



# Steadfast

## In the Word and Faith



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## What Luther Says About —

### Law and Gospel



**The Law Is Blasting Lightning; the Gospel, Warming Sun.** At Mount Sinai the thundering, the lightning, the dense clouds, the mountain smoking and flaming, and all that terrible display did not exhilarate or enliven the Children of Israel. Rather it filled them with terror, almost frightened the life out of them, and showed how unable they were, with all their purity and holiness, to endure the presence of God speaking to them out of the cloud. So the Law, in its proper use, does nothing but reveal sin, engender wrath, accuse, fill with terror, and almost lead minds to despair. This is the proper use of the Law; here it ends, nor should it go any farther. Conversely, the Gospel is a light that enlightens, revives, comforts, and raises up fearful minds; for it shows that God is gracious to sinners and to the unworthy for Christ's sake if only they believe that they are delivered from the curse through His death, that is, from sin and death everlasting, and that through His death the blessing is given them, that is, grace, the remission of sins, righteousness, and life everlasting. By distinguishing the Law from the Gospel in this way, we give to both their proper use and office. (SL 9, 414 f).

**Law and Gospel Far Apart in Theory, Intertwined in Heart.** Though in their essential nature (*re ipsa*) these two are far apart, they are nonetheless most intimately joined in one and the same heart. Nothing is linked more closely than fear and confidence, Law and Gospel, sin and grace. For they are so connected that the one absorbs the other. Therefore there can be no mathematical combination that is like this. (SL 9,454).

**Law and Gospel, Their Use and Their Misuse.** The Law is of no use whatever in the attainment of righteousness. Correctly understood, it makes people desperate; not correctly understood, it makes them hypocritical. The Gospel, not correctly understood, makes people secure; otherwise it makes them godly. This is why the Law has been given only for the sake of transgression (Gal. 3:19), so that

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people might intensely long for Christ. Externally it serves as a political norm. (W -T 1, No. 1167).

**Skill That Only God Can Teach.** Not everyone has the ability to distinguish between the Law and the Gospel. The ability to differentiate these comes down from above, from the Father. (W 47, 750).

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## Devotion — 1 Timothy 6:6 — Part 2

(Continued from January – February 2020 edition)

### “But godliness with contentment is great gain.” 1 Timothy 6:6

2. With Godliness, as Wuest says, comes **CONTENTMENT**, naturally in association and by accompaniment.

“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! Notice again that 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), as God’s ambassadors of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18–20),

Philippians 2:15: “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.”

2 Corinthians 5:18–20: “And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”

The Greek commentator Thayer says that **contentment** is “a perfect condition of life, in which no aid or support is needed ... a sufficiency

of the necessities of life;” “And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work” 2 Corinthians 9:8.

**CONTENTMENT COMES FROM DEPENDENCE (on God) NOT FROM INDEPENDENCE (from God)!**

“Contented” describes someone who is satisfied, quiet, easy in mind, not complaining, opposing or demanding more. It is our duty as Christians to be contented with the circumstances our Heavenly Father provides us. If he can grow or better his earthly circumstances in life to the glory of God, the Godly person does so, but the key to his contentedness is that he is satisfied with his lot in life. He knows that his soul and his life rests in the hands of his almighty Father in heaven.

Someone once described contentedness as “having adequate resources.” It rests in the knowledge that our Saviour has done everything necessary to redeem us from our sins. Our Heavenly Father has accepted the payment and as a result has adopted us as His children. Romans 8:15–17: “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.” As our Heavenly Father the Lord takes upon Himself the responsibility for our protection and our provision, granting us direct access to Him through prayer and promising to

“supply all our needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” Philippians 4:19. Faith in God accepts all of these promises as one’s own, and this attitude of trust results in contentedness.

**The attitude of contentedness is NOT SELF SUFFICIENCY BUT “SAVIOR SUFFICIENCY.”** The believer’s contentment, comes from **dependence** on God through faith in Christ. It is not dependent on outward circumstances, such as earthly happiness or prosperity. Contentedness can even be found in suffering, as displayed by Paul and Silas in the prison at Philippi, where, despite their pain, they were singing hymns to glorify and praise God.

