it is a Law of death (Rom 7:13). (SL 18, 249f).

Man Must Hear the Law First. Then the Gospel before receiving the comfort of forgiveness, sin must be recognized and the fear of God's wrath must be experienced through the preaching or apprehension of the Law, that man may be driven to sigh for grace and may be prepared to receive the comfort of the Gospel. Therefore one should by all means most severely admonish and drive to repentance with threats and intimidation those who as yet are without any fear of God's wrath, are secure, hard, and unbroken. That is, no Gospel but only the Law and Moses should be preached to them. On the other hand, where there are hearts in which the Law has performed its office, so that they are frightened by the knowledge of their sin, are timid and fugitive, no Law should be preached and proclaimed any more, but pure Gospel and comfort. For this is the proper office of Christ, to perform which He came and commanded the Gospel to be preached to all poor sinners and enjoined on them to believe it, that He might abolish and remove all charges, frightenings, and threatenings of the Law and might give the purest comfort instead. (SL 11, 1330).

Dividing Law and Gospel: Theological Maturity. This difference between the Law and the Gospel is the height of knowledge in Christendom. Every person and all persons who assume or glory in the name of Christian should know and be able to state this difference. If this ability is lacking, one cannot tell a Christian from a heathen or a Jew – of such supreme importance is this differentiation. This is why St Paul so strongly insists on a clean-cut and proper differentiating among Christians of these two doctrines, the Law and the Gospel. To be sure, both are God’s Word: the Law, or the Ten Commandments, and the Gospel—the latter first given by God in Paradise, the former on Mount Sinai. But everything depends on the proper differentiation of these two messages and on not mixing them together; otherwise one will know and retain the proper understanding of neither the one nor the other; nay, while under the impression of having both, one will have neither... Therefore place the man who is able to divorce the Law from the Gospel at the head of the list and call him a Doctor of Holy Scripture, for without the Holy Spirit the attainment of this differentiating is impossible. (SL 9, 798, 802).

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Devotion—Luke 1:31–33

“And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end” Luke 1:31-33.

1. Mary is informed of a prophecy concerning Christ which will be fulfilled through her

There is but one Saviour, one way to heaven. Only through Jesus, the Son of God who is at the same time the Son of the Virgin Mary, and not through our own good works, can we be justified in the sight of God.

“Behold,” the angel says, or “take careful, special note to what is about to be said.” This is necessary on the part of the angel, for what Gabriel is about to announce will be a great, unique miracle – the Virgin Birth. The Child within her will be conceived by the Holy Ghost. She is also to pay careful attention to the fact that His Name is to be Jesus, which means “Saviour, Redeemer, Helper.”

These words prove that Jesus is true man as follows: “Thou shalt conceive;” “in thy womb;” “thou shalt bring forth a Son;” and these words prove that Jesus is true God: “He shall be great;” “He shall be called the Son of the Highest” (Son of God); from this Person eternal life is received (name Jesus); He is an eternal King with an eternal Kingdom.

2. His Godhead and Work

Gabriel continues in verse 32: “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest:”

The Greek means He will be “Great in the absolute sense,” in other words: the greatest. John the Baptist would be “great in the sight of the Lord.” But none could be GREATER than CHRIST because His human nature was to be united with His divine nature. Jesus was to be great in a unique and special sense of the word, great in that Jesus was also true God, great in that Jesus would bring about a great salvation.

He will be the “Son of the Most High.” This expression designates God in His supreme majesty. It states exactly who Jesus will be. It further explains why Jesus would be great. It is another way of referring to Jesus as the Son of God. It teaches that Jesus is true God. This is a fulfilment of Isaiah 9:6 where Christ is called the “Mighty God.” “His Name shall be called... The mighty God.”

3. His Power, Rulership and Kingdom

“and the Lord God (Father) shall give unto Him (Christ) the throne of His father David:”

David’s rulership was a picture of the greater rulership of his unique Descendant, Christ, who was David’s son according to the flesh. Like his ancestor David, Christ was to be a King, a spiritual heavenly King, the King of all true believers, as promised in the Old Testament.

Here the prophecies are found and referred to in 2 Samuel 7:12–14 and Isaiah 9:7: **“And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men.”**

Isaiah 9:7: **“Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”**

Christ was a unique descendant of David. This is also proven by the genealogical lists in Matthew 1 and Luke 3. Christ’s rule would not be one over some earthly kingdom, but as the mighty God and Saviour He rules over all things for the welfare of his church.

