

The
Concordia  *Lutheran*

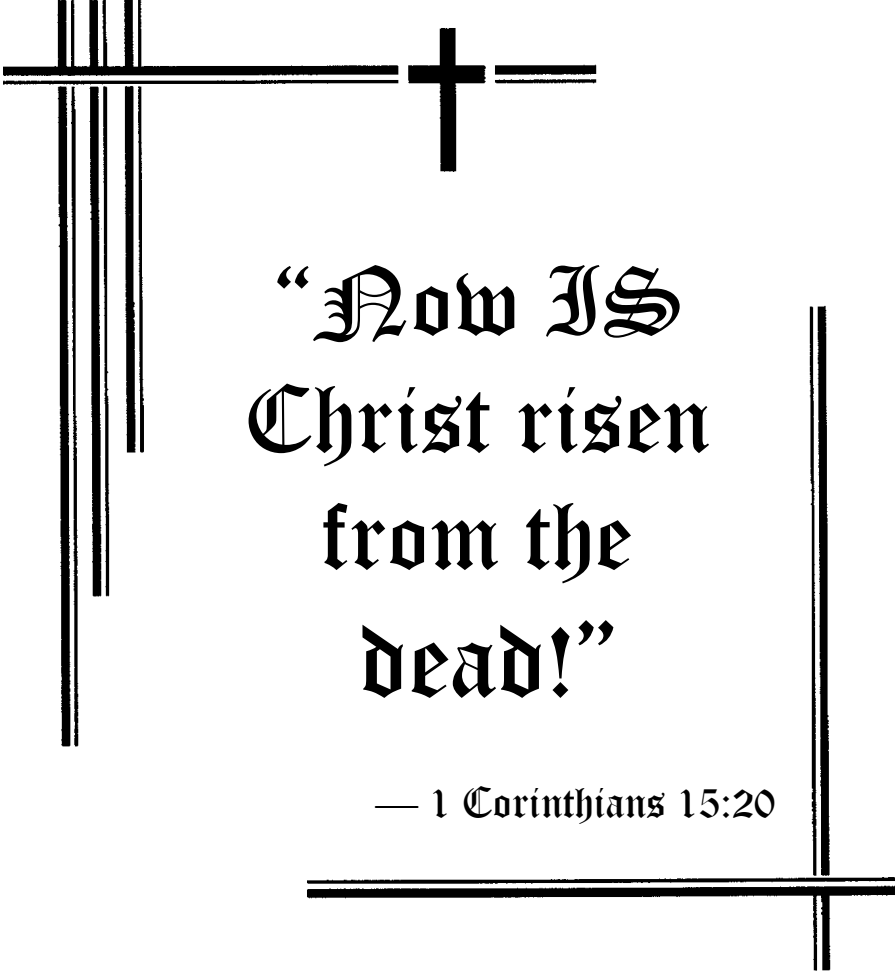
“The Scripture cannot be broken.” John 10:35.

“Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet, and a Light unto my path.” Psalm 119:105.

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“Now IS
Christ risen
from the
dead!”

— 1 Corinthians 15:20



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The Concordia Lutheran Editor

The Rev. David T. Mensing
17151 South Central Avenue
Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913

Book and Tract Editor

The Rev. Paul E. Bloedel
22012 S. Torrence Avenue
Sauk Village, IL 60411

Lay Member:

Mr. Jason A. Mabe
2852 S. Western Avenue
Park Forest, IL 60466

Address subscriptions, renewals, and remittances to: **Scriptural Publications, 17151 S. Central Avenue, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913.** A special notice of expiration will be inserted in the issue which terminates your subscription.

Officers of the
Concordia Lutheran Conference

PRESIDENT:

The Rev. Edward J. Worley
5350 South Fountain Street
Seattle, WA 98178

VICE PRESIDENT:

The Rev. Robert J. Lietz
233 North Cuyler Avenue
Oak Park, IL 60302

SECRETARY:

The Rev. David T. Mensing
17151 South Central Avenue
Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913

TREASURER:

Mr. Robert G. Bloedel
10017 - 61st Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98178

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

To set forth in simple and plain language the pure doctrine of God's Word as taught by the true Lutheran Church in full accordance with the **Book of Concord of 1580** and the **Brief Statement of 1932.**

To show, **on the basis of Scripture,** what true Christians are to believe and how, out of love for their Savior Jesus Christ, they are to lead Godly lives.