### THE POWER FOR CONTENTMENT

2 Corinthians 9:8: “And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work.”

In the original Greek grammar, the expression “God is able” is in what is called the present tense, which here has the idea that “God is continuously able.” He is continuously able without end to make “all grace abound toward you.” For what purpose is He able to make all grace abound, or overflow in abundance toward you?

Whenever you see the word “that” in the Bible, always pause to reflect and ponder the text, for this word gives the purpose for something. In other words, “that” is now informing us of the reason that God makes all grace abound toward us, and that now follows. The reason is so that we may have sufficiency in all things, in other words, have all the spiritual resources that we need, to produce an overflow of good works. What a blessing contentment truly is!

—TJW

## God’s Spiritual Blessings – Part 2

[I can’t urge our readers enough to study Hochstetter’s *History of the Missouri Synod in North America and her Doctrinal Controversies*. From this book, highlights that by God’s grace everything that Dr Walther and the early Missourians were able to accomplish in the Lutheran Church was through the right division of Law and Gospel and the teaching of the pure Word of God. May we imitate the lessons here placed before us. This synopsis has been submitted to and approved by Pastor Bryce Winter. Bolded emphasis is Pastor Bryce Winter’s and the underlined is . – BLW]

The first article on the Missouri Synod dealt with a fledgling Church with its various adversities coming together by **placing their trust solely on the Word of God**. In this the parishioners were superbly led by their pastors who provided them with the solid foundation that was needed for them to stay on the straight, but narrow path that leads to Heaven. The concluding words of Jesus’ sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7: 24–27 are most apt: **“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”**

In the period of time that this article deals with, 1847–84, the Missouri Synod remained faithful to God’s Word and the Lutheran Confessions that were also based on God’s Word and hence flourished. The year of 1847 was notable, for in that year the Missouri Synod’s constitution was established. This constitution incorporated eight theses which were drawn up in 1841 as part of the settling of the Altenburg disputation.

As is the case in most secular and religious undertakings, there is a tremendous amount of work that has to be done in order to set up the undertaking. The conditions were primitive to say the least. Scrub or

forest had to be cleared manually. Roads had not been established and only tracks existed. It was quite easy to get lost. Living conditions were not good, but **in spite of that, the pioneers saw fit to build churches and schools as a priority.** They realized that it was up to them to build the house of God and that if they were to protect their children from unbelieving school teachers they had to **establish Christian schools for their children.** In Perry County, a cabin was built for a theological school practically before the parishioners themselves had built their own cabins or houses. The theological candidates themselves assisted in building the cabin. This log cabin served the church well for 44 years until a magnificent new building was opened in St Louis in 1883.

Regarding **education**, where no teacher could be employed, the **minister and others taught to the best of their ability.** Many parents who did not belong to a Lutheran congregation also sent their children to the school because they could see that their children would get an excellent education in a disciplined atmosphere. It is interesting to note that these non-Lutheran parents had to purchase *Luther's Small Catechism* for their children, as all students took part in religious education. The Lutheran schools, even at this time (approximately 1850) could compete very favourably with the local state schools in all subjects. An anti-Christian influence in the state schools, along with Darwinism and atheism were filling many non-Lutherans with alarm. The Lutheran parish school in St Louis was a beacon for the Lutherans. "There is no question that the Missouri Synod, whose principles are often shouted as too harsh and grumpy by the world, is not only spreading through its schools, but is also acting as a salutary salt to counteract the general decay among the people" (Hochstetter).