Verse 33: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob (His Church) for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

This further explains the nature of the house of Jacob. The true Christian Church not only will never perish in this world but will continue in all eternity in Christ’s Kingdom of Glory. Christ’s rule as the head of the Church would be eternal. The powers of all the evil angels shall never be able to destroy Christ’s Church. —TJW

God’s Spiritual Blessings – Part 1

[Pastor Bryce Winter requested _____ to study Hochstetter’s excellent *History of the Missouri Synod in North America, and her Doctrinal Controversies* and to write a brief synopsis of some of the matters dealt with. The idea was not only to encourage more people to study it, but also by God’s grace in Christ Jesus to help us more highly value the pure Word which God has so graciously granted us. This has been submitted to and approved by Pastor Bryce Winter. Bolded emphasis is Pastor Bryce Winter’s and underlined emphasis is _____.]

God showers His Spiritual blessings on a church body or Synod if they base their beliefs and practices solely on His Word. If they do this then not only will they be rewarded by God for their faithfulness, but at the same time be **seen by Satan as a distinct threat to him**. Then Satan will launch all his fiery darts at them, and this will include using the world also. It should be apparent to all that if we are busy supporting the Lord’s Kingdom then we will **attract the attention of the devil** and then have to endure whatever he does to oppose us. If our life is a cosy existence where we calmly sit on the fence, suffering no persecution at all, it is safe to say that Satan does not see us as a threat to him. In that situation a referral to the words of the hymn, **“Rise my soul to watch and pray, from thy sleep awaken”** would be in order.

The material in this article deals with the beginnings of the Missouri Synod in North America. It is taken in summary from the work of **Pastor Christian Hochstetter** and translated by Ron Lah and any quotations in this article are from his book.

In the year 1838, when the first Lutherans arrived in Australia, there were already a number of Synods in North America or in the early stages of forming, such as the Missouri Synod, the Ohio Synod, the Buffalo Synod, the Iowa Synod. The Missouri Synod became the largest in time but **not without its**

share of trouble in the early years. In general terms it is true to say that right from the start the Missouri Synod ordered the structure of their church **on the doctrine of the Lutheran Church.** In time other Synods joined them because of their insistence on the unadulterated Word of God. God blessed this Synod and it increased in an unprecedented way. Pastor Hochstetter says: “In accordance with the spiritual nature of the Kingdom of God it cannot be otherwise...when the pure teaching of the Gospel as the power of God goes out to the salvation of souls, there the churches will also come to a healthy knowledge and to a proper form from within.” They did not model their teaching according to their circumstances, but as said before, to the doctrine of the Bible. Pastor Hochstetter states: “When I think of what has been done by the grace of God by the Missourians, I cannot join in the clamour against them. It is my belief that the Missourians **attribute their success to God’s grace,** not to their diligence, however proud they may be of it. The Lord bless the brave Saxons and make their salt work more vigorously in the leaven of American church life.” These Lutheran Saxons came from the state of Saxony in eastern Germany. The cities of Leipzig and Dresden are in Saxony.

It is interesting to **note who those are whom the devil uses to attack God’s Word and the orthodox church** at various times. In Luther’s day the Romanists attacked him and his associates with regard to the doctrine of the Church and Ministry, amongst other doctrines and matters. Erasmus argued with Luther regarding the doctrine of the election of grace. Calvin based his argument on rational deductions. Because the Missouri Synod, ably led by Dr Walther, firmly followed the Word of God, Luther and the Formula of Concord, there were a number of detractors who waged a battle against Walther and the Synod. In time some recognized that Dr Walther was a “man of excellent piety, of sublime character, and rightly the recognized leader of the respectable body which he has headed since its existence.” It must be pointed out that Walther was a very young man at this time, but a very gifted young man.