To furnish aids for Bible study and articles for Scriptural devotion and meditation.

To demonstrate, by our Scriptural stand, that our **Concordia Lutheran Conference** is not a sect or false church body, but that the congregations which form it confess, teach, and practice the Word of God in its full truth and purity and use the Sacraments according to Christ's institution. All who do this are the true visible Church on earth.

To seek out all who truly share our Scriptural position in doctrine and practice, and to urge the mutual public acknowledgment of such God-given unity. Thus we shall be able thereafter to practice a God-pleasing fellowship with them.

To show that we do not have among us a mixture of divergent teachings but that we are *"perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.."*

To set forth pertinent historical information which has a bearing upon the Church and to expose modern philosophical thought and the so-called scientific theories which contradict the Word of God.

To expose particularly the false teaching and practice of the various so-called "Lutheran" church bodies by comparing their teachings and practices with what is plainly recorded in the Word of God, in the Lutheran Confessions, and in the old orthodox Lutheran writings.

To expose false teaching and practice wherever it makes its appearance and to keep abreast of the current happenings in the church and among the nations as signs of the times.

To be truthful and factual in our reporting and freely to correct any misinformation of which we are not aware and which has been called to our attention. Also to clarify any information or statement of doctrine or practice which may be unclear to our readers or which may create a wrong impression.

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What had Jesus accomplished when He died?

“When Jesus, therefore, had received the vinegar, He said: ‘It is finished!’ And He bowed His head and gave up the ghost.” —John 19:30



As we on Good Friday read over the “last chapter” as it were in the narrative of our Savior’s suffering and death and witness in spirit the sad scene on Golgotha’s hill as our Savior yields His last expiring breath, we also call to mind all the things that happened to Him, all the things that He endured during His extremely **brief** but seemingly **endless Great Passion** of His for our sakes. In actual point of time, it was all over in less than twenty-four hours —having **be-gun** late on Maundy Thursday evening in the Garden of Gethsemane, “*the same night in which He was betrayed,*” and having **ended** with His death on Good Friday afternoon and with His burial before sundown that same day.

Indeed, as we rehearse in our minds from the “Passion History” of our Lord and Savior what **all** He endured —the **anguish of His soul** already in Gethsemane, the **mockery and scorn** heaped upon Him in the course of three trials, the **pain and suffering** inflicted upon Him by cruel tormentors and abusers, the **agony of crucifixion** (one of the most *inhumane* forms of capital punishment ever devised), and also the **excruciating trauma** of both body and soul as He suffered the very **pangs of hell**, having been forsaken by God — we can well imagine that Jesus might have welcomed the hour of death as a “merciful end” to the unspeakable suffering He had endured! Indeed, WE surely would have welcomed such relief! And so, many people have the mistaken idea that this was Jesus’ own thought when He cried out from the cross: “*It is finished!*” — “It’s finally over and done with! What a blessed relief that I don’t have to suffer anymore!”

But that is **NOT** the meaning of our Savior’s cry at all! It was **NOT** the defeated cry of someone who just “couldn’t take it anymore”! It was **NOT** a whimpering sigh welcoming the end of His suffering! Rather, it was a

bold and powerful **shout** declaring His task *COMPLETED* and His mission *ACCOMPLISHED!!* It was a cry of *TRIUMPH!* ...of *VICTORY!* For what the Lord Jesus actually “*cried out with a loud voice*” from His cross, as the other writers describe His shout, was a single word in the Greek of John’s Gospel account, “*ἤλαλησάν τε*” [teh • TELL • ess • tai], which means: “*It has been and therefore stands ACCOMPLISHED!*” —something quite different indeed from a sigh of relief!

In that victorious, triumphant cry, Jesus summed up His entire work of redemption, the entire task which His Father had sent Him, yea, had *given* Him (John 3:16), to do; and He summed it up not in some halfhearted, half-baked assessment like: “Well, I did *My best...*” or “*I hope* My Father is satisfied...” or “That should *just about* do it...” or “That should go a *long way* in *helping* people get to heaven.” No, indeed! It was the bold **declaration of FACT** that He had **satisfied in full** God’s justice with respect to all mankind and, in fulfillment of God’s first Gospel promise (*protevangelium*) to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15), He had crushed the head of that old serpent, the devil, and stripped him of his power to hold mankind in perpetual bondage to sin.