The Addison Seminary for School Teachers which was viewed as of being absolutely essential was also founded at this time. Parishioners were exhorted to **pray for the training of future leaders and pastors.** Parents were reminded of their obligations, one of which was that if God had given them capable boys, they should be encouraged to serve the Lord and His Church. Parents were also reminded of the words of **Luther** in his preface to the Small Catechism, that **if they did not do this they would "prove to be the worst enemies of God and man."**

In the early years of the Missouri Synod, God called home Pastors GH Loeber and OH Walther (older brother of Pastor Ferdinand Walther). In 1850, Pastor Ferdinand Walther was elected professor of Concordia Seminary. Of Walther, R Hoffmann wrote that "he is the creator and to this day the spiritual leader of the Synod; he who knows him knows the Synod; he knew how to instil in it his thoughts, his direction, his goals." But these were not his own, but **God's.**

When Dr Walther took up his position in St Louis, he initially had some opposition by people who had followed Stephan and who had gone from "hierarchical Stephanism to the opposite extreme, namely Donatism and Democratism." However, he won over part of the church, while others moved away, some of whom returned to the fold at a later date. But the leader of this group, a man called Sproede, continued to attack the St Louis congregation. They in turn issued an open invitation to all and sundry to come and see and hear if they were a Christian congregation or not. **The St Louis congregation learned from these battles to trust God and His Word.** In 1842, the first church of the Trinity congregation was built and this was followed in 1865 by the second in the district.

Now something about Dr Walther. Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther was born on 25 October 1811 in Langenchursdorf in the Saxon Valley of the river Mulde. He enrolled in the University of Leipzig as a theological student in 1829. This university poured a **poisonous** current over the land. It was full of **rationalist** teachers. Walther's elder brother, Hermann, had been awakened to the true faith and Ferdinand joined a circle of students who, through the mediation of Hermann, **had come to believe in the grace of God in Christ.** Others in the group included Theodore Brohm and Johann Friedrich Buenger. Some in the world hated and/or pitied this circle of students but the faith that had been kindled in them by the Bible was the true Lutheran faith. Hochstetter states: "In the beginning there was no lack of doctrinal differences between the different churches, but as they grew in knowledge" this changed. They also came to believe that their Christianity could not rest on a firm foundation "until they too had

experienced a high degree of repentance and true horrors of hell. The result was a fairly general change from a cheerful evangelical Christianity to a more legal and sombre one.” Walther became immersed in a labyrinth of doubt and he was eventually shown that **he had to go to Jesus and surrender himself, in faith**, to the heavenly good Samaritan. The peace of God returned to him.

When it was time for Walther to leave university, although he and the others had good credentials, they had “no prospect of being promoted to the office by the rationalist consistory (a kind of church board).” They were therefore dependent on patronage positions. Walther found that the Saxon State Church was permeated by unbelief and that “the union between believers and unbelievers was more oppressive than in Prussia.” Many of the church textbooks, hymnbooks and agendas were no longer in conformity with the Confessions of the Lutheran Church. Many of the chief shepherds of the Church were blaspheming the divine truth in their congregation and so under “the heavy burden of conscience” Walther was led to seek freedom of conscience in America in October 1838.

In America Walther began to publish the church newspaper, *Der Lutheraner*, in 1844. From the beginning Walther and his fellow believers had accusations thrown at them by people in America and Germany. They were accused of being obsessed with strict orthodoxy, in fact dead orthodoxy. The fact that Walther was interested in the state of the congregations and of the visible fellowship of the parishioners seems to have escaped the notice of his critics. Walther claimed from the beginning that “everyone who submits to the whole written Word of God without false pretence and who carries the true faith in our Lord Jesus Christ in his heart and confesses it before the world, we extend our hands to him...” Walther rejected Donatism, the Sects, Roman narrow mindedness. He upheld that the Lutheran Church retains the honour and privilege of being the Church of the pure Word and the true Sacraments because it confessed the pure Word as laid down in the Lutheran Confessions. He confessed that our church claims that “no **other** doctrine of **Christ**, and **no other** doctrine **saves** people, than the doctrine and faith which is carried in the heart and known with the mouth by the true Lutherans.”

Walther stated that “the object of our struggle is nothing other than the true faith, the pure truth, the unadulterated Gospel, the pure foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, since Jesus Christ is the cornerstone.” He also stated that “Luther is not the head of a sect” and that he did not preach new doctrines. Rather “we prefer to go back to our symbols and Luther’s writings, because it was he who drew the pure Gospel from the rubble of the papal statutes of man by going back to the **Holy Scripture**.” If Luther had “led his own word in the heart, he would not have been the Reformer through whom God provided the help that one was allowed to teach with **confidence**.” Therefore the Lutheran Church is both the “true Bible Church and the Church of Grace.”