The **importance of the Missouri Synod to Lutheranism** in America and ultimately to orthodox Lutheranism in Australia is well expressed in the following words: “I have no more obvious example of how God blesses human faithfulness than the Missouri Synod itself. If she had not held so steadfastly to her profession of pure doctrine, if she had not borne witness so sharply and fought against all and every deviation from the path which she alone had correctly discerned, if she had been just a little more comfortable with the views of our more easily fickle times, she would **not** have achieved what she can now call her own. She took her reason captive under the obedience of Christ and the Lord has rewarded her. The glory of God, the pure truth of the Word, which found its clearest expression in the Confessions of the Lutheran Church, stood and stands higher to her than the favour of the world and the windy inventions of men” (p10 Foreword). These are wonderful words of inspiration for all Christians to follow, but especially for those who claim to be orthodox Lutherans. Pastor Hochstetter also states that “it is **precisely during a doctrinal controversy** that one becomes quite aware that **nothing clings so firmly in one’s conscience as the Word of God revealed in Holy Scripture,** which is therefore also the only judge in the controversy and the perfect source of our Christian faith.”

When the original emigrants from Saxony to North America set out on their journey, many curious spectators came to see them depart. Some had good wishes for the travellers, others had curses, others thought that what they were doing was foolhardy. **This situation would be repeated when others left for Australia** and the Germans in Russia left for North America later in that century. But to all, the important thing was to preserve the old Lutheran faith, the pure Lutheran faith. They saw that it was impossible to keep their faith pure and unadulterated in Germany and their conscience told them to “seek another country where they could enjoy undisturbed the means of grace that God has decreed for all people for their salvation, in their completeness and purity” (p3).

In Germany in 1817, the 300th anniversary of the beginning of the Lutheran Reformation was seen as an ideal opportunity to tear down the dividing walls between the various churches and introduce a so-called Union. Some people in positions of influence thought that it was no longer necessary to recognize differences between Lutheran and Reformed: “The doctrine of the poor sinner’s justification before God was ridiculed as an outdated theology of blood” (p5). In Prussia the union of Lutherans and Reformed

was introduced by royal cabinet order with disastrous consequences for those pastors who refused to accept the new agenda, including imprisonment. In Silesia several churches were taken away from the Lutherans by force of arms.

When Pastor Walther was in Germany (before emigrating to America), he had used the old formula of absolution in Saxony which did not contain the new agenda. However, his unbelieving school teacher sued him and he had to pay a fine. **Walther was strictly forbidden to use the old absolution formula.** Lutheran laymen in Saxony were also under great distress of conscience by the prevailing conditions. Some have asked why the faithful Lutherans in Saxony did not break away and form separate Lutheran congregations, but apparently that was not possible, so emigration to a country in which there was freedom of religion was recognized as the only way out for them. It is reported that in spite of the persecutions, “the Lord still had His 7000 in Saxony, who did not bend their knees before the Baal of Zeitgeist (spirit of the age).” However, their steadfastness and the burning zeal of their preachers caused them to be looked upon with envy and hatred by the rationalists and the world.

At this time there was an interesting minister in Dresden, one **Pastor Stephan**. Many saw Stephan as their chief shepherd. The more people admired and sought him, the more the world saw him as a dangerous man who had to be stopped. However, Stephan came into conflict with the symbolic books and Luther’s writings. In spite of his weaknesses and sins, God had a plan for Pastor Stephan and this involved using him to go to America and succeed in establishing a settlement there. But as Pastor Keyl writes in his diary: “Stephan had to come all the way to America, because it was **here that his sins and follies were revealed** much more quickly than if he had stayed in Dresden” (p17).

Four migrant ships arrived in the port of New Orleans in December 1838 and January 1839 after a stormy voyage in which one other ship was lost at sea. These immigrants were then taken to Perry County, Missouri by Pastor Stephan. Some observations made of Christians then, which are just as pertinent today, were that **Christians of weak faith find it easier to be attached to one person and to external and internal experiences than to keep their faith completely to the Word.** These “one persons” often dream up grandiose plans which seldom come to fruition, primarily because the money runs out and these grandiose plans often involve the leader living like a king while his “subjects” had to live in miserable camps and under tents.