Jesus had, first of all, **kept the whole Law of God perfectly in our place!** At the time of His holy incarnation in the Virgin Mary, “*God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law*” (Galatians 4:4-5). That, in and of itself, was a **miracle**, that the Son of God, the King of all kings and Lord of all lords should be so **degraded**, so **humiliated**, that He was made subject to His own Law! And He accomplished that **willingly**, “*who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became OBEDIENT...*” (Philippians 2:6-8), not for His own benefit, not because He had to —but for OUR benefit, because He **WANTED** to!

God says to all of us who are under the Law: “*Ye shall be HOLY, for I the Lord your God am holy!*” (Leviticus 19:2). “*CURSED is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them!*” (Galatians 3:10). “*Whosoever shall keep the whole Law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of ALL.*” (James 2:10). “*Be ye therefore PERFECT, even as your Father, which is in heaven, is perfect*” (Matthew 5:48). And yet, we sinful, corrupt and helpless human beings are **completely unable** to do that!! “*We are all as an unclean*

thing, and all our **RIGHTEOUSNESSES** are as **filthy rags**” (Isaiah 64:6). “There is not a just man **upon earth** that doeth good and sinneth not” (Ecclesiastes 7:20). “**All have sinned and come short of the glory of God!**” (Roman 3:23). “Therefore by the deeds of the Law there shall **NO FLESH** be justified in His sight!” (v. 20).

And so **Jesus** performed by His **active obedience** in man’s place what man could never have done for himself: **He perfectly obeyed every Law of God**, flawlessly complied with every demand that God had made of us human beings, and thus completely satisfied God’s legislative justice so that, the Apostle Paul writes in Romans chapter five: “By the obedience of **ONE** [namely, of Jesus Himself] shall [the] **many** be made righteous” (v. 19). How fitting, then, that, already in the Old Testament, Jeremiah said of Jesus: “*This is His Name whereby He shall be called: **The Lord, OUR Righteousness***” (23:6). Throughout His life here on earth, Jesus “*was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin*” (Hebrews 4:15), so that He could lay down **HIS spotless** record before His heavenly Father **to cover OUR miserable** record, so that **HIS** righteousness could be imputed to **US**, to make **OUR** record flawless in the sight of God. That **amazing feat**, that **miracle** of **vicarious obedience**, Jesus actually “**ACCOMPLISHED**” **FOR US**, so that God’s requirements for admission into His heavenly kingdom were **met IN FULL** by Jesus, **on OUR behalf**, by the time He died on the cross and “*offered Himself without spot to God*” (Hebrews 9:14) **in OUR place!** That had already been “**ACCOMPLISHED**”! And it stands still today, recognized by God Himself, as the **ACCOMPLISHMENT** of **Jesus** which merited **OUR** redemption!!

Moreover, Jesus “**accomplished**” even **MORE!** In case there was ever any doubt about His authority to take on this task and to complete it in our place, Jesus **perfectly fulfilled all the prophecies of the Scriptures** concerning God’s **MESSIAH**, the One anointed by God in eternity already to “**accomplish**” man’s redemption. He did this not only throughout His earthly life, but very particularly during His *Great Passion*; for He had told His disciples shortly before the end of His three-year ministry: “*Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and **ALL THINGS** that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished*” (Luke 18:31). —What were those things that had been prophesied of God’s Messiah? —He was betrayed by His own “*familiar friend*,” Judas Iscariot, “*in whom He [had] trusted*” (Psalm 41:9) for thirty pieces of silver which eventually went to purchase a “*potter’s field*” to bury strangers in. —He was “*despised and rejected*” by His own people (Isaiah 53:3), hated without a cause (Psalm 35:19), ridiculed