Walther’s public ministry was directed to the **salvation of souls**. He safeguarded the right of Christians “to **judge doctrine** which brought spiritual freedom for the Christian man back to light from God’s Word and Luther’s Reformation writings, without which no foresight against false doctrine would be possible.”

In 1872, six evangelical Lutheran synods came together to form the **Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference**. In the opening sermon Dr Walther preached on 1 Timothy 4:16 and showed that the salvation of souls should be made the ultimate goal of the common work in the Kingdom of Christ. He warned against the temptation to merely aim at enlarging the Synod and urged the hearers to resist selfishness. In the second part of his sermons he answers critics who say that Lutherans spend too much time arguing about doctrine, with the words of the apostle: “**Take heed unto the doctrine**.” In this the whole Word of God is revealed for the salvation of men. It also follows that if **we give away even one of God’s saving words, then we are despising God’s riches in grace**.

We should always be mindful of the following words. “But while not every doctrine of the Word of God is a heavenly seed of rebirth to eternal life, but also every **human doctrine** in matters of salvation is a hellish seed of Satan’s birth to eternal death, it also follows from this, that it is not only the glory of God

and His Word that demands that it be faithfully confessed, but also that the care for immortal souls obliges every faithful Lutheran preacher to add to his doctrine also the defence of it, and to protest against all human doctrine.”

When *Der Lutheraner* began to appear in 1844, the local Lutheran Church was in a period of terrible decline. Many Lutherans had lost the awareness and knowledge of pure doctrine. Many were filled with the spirit of unionism and had flirted with all sorts of sects. Dr Walther had to **use sharp language to get these Lutherans to see the error of their ways**. However, the harshness he used against the enemies of the pure doctrine was **not of a quarrelsome or malicious kind, but of a zeal for the truth**. But in his sermons the sharp polemical language is replaced by the Law being preached with the seriousness of convicting consciences of their sin and “the Gospel without reservation, so that even the most grieving sinner may find comfort and peace.”

In concluding this section on Dr Walther, the following quotation bears witness to the effect of his work: “Dr Walther, through his word and testimony, has done so much in the vast North America by the grace of God that other synods have begun to be ashamed of their syncretism of religion-mongering and have listened to the voice of the Missouri Synod.”

Another man is also highly revered who played a large part in shaping the Missouri Synod. This man is **Friedrich Conrad Dietrich Wyneken**, who was born on **13 May 1810** in Verdun, in the Kingdom of Hanover. He arrived in Baltimore in 1838, accompanied by candidate CW Wolf. They were missionaries who set out to visit German Lutherans in the west and gather them into churches. Wyneken was an honest and sincere man whose integrity was exemplary. In September 1838, he went to Pittsburgh, bought a horse and stayed in Ohio for some time. He went to Fort Wayne, then only a small city. From there he did a missionary journey to the western part of Ohio. He found the church conditions of the immigrated Germans to be so bad that some had fallen back into paganism, others had become enthusiasts (fanatics), especially Methodists. Wyneken preached the joyful message of Christ to them.

As Wyneken was a humble man, he was prepared to speak to anyone, and listen to them. But he had the compelling message of Christ crucified which he brought to souls who, due to the conditions of that time, were being deprived of it. In time, his ability became widely known and his workload was heavy. He became the second minister to be elected to the position of **president of the Missouri Synod**.

This presentation is an insight into a translation of a book by Christian Hochstetter entitled the *History of The Evangelical Lutheran Missouri Synod In North America and Her Doctrinal controversies – 1838 to 1884*, by Ron Lah of America. Much of the work of this book dealing with the different controversies is relevant to the ELCR. The aspects of the question of **Church fellowship** and how the Missouri Synod dealt with this question is particularly interesting. Other controversies included relations with the **Iowa Synod, the Millenium, the anti-Christ, the doctrine of the Election of Grace**, the break with the Leipzig Mission society, and others.