“America was to become a refuge for the faithful sons of the Reformation, and a new life of faith was to be established in the Lutheran church, while in Germany the Lutheran church was decaying more and more and going to its grave” (p17). America opened its gates to the Church of the Reformation and although many who first entered were as confused sheep, now, “through the ministry of purely Lutheran Pastors, incorporated into the congregations of the Missouri Synod, were led to the knowledge of the truth to life from God” (p18). This knowledge of the truth and life from God was further enhanced when the St Louis congregation instructed **Pastor Ferdinand Walther to go to Perry County and confront Stephan**. This he did, and while there his brother Hermann Walther handed over his sermon to Ferdinand Walther to preach. The following Sunday when Stephan preached in the settlement, only two people turned up. A great change of attitude had taken place. Meanwhile Ferdinand Walther had returned to St Louis. Most of the St Louis congregation boarded two large boats and went to Wittenberg in Perry County to decide Stephan’s fate. He was relieved of his office, lost his property and expelled from the State of Missouri. Stephan was visited by Pastor Loeber and Candidate Brohm who tried to lead him to repentance, but in vain. The great majority of the emigrant congregation listened to the voice that called the whole congregation to repentance. As a result of Stephan’s fall, conditions became quite acute for the settlers. However, this **had the effect of putting their trust solely into the arms of God’s care, rather than trusting in man.** Some, however, who had been led into temptation suffered from a guilty conscience. This even included some pastors. Some church members doubted their state of grace and went astray.

“What is perceived in the life of nations, that especially in times of misfortune men rise up through whom God sends help, is also reflected in the history of the Christian church. **The men whom God had chosen as His instruments must then come to light and, when the need is greatest, grow with the strength that God has entrusted to them**” (p30). So it was that Ferdinand Walther was called upon to put together a broken congregation. Many in the congregation had guilty consciences for what had happened under Stephan. Walther endeavoured to prove from God’s Word and the Lutheran Confessions that even in such a situation there were believing children of God. He also taught that where an effort is made to correct abuses and to establish the true teaching office of the ministry, “there is also a **Lutheran** Church, because the pure Word of God and the unadulterated administration of the sacraments are the only characteristics of the true Church” (p31). He also made it clear that the congregation has the right and duty to establish the public ministry of preaching in its midst. This is taught in accordance with the Smalcald Articles.

In April 1841, a **disputation took place in Altenburg** which resulted in Eight Theses (doctrinal statements) prepared by Pastor Ferdinand Walther, being victoriously decided. A dramatic change in outlook was observed by others who saw this disputation. Where there had been sunken faith in many hearts, was the freedom of distressed consciences, as one could see joy and hope in the resurrection. Many believed that the disputation in Altenburg became a milestone in the forming and shaping of the Lutheran Church in the west of America. The pastors were also filled with a new joyfulness. “They were well aware of the fact that the Lutheran pastor in his spiritual office **needs no other power than the power of the Word**, for the power of God to save does not lie in one’s own strength or worthiness, but only in the Gospel” (p39). The pastors remembered God’s Word and Luther’s doctrine and this fortified them against all kinds of doubts. Some did not want to be counselled and went their own ways. But the newly settled Saxon congregations recognized that the exercise of the church government, according to **divine** right, belongs to each individual congregation.

This understanding brought peace, order and harmony to the relationships between the pastors and their congregations. “After the congregations had gained the right understanding of the freedom (from the laws of men) they have in Christ, of their spiritual rights and duties, they also began to make the right God-pleasing **use** of the spiritual power which Christ gave not only to the ministers, but also to His Church on earth (as the Catechism teaches).” The Missourians rejoiced in the pure Word of God and as they cleared the forest for cultivation their voices sang with the voice of the Lord. They had to put up with detractions from the world, but they bore their load with dignity.

The constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Missouri Synod took place six years after the Altenburg Disputation and was based on the same doctrinal foundation. This synod held fast without wavering to the Word of God for many years. There were opponents of these doctrines in the world, such as the Roman Catholics and the Donatists. These were countered by Dr Walther when he went into the Holy Scripture and effectively rebutted them. Walther “recognized that the spiritual power of the Word is strong enough to rebuild the Church...independent of the state, according to the genuine evangelical principles of the Reformation” (p44).

Walther studied Luther and found that what made Luther so strong in his struggles was his **faith in the Bible**. This enabled him to stand firm against the Pope, Zwingli, Calvin and the enthusiasts. “Luther knew well that the Holy Scripture is the only **source**, rule and guideline of faith” (p44). Walther proclaimed, “**back to Luther, for whoever goes back to Luther will be led into the Holy Scriptures**” (p45). The church of Christ is not a visible earthly kingdom, but is the congregation of the true believers and saints scattered throughout the world, who are under one Head, namely Christ. The members of this church do not adhere to the Pope, but to Christ as they adhere to the universal Christian Church. Christians must be careful that they do not substitute distraction, bitterness, or even “constitutional form” in place of a right unified faith.

The democratic constitution of the Missouri Synod led one or two to misunderstand its nature. One critic maintained that church government and the Office of the Keys had been **transferred** to each individual congregation. “But here nothing is to be transferred by people in the first place, but only to confess what the true Christians as spiritual priests and kings already originally **have** from Christ” (p48). The real Old Lutherans, in answering the question, **with whom is the original spiritual power**, the power of the keys, which includes all church government, say this. It is the power given by **Christ to His Church** on earth, nor does it belong to a pope or church government. Congregations receive their spiritual power through Christ and not the Church. “Spiritual power is principally with the Christians as spiritual priests. It cannot be with the pope or the bishops alone” (p49). The Saxon pastors realized that this brought more blessings and was a factor in limiting priestly pride. They also rejoiced in the **power of the Word** which led to a heavenly outpouring of blessings for them and their congregations.

What has been presented shows the beginnings and consolidation of the Missouri Synod. In the next instalment it is hoped to show how the Missouri Synod, through the grace of God, became **a powerhouse of true Lutheranism in North America**. Finally, it is intended to list all the pastors in America who received and accepted calls from the old ELSA Synod in Australia and also those native born Australians who went to St Louis to study and returned to minister, along with pen-notes on each of them. For **we owe a huge debt of gratitude to Missouri in helping to build up and maintain orthodox Lutheranism here in Australia**. — , October 2020

Letting Scripture Speak for Itself – Part 5

Baptism

John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.¹

Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?²

And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.³

But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.⁴

And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.⁵

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.⁶

But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.⁷

This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood.⁸

And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.⁹

In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.¹⁰

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.¹¹

The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.¹²

With the washing of water by the word.¹³

*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*¹⁴

*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*¹⁵

*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*¹⁶

*Save yourselves from this untoward generation.*¹⁷

*They that gladly received his word were baptized.*¹⁸

*They were baptized, both men and women.*¹⁹

*And he [the Philippian jailor] ...was baptized, he and all his, straightway.*²⁰

*And many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.*²¹

*These are they which... have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.²² And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*²³

*For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*²⁴

*Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*²⁵

*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.*²⁶

*And I went and washed, and I received sight.*²⁷

*Ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*²⁸

*Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*²⁹

*One Lord, one faith, one baptism.*³⁰

*Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.*³¹

¹Mark 1:4; ²Luke 3:7; ³Luke 7:29; ⁴Luke 7:30; ⁵Matt 3:16–17; ⁶1 John 5:7; ⁷John 19:34–35; ⁸1 John 5:6; ⁹1 John 5:8; ¹⁰Zech 13:1; ¹¹Ezek 36:25; ¹²1 John 1:7; ¹³Eph 5:26; ¹⁴Matt 28:19; ¹⁵Mark 16:16; ¹⁶Acts 2:38; ¹⁷Acts 2:40; ¹⁸Acts 2:41; ¹⁹Acts 8:12; ²⁰Acts 16:33; ²¹Acts 18:8; ²²Rev 7:14; ²³Acts 22:16; ²⁴Gal 3:27; ²⁵Rom 6:4; ²⁶Tit 3:5; ²⁷John 9:11; ²⁸1 Cor 6:11; ²⁹Heb 10:22; ³⁰Eph 4:5; ³¹Rev 1:5.

Faithful and God-fearing parents

God alone knows how many now are safely in the Heavenly mansions because of faithful Christian parents (many of whom also had at least one faithful parent).

Augustine is perhaps one of the more significant ones in church history converted by the Holy Ghost in answer to the tears and prayers of his mother. St Paul wrote that the strong faith found in Timothy was also because it too was found in his mother and grandmother.

The repentant thief on his cross was in his last hours restored to the True Faith when he began to remember and see beside him the fulfilment of the prophecies and promises concerning the Messiah that he had been taught in his childhood, most likely in the first place by his parents. What overwhelming joy must have been his when about two or three hours later he came into the presence of Him who had so recently spoken to him that glorious promise: "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise!"