In view of how the Election of grace controversy was portrayed by some in Germany, as though the Missouri Lutherans were disturbers of the peace, and that it was better to devote your time and energy to missions and such good works, the Missourians countered: “It is nevertheless certain that nobody can be diligent in a godly life who does not adhere with all seriousness to the pure teaching of the divine Word. **Only those who know the pure Word of God and have experienced its saving power in their hearts will be willing to participate in the building of the Kingdom of God and to place themselves at the service of the Lord Jesus without compulsion.**”

Professor Walther, in his address at the opening of the new building for Concordia Seminary in 1883 said that because the Missourians had committed everything to God they had been flooded with one congregation after another entering their synodical union. The old Lutheranism became powerful again as the old treasures of the Church were resurrected. The old pure songs full of faith and love resounded

again with their old sweet melodies. Thousands of Lutheran immigrants helped cause many new congregations to spring up. The cry for help from other parts of the world, **including Australia**, had reached America and touched their hearts. As a result of all the needs and requests, many of which were unable to be fulfilled, a new larger building for the training of church workers had become a necessity.

The history of the Missouri Synod is a **history full of church battles**. That these battles were won was due to a strong faith and trust in God. “Where the Word of God is taught clearly and more purely, where the doctrine is diligently pursued, that we are justified without works by faith alone, there the name of God is sanctified.” To the Missourians Jesus Christ was the cornerstone. “**Christ and His Word** alone shall prevail, otherwise no one shall rule in the Church of God.” The Missouri Synod was built on that foundation.

— , December 2020

## *Letting Scripture Speak for Itself – Part 6*

### **The New Man in Christ**

*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.<sup>1</sup>*

*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.<sup>2</sup>*

*Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm.<sup>3</sup>*

*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing.<sup>4</sup>*

*The flesh profiteth nothing.<sup>5</sup>*

*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.<sup>6</sup>*

*So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.<sup>7</sup>*

*Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.<sup>8</sup>*

*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?<sup>9</sup>*

*I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.<sup>10</sup>*

*As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.<sup>11</sup>*

*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.<sup>12</sup>*

*For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.<sup>13</sup>*

*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.<sup>14</sup>*

*Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.<sup>15</sup>*

*Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.<sup>16</sup>*

*Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.<sup>17</sup>*

*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. 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.<sup>18</sup>*

*For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.<sup>19</sup>*

*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.<sup>20</sup>*

*Unto the pure all things are pure.<sup>21</sup>*

*Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.<sup>22</sup>*

*For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.<sup>23</sup>*

*We have the mind of Christ.<sup>24</sup>*

*With the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.<sup>25</sup>*

*Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.<sup>26</sup>*

*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.<sup>27</sup>*

*Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.<sup>28</sup>*

*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.<sup>29</sup>*

*He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.<sup>30</sup>*

*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.<sup>31</sup>*

*For we walk by faith, not by sight.<sup>32</sup>*

*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.<sup>33</sup>*

*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.<sup>34</sup>*

*He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.<sup>35</sup>*

*For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel.<sup>36</sup>*

*They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.<sup>37</sup>*

*Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.<sup>38</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>John 3:3; <sup>2</sup>John 3:6; <sup>3</sup>Jer 17:5; <sup>4</sup>Rom 7:18; <sup>5</sup>John 6:63; <sup>6</sup>Rom 8:7; <sup>7</sup>Rom 8:8; <sup>8</sup>1 Cor 15:50; <sup>9</sup>Rom 7:24; <sup>10</sup>Rom 7:25; <sup>11</sup>John 1:12-13; <sup>12</sup>Tit 3:5; <sup>13</sup>Gal 3:27; <sup>14</sup>2 Cor 5:17; <sup>15</sup>James 1:18; <sup>16</sup>1 Pet 1:23; <sup>17</sup>2 Pet 1:4; <sup>18</sup>1 John 3:1-2; <sup>19</sup>Rom 8:19; <sup>20</sup>1 John 3:9; <sup>21</sup>Tit 1:15; <sup>22</sup>Rom 7:20; <sup>23</sup>Rom 7:22; <sup>24</sup>1 Cor 2:16; <sup>25</sup>Rom 7:25; <sup>26</sup>Rom 6:18; <sup>27</sup>Rom 8:1; <sup>28</sup>Eph 4:24; <sup>29</sup>1 Pet 2:2; <sup>30</sup>1 Cor 6:17; <sup>31</sup>Gal. 2:20; <sup>32</sup>2 Cor 5:7; <sup>33</sup>2 Cor. 4:18; <sup>34</sup>Gal 6:15-16; <sup>35</sup>Num 23:21; <sup>36</sup>Rom 9:6; <sup>37</sup>Rom 9:8; <sup>38</sup>John 3:7 –SW