Many faithful parents are recorded in the Scriptures. One of great importance in the Old Testament is that **of a mother who at the time saw only her duty, and hoped that her son would grow to be and remain a child of God.** But the result of her faithfulness was no doubt so far reaching that even today

we should thank and praise God that because of it many were removed from their idolatry and brought back to the True God.

This was of course Hezekiah who in his reign as a God-fearing King in Judah did all in his power to eradicate the influence of the heathen and restored the true Old Testament worship. While the influence of his reign was only relatively short in the history of Judah, yet no doubt there are souls in Heaven thanking and praising God also that He had given them a faithful and God-fearing king who helped to keep them with their Heavenly King and Messiah.

The Twelve Foundation Stones in the New Jerusalem

“And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper (Quartz); the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony (Agate); the fourth, an emerald; The fifth, sardonyx (Onyx); the sixth, sardius (Cornelian); the seventh, chrysolite (Peridot); the eighth, beryl (Aquamarine); the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth (Zircon); the twelfth, an amethyst” Rev 21:19–20.

Gems can be classed in two types – anisotropic and isotropic – and recently scientists discovered cross polarized light (“pure light”) which can determine, under illumination, those anisotropic stones that display a colourful array of all the colours of the rainbow, whereas isotropic stones under the same “pure light” lose all their colour and appear black.

The twelve stones listed above in Rev 21 (picturing the Church triumphant in all its glory) are ALL anisotropic gems, i.e. gems that reflect colourful patterns when exposed to cross polarized light. Gemstones we might consider more precious or valuable are not so, i.e., diamond, spinal, pyrope, almandine (garnite).

St John on the Isle of Patmos well over two thousand years ago wrote Revelations. Nothing about cross polarized light (“pure light”) was known to him. The Creator of all things divinely inspired the text to John, choosing gems to picture the purity of the saints in Paradise, that only He knew would reflect His “pure light,” deliberately avoiding gems that would lose their colour.

“...and there was a rainbow round about the throne...” Rev 4:3.

—Adapted from *The 12 Foundation Stones in New Jerusalem* from ChristianEvidence.net by

Pastor Fritzsche and the Days of Genesis

(by Dr. Brauer)

The questions which orthodox theologians have proposed for consideration to those who interpret the “days” of the creation as periods of thousands or even millions of years, and which Fritzsche¹ – at all events, in effect – put to his rationalistic opponent are the following:

- 1) If the first six days were days of an indefinite length (periods) and not natural days of ...twenty-

¹**Pastor Fritzsche** (1797 – 1863) studied under the outstanding Bible teaching theologian in Germany, **Dr Scheibel**. Fritzsche refused to join the **Union Church of King Frederick William III** which was based on a compromise on the Lord’s Supper. For a time as a “spiritual outlaw” he secretly served those loyal Lutherans who stood alone for the truth in the Silesia area of Germany and who though persecuted loved God’s Word more, even worshipping at night in the forests. In 1841 he together with a number of these steadfast Lutherans arrived in Adelaide, South Australia. Besides being a faithful pastor, he trained three men for the ministry. There is no photo available of Fritzsche.

He was really the founder of true Lutheranism in Australia. These words are very significant because: (1) Darwin published his false evolutionary ideas in the *Origin of the Species* in 1859; (2) Charles Lyell had already published these wicked views in 1830; (3) the attacks on Gen.1 have occurred in false teaching Lutheran churches throughout the world and even here in Australia; (4) Fritzsche recognized that attacking Gen. 1 was an attack on the absolute authority, verbal inspiration and absolute inerrancy of Holy Scripture. He knew that such an attack meant the spiritual death of Lutheranism if these errors were accepted.

four hours, was the seventh day (the Sabbath) on which God rested “from all His work which He had made,” which He blessed and sanctified, and concerning which He commanded the children of Israel to “remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy... in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant” etc – was that seventh day also an indefinite period?

- 2) When God gave the command to the Jews: “Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work,” did He, by the appellation “day,” desire to denote a long, indefinite period lasting thousands of years? Was a Jew to labour six indefinite periods before he rested, each period lasting thousands of years? Is it consonant with science and philosophy to place such **forced, unnatural, and absurd interpretations** on the common meaning of words?
- 3) If the length of the “one day” of which Moses speaks (“and the evening and the morning were one day” – thus in the original) does not denote that portion of time which is measured and consumed by the earth’s revolution on its axis (24 hours), but, on the contrary, denotes long, indefinite periods, by what rule of scientific or philosophic interpretation can the same word, in the next verse, be made to mean a day in the literal sense of the word, and not a long, indefinite period?
- 4) Further, did the earth take longer to make one revolution on its axis at the time of its creation than it takes at the present time (24 hours)?
- 5) As the earth at the present time revolves once in 24 hours, causing day and night, when and how did the change take place from the periods of thousands of years to those of 24 hours?
- 6) If the first six periods called “days” by Moses were of thousands of years’ duration, did the sun shine continuously during these long “days” (since it was created to “divide the day from the night”)? And were the periods called “nights” by Moses also of thousands of years’ duration, with no appearance of the sun during these long periods?

Fritzsche is stated to have added that **orthodox theologians** were not much concerned about the resolution of these questions, **because they accepted the account of the creation given in the Scriptures as correct and true**; but a preacher, who is at the same time a scientist and philosopher should be interested and endeavour to give an unequivocal reply to these questions.

Finally, Fritzsche had asked this question, “If you believe that the Biblical account of creation is not true, and that the Bible contains numerous errors of one kind or another, why do you in your pulpit call it the ‘Word of God’ and induce the common people to believe that you accept the whole Bible as the Word of God and as correct and true?”

Fritzsche is said to have concluded with the words: Please do not regard my questions, and particularly my references to your scientific and philosophic knowledge, as sarcasm or irony. I assure you I regard with deference your knowledge of science and philosophy. A reply came to this effect: “As our viewpoints are poles asunder, a continuance of the correspondence is a waste of time. So please excuse.”

[These unpublished comments are taken from the original manuscript by **Dr Brauer on the History of the Lutheran Church in Australia** (they were not printed in *Under The Southern Cross*) pages 908–910. We would like to acknowledge the approval to print this from Lutheran Archives Adelaide and express our appreciation to Janette Lange and Jacinta Connell from the archives for their help. Emphasis added.] —BLW

History: German Evangelical Martyrs in the year 1919

The following account of some of the consequences of the late war appeared in the “*Abendschule*” of the 11th March of this year [1919]:

“Before the war we often heard the opinion expressed that there would never be a time of persecution. The clays of martyrs charged or executed on account of their faith were believed to be past. Even in this

century there were persecutions and outrages. On 2 January 1919, Riga, unsuccessfully defended by the Germans and Balts, fell into the hands of the Bolsheviks. A reign of terror commenced in this almost entirely German city, the marks of which will never be effaced in the pages of history. The rage of the inhuman mob was principally directed against the church and the clergy.”

“Religion,” says a pastor of Riga, “was according to notorious precedent declared to be a private affair, but godlessness was a party affair. Anything in the least emblematic of religion was removed from public and State institutions. Religious instructions in schools was prohibited, as also prayers in school. Children assembled in the churches for prayer before the commencement of school hours. Even the churches were desecrated. Communist leaders entered the pulpits and talked nonsense and blasphemy. Satan was commended as the first blessed revolutionary who brought to mankind liberty from the servitude of God. The ‘Marsellaise’ was sung in the churches by the mob to the strains of the organs, organists being compelled to play the desired tune. For weeks pastors were in the habit of rededicating their pulpits and churches as a protest against such profanations. The communists then changed the time of their meetings to the time of the Sunday services in order to wean the people from the church going habit. In this they failed. The church services continued well attended. Other means had to be applied. To break the power of the Gospel, at first a few pastors were arrested, and some condemned to death on account of anti-evolutionary activities in the years 1905–1906. Propst Marnitz and Pastor Treu were executed. Conditions were now the same in Riga as they had formerly been in Esthonia and Livonia, where Professor Hahn and the Pastors Hesse, Pauker, Adolphi Schwartz and Jende had died for the sake of the Gospel. Our ranks trembled. Every kind of meeting was forbidden, and we therefore came together secretly to gather strength in prayer and to beseech the blessings of God for our congregations. More and more people came to the services. Arrests of pastors became more frequent, and finally applied to almost all. Even superannuated old men who officiated in the place of the imprisoned pastors did not escape. Eckhardt was torn from the pulpit, Hoffman taken from the altar where he was dispensing the holy communion to his confirmees. In the corridors of the prison we met and exchanged greetings. This was real persecution. The one was placed before the alternative of denying Christ or taking a bullet. To another the proposal was made that he should give an undertaking that he would give up preaching and regain his liberty. My saddest experience was not the brutal treatment received in the prison, nor the menial labour to which we were forced, as the cleansing of sanitary outhouses reeking with deadly typhus germs, or driving a dung cart through the city, the blows, the curses that in common with my friends I was subjected to, what was hardest for me was when, after a most shameless personal search, the management of the prison consisting of wild truculent monsters ordered me to be deprived of the New Testament which I was wont to carry in my coat pocket.