## Brain Disappoints Evolutionary Thoughts

**“The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple” Psalm 119:130.**

According to evolutionary thought, humans came from ape-like creatures. These ape-like creatures came from reptiles through many steps. Likewise, reptiles ultimately came from fish, through many steps. Evolutionists say that with each major stage, more parts were added to the brain. The final development, and the greatest of all, is the cerebral cortex.

According to this theory, one of the oldest parts of the brain is the part deep inside. Evolutionists claim that this part of the brain, called the basal ganglia, comes from our reptilian past. They have described this part of the brain as “primitive.” It controls such simple things as movement and spatial memory. These are basic functions needed by reptiles. Of course, the evolutionary view that the basal ganglia is primitive was never scientifically researched.

Then researchers started to examine the workings of the basal ganglia. They have concluded that the deep structures of the brain that are supposed to be primitive are actually quite sophisticated. In fact, these so-called reptilian structures rival the cerebral cortex in sophistication. These structures receive input from all parts of the cortex. And all the neurochemicals found anywhere else in the body are also found in these structures. In other words, there is absolutely no evidence of their being primitive.

Once again, scientific research has not found what evolutionists expected. The human brain has not developed by adding parts to reptile brains. It was specially created just for human beings.

– [creationmoments.com](http://creationmoments.com), The Berean Call, 14 January 2021

## **A Youthful Martyr**

In the first ages of the Church of Christ, in the city of Antioch, a believer was carried forth to die as a martyr. “Ask any little child,” said he, “whether it were better to worship one God, the Maker of heaven and earth, and one Saviour, who is able to save us, or to worship the many false gods whom the heathen serve?”

Now, it was so that a Christian mother had come to the spot, holding by the hand a little son, of about nine or ten years old, named Cyril. The heathen judge no sooner heard the martyr’s words than his eyes rested on the child, and he desired the question to be put to him. The question was asked; and to the surprise of those who heard it, the boy replied: “God is one, and Jesus Christ is one with the Father.”

The judge was filled with rage: “Oh! base Christian!” he cried, “thou hast taught that child to answer thus.” Then turning to the boy, he said, more mildly, “Tell me, child, how did you learn this faith?”

The boy looked lovingly into his mother’s face, and replied: “It was God’s grace that taught it to my dear mother, and she taught it to me.”

—*The Australian Lutheran*, March 1914, p6

## **Why we of the ELCR oppose Lodge Membership**

In a tract entitled “*Why the Lutheran Church must object to Lodge Membership*” the whole position is concisely put as follows:

Is it proper for a Christian to take part in the religious ceremonies of an organization that:

1. Purposely omits Christ from its ritual, but still seeks to worship God?
2. Claims to teach a way of life that can please God without the work of Jesus Christ?
3. Requires of its members oaths of secrecy in matters that are unknown to them and may involve a denial of the Lord Jesus Christ?

### 1. Worshipping God without Christ

Our Lord Jesus Christ made exclusive claims about Himself that call for a clear-cut decision. He said, for instance: “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me” (John 14:6). In another place He said: “All men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him” (John 5:23).

The apostle John said, “Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father” (John 2:23). Now, you cannot hedge on these claims. Either it is true that Jesus is the only way to the Father, or there are many ways. But both cannot be true.