“After weeks of terrible uncertainty it seemed as if our liberation through German and Baltic troops were again at hand. In their rage before taking to flight, the Bolsheviks murdered 32 hostages they had in prison. Of their martyrdom, the writer who at the last moment managed to escape has the following to relate: ‘How inspiring the manner in which they met their death. Young Pastor Gruener strode to the place of execution singing “Wenn ich einmal soil scheiden, etc.”’ (the last two verses of the hymn “O bleeding head and wounded”). Even the firing party was moved, and no trigger was pulled until the last echo of the hymn had died away. Missionary von Boettcher was not most concerned about his sick wife and his child, but strengthening his companions from the New Testament he proclaimed the Gospel until a bullet silenced him. The young concert singer, Marion von Kloth, who had so often encouraged her companions by singing the hymn, “Weiss ich den Weg auch nicht, Du weisst ihn wohl,” sang this same hymn once more as she was marched to the place of execution. Facing her executioners, this noble young lady had but the one wish, that at the last she might not falter. Eckhardt, who accompanied his companions with prayer as they were led out of the cell he occupied together with them, a few minutes later went forth in prayer to his death. He had appointed the text of his funeral address to be, “The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places,” and he also wrote a farewell sermon for his congregations which was read to the latter when his funeral address had been delivered.” In the registers of the Communists, 3,654 death warrants were found. To the Evangelical, church there has been given a large number of martyrs.

—*The Australian Lutheran*, 1920, p1

Notes and News

Hospital: Since the last *Steadfast*, _____ has been in hospital. May _____ find comfort in the following passage:

Read: Matthew 9:27–38

VERSE 36: He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted.

O Thou who didst call Thyself the Good Shepherd, and who desirest to make us all lambs and sheep of Thy fold, our hearts are warmed by the knowledge that there is One who careth for us, who pitieth us, who understandeth our troubles, who doth sympathize with us, who doth comprehend just how sorely we need help and heartening. It is precious to know not only that Thou art the all-seeing, all-knowing God, but that Thou wast actually among us on earth in human form, Thyself didst suffer human needs and wants, Thyself didst bear the very burdens which afflict our shoulders and break us down as we struggle on with our loads of sin and woe. How well Thou didst make Thyself understood when Thou didst confide to Thy hearers that the Good Shepherd layeth down His life for His sheep. Thou didst lay down Thy life, not only when death overcame Thee on Calvary, but also when Thou didst go about doing good, rendering redeeming ministry, pouring Thy very existence into the fervour of the messages Thou didst carry to the needy men and women of the ancient days. Look, Lord: we too are weary, and blind, and hungering, and fainting, and leaderless. With all earth’s boasted accomplishments, we have nothing wherewith to solace our hearts and the hearts of our fellows. We need Thee. We need Thee as the Shepherd who layeth down His life for the sheep. Be Thou evermore our Redeemer, our Saviour from sin. Amen. *(Moments with God, p27)*

_____ : On Saturday, 24 October 2020, _____ celebrated _____ with _____ family. _____ is at present working at _____. We wish God’s blessings on _____ future life and urge her to remain true to the Saviour. “Stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved” Philippians 4:1. –GLW

_____ : Congratulations to _____ as well as to _____ of _____ for the award they recently received in recognition of the high standard in which they operate their business. If Christians in true faith perform the duties of their calling to the highest Godly standard possible, the Lord’s gracious blessing rests upon them. –BLW

Engagement — _____ : _____ joyfully announce the engagement of _____

_____ . May the Lord richly bless them in their married life together as they continue their walk with Christ. “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” Proverbs 3:5–6) _____



Christmas Greetings

The Pastors of the ELCR wish to extend to all our readers best wishes for a happy and Blessed Christmas and New Year.