An honest look at the ritual and publications of many lodges, particularly that of Freemasonry and its allied orders, will show you that these organizations recognize many ways to the Father. And they purposely do not approach the Father through Jesus Christ for fear of offending anyone who follows a

different way. The theory of these organizations is that all religions are equally good ways to find God. While this may be a very popular and attractive idea, it is directly contrary to the claim of Jesus Christ. You cannot come to the Father in Jesus' name on Sunday morning and then approach Him without Jesus Christ at the Wednesday night lodge meeting. If you do, you are trying to carry water on both shoulders. About such an attempt He said: "He that is not with Me is against Me" (Luke 11:23).

## 2. A way of life to please God without Christ

For a true believer in Jesus Christ there is only one hope – the forgiveness of sins through faith in Him. The believer stands as a beggar before God, asking for mercy. Understanding the depth of his sin, he knows that he never does one thing in his life that is really the way God wants it to be. Therefore, he humbly asks for mercy. He places all his hope in the promise: "Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

In the ritual of Freemasonry this question-and-answer statement occurs: "Why were you presented a lambskin, and why is that the badge of a Mason?"

"The lamb has in all ages been deemed an emblem of innocence. He, therefore, who wears the lambskin as the badge of a Mason is thereby constantly reminded of that purity of life and conduct, so essentially necessary to his gaining admission into the celestial lodge above, where the Supreme Architect of the Universe presides" (*King Solomon and His Followers (Mass): A Valuable Aid to the Memory*, p57).

This is typical of teaching that runs throughout this order and others. It is the idea that if you are good enough God will take you into heaven. But if we can gain heaven by our own innocence and purity, why did Christ die? Is it honest to confess Jesus Christ as Saviour and still belong to and promote organizations which have no need for a Saviour?

[Editor's note: We learn in Rom 3:20, that no person can be saved by good works. This text reads: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."]

## 3. Oaths and Promises

Jesus said: "He that denieth Me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God." Knowing this claim of Jesus Christ upon His followers and the general spirit of some lodges as outlined above, do you think that a Christian should take the oath to secrecy (required by the lodge), which may, for all he knows, involve a denial of Jesus? Rules of the lodges forbid their members to talk about controversial things like religion in their meetings. Imagine! You must not confess the Lord Jesus to the very people who are your companions week after week and may not have accepted Christ.

Yet many people claim that there is absolutely no conflict between the claims of Christ and the claims of the lodge.

These are the issues. To speak of business advantage, of not taking the ritual seriously, of supplying the name of Jesus in your own heart, is to beg the question. We have been called by the Spirit of God to deny ourselves and to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to confess Him openly before men. Do we do this when we pray to a God who is purposely disassociated from Jesus Christ? Do we do this when we support the impression that man's life is good enough to stand before God, without redemption in Jesus Christ? Do we do this when we pledge ourselves not to speak of Jesus to our lodge brothers?

You see, the church is so committed to Jesus Christ that she must say these things out of love. She must warn her members against any man, organization, or teaching that offers a different way, a different truth, and a different life than Jesus Christ.

(Taken from a tract from Scriptural Anchor Publications. Adapted and Emphasis added).

## What is Our Scriptural Practice Concerning Lodge Members?

1. No person who believes the religion of the Lodge can be a true Christian.

Dr F Pieper: “Therefore it is clear that no man who has the religion of the lodge in his heart can be a Christian, but stands outside the Christian Church.” (*Theses on Unionism*, p12).

2. Out of love to Jesus we must constantly oppose the lodge.

Dr F Pieper: “Hence our earnest and unceasing struggle against the lodge.” (*ibid.*, p12).

3. No lodge members must be allowed admission into membership in our church until they have severed all connections with the lodge.

Dr F Pieper: “Therefore we allow no adherent of the religion of lodgery into the membership of the congregation, or to attend communion, until such time as they have openly renounced the religion of lodgery, and thereby so that all men can see, proved themselves to be Christians.” (*ibid.*, p12).

In the constitution of each of the congregations of the ELCR we read: “Therefore only such may become and remain members who: “(c) are not members of any secret, oath-bound society which rejects the Deity of Christ and His substitutionary atonement, and which bases its hope of salvation not on the work of the Saviour, but good conduct (John 5:2; Rom 3:20; Gal 3:10).”

4. Those members who have strayed into the Lodge must be refused admittance to the Lord’s Supper until they withdraw.

Dr JHC Fritz: “Since it is a fact that Christian church-membership and lodge membership exclude each other, there can, strictly speaking, never be made an exception to the rule that a Christian should not be a member of a lodge and that therefore a lodge member should not be communed.” (*Pastoral Theology*, p228).

The orthodox Lutheran rule is: “First withdraw, then commune.” (T.Q. IX, 123). If such a person refuses to repent after patient, evangelical admonition, then the congregation is in duty bound to deal with him according to Matt 18:17.

5. If a church member hypocritically secretly remains a member of the lodge and in event of his death, this becomes evident, then such would of necessity be refused a Christian burial.

Pastor FG Kleinig: “A conscientious Lutheran pastor cannot and will not have anything to do with the secret societies or lodges, in funerals or in any other connection.” (*Paper on Christian Burial*, p6).

– *Steadfast*, No 4, 1984, p57–59

## *Father, let me dedicate all this year to Thee*

Father, let me dedicate all this year to Thee,  
In whatever earthly state Thou wilt have me be,  
Not from sorrow, pain, or care, freedom dare I claim;  
This alone shall be my prayer: Glorify Thy name!

Can a child presume to choose, where or how to live?  
 Can a father's love refuse all the best to give?  
 More Thou givest every day than the best can claim,  
 Nor withholdest aught that may glorify Thy name.

If in mercy Thou wilt spare joys that yet are mine;  
 If on life, serene and fair, brighter rays may shine;  
 Let my glad heart, while it sings, Thee in all proclaim,  
 And, whate'er the future brings, glorify Thy name.

If Thou callest to the cross, and its shadows come,  
 Turning all my gain to loss, shrouding heart and home,  
 Let me think how Thy dear Son to His glory came,  
 And in deepest woe pray on, glorify Thy name.

– L Tuttiett, 1825. Republished from *The Australian Lutheran*, Feb 1914, pg1

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## Notes and News

**Hospital:** Since the last *Steadfast*, none of our members have been in hospital. May all of our members take comfort in the following passage:

### Read: 2 Corinthians 1:3-12

VERSES 3–4: The God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation.

GOD of all comfort, Father of mercies, cheer us on our way; for truly the way is long and hard and beset with many dangers. Again and again we have felt that we must give up life's combat. Again and again it hath seemed to us as though we had reached places where there was no way through to deliverance. Then Thou didst come to us, and all was well. But new troubles assail us with every new day, and whenever darkness falleth we dread the defenceless hours of the night. Rather than need Thee less as we gain more and more experience, we find that we need Thee more and more. Somehow, having had Thy comfort, we yearn for it more eagerly when new distresses come upon us. Thou art ready, we know to comfort us in all our tribulations. None of them can come upon us without Thy will. In them Thou dost conceal wise purposes which Thou hast toward us. The little vexations which annoy us, the awful calamities which sometimes appal us. Thou hast comfort for us in them all. No worry of ours is too insignificant for Thine attention. No doom is too terrible for Thy saving might. Continue to comfort us. When sin oppressteth our hearts and consciences, comfort us with new assurances that the blood of Thy Son is the propitiation which availeth in Thy sight. As Thou dost grant us abounding comfort, speed our steps to the side of those who need us, and enable us to comfort them in Jesus' Name. Amen.  
*(Moments with God, p28)*

: are pleased to announce the marriage of their . Because of scheduling complications with the Coronavirus pandemic, this joyous occasion was moved up from its originally planned Spring wedding date. We thank our dear Lord Jesus Christ for blessing this special day with such happiness. took their solemn vows before a small number of witnesses from both families. They now reside in -

**Sunday School Picnics –** : conducted their Sunday School Picnic at , . Pastor Gavin Winter conducted devotion on the story of Jesus Calming the Sea. also conducted their Sunday School Picnic on the afternoon of . –GLW