and blasphemed (Psalm 22:7), scourged and spit upon (Isaiah 60:6), “*numbered with the transgressors*” (Isaiah 53:12), and crucified with His hands and feet “*pierced*” (Psalm 22:16). —He thirsted intensely during his suffering (Psalm 22:15), was given gall and vinegar to drink (Psalm 69:21), had His clothing divided among the soldiers and his seamless coat won in a “crapshoot” (Psalm 22:18), suffered the Godforsakenness of the damned in hell (Psalm 22:1), died without a “*bone of Him [having been] broken*” (Psalm 34:20), was pierced in His side by a soldier’s spear (Zechariah 12:10), and then was buried in the tomb of a rich man (Isaiah 53:9). **ALL** these things and many more had been prophesied hundreds of years ahead of time concerning God’s silently-suffering, *vicariously-suffering* Messiah! —And “*all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled*” (Matthew 26:56), so that Jesus could declare from His cross in complete triumph, in complete vindication, in complete fulfillment of divine prophecy: “*It has been ACCOMPLISHED, and it STANDS ACCOMPLISHED*” —Christ’s perfect record of accomplishment as the long-promised Messiah!

But there was still another accomplishment to which Jesus laid claim, as He shouted this victorious cry from the cross: He also **paid in full the debt which we owed to God because of our sins!** What was that debt? The Bible says: “*The wages of sin is death!*” Not only did Jesus have to satisfy God’s demand for RIGHTEOUSNESS; He also had to satisfy God’s demand for **JUST PUNISHMENT!** God would not have been perfectly **just, fair, and impartial** if He had simply “written off” the world’s sins as an “uncollectible debt” and hadn’t required satisfaction and punishment for them!

The only way that we as sinners could render satisfaction to God for our transgressions would be to **go to hell ourselves** and there to **suffer forever** the unspeakable trauma of **eternal death!** But God also says, according to His **mercy** in and through Christ Jesus, His Son: “*I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked*” (Ezekiel 33:11). Instead He wants “*all men to be saved*” (I Timothy 2:4). In order for **that** to happen, however, someone else had to **satisfy God’s punitive justice** and pay off our debt to Him. That “someone,” according to God’s eternal decree of redemption, was His only-begotten Son, the Word, the Holy One of Israel, **Jesus our Savior.**

How was God’s abundant mercy bestowed upon us without His justice having been compromised?? That, in and of itself, is a **profound miracle!** God imputed to His holy Son the sins of the world and made **JESUS** to be the **guilty one**, so that He could punish **HIM**, as the “*scapegoat*” (Leviticus 16:7-10) for sinners, with everlasting death instead of us! “*He hath made HIM who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteous-*

ness of God **in Him**” (II Corinthians 5:21). “*The Lord hath laid on **HIM** the iniquity of **us all**.*” Isaiah writes (53:6b); ...“**HE** was wounded for **our** transgressions; **HE** was bruised for **our** iniquities” (v. 5). Jesus “*became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*” (Philippians 2:8), suffering not only **temporal** death as the result of sin (which the malefactors also suffered) but **ETERNAL** death, the “*wages of sin*” (Romans 6:23), **OUR** sin (Galatians 3:13). It was Jesus who was **FORSAKEN BY GOD** (Psalm 22:1; Matthew 27:46) that we might be pardoned by Him, “*who gave **Himself** for **US**, that He might redeem us from all iniquity*” (Titus 2:14), “*who gave **Himself** a ransom for **ALL**” (I Timothy 2:6), who became “*the Propitiation [the payment demanded and accepted to effect perfect reconciliation] for **our** sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*” (I John 2:2).*

Thanks be to God that “*It is **FINISHED!**”* It has been **ACCOMPLISHED!** And it **stands**, for the record, both here on earth in the Holy Scriptures and in heaven itself, an **accomplished FACT** for our assurance! What a **miracle** of God’s grace to us poor, lost, and condemned sinners, beloved brethren: The **VICARIOUS ATONEMENT**, the **substitutionary satisfaction** of God’s justice in our place by the **ACTIVE and PASSIVE OBEEDIENCE** of His Son, the **perfect satisfaction** that purchased for us reconciliation with God and our full and free justification in His sight! The Apostle Paul states in stark and simple summary of this most wonderful scenario: “*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness, that He might be just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus*” (Romans 3:23-26). “*Thanks be unto God for His **unspeakable Gift!**”* (II Corinthians 9:15).

Our guilt the Father willed to lay
on Christ, His Son, our Savior.
Christ Jesus, then, our debt did pay
and gained for us God’s favor.
His perfect life and death He gave,
accomplished what it took to save
our souls from condemnation.

—D. T. M.

Close Communion – Snobbery or Orthodoxy?

“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” —Amos 3:3



In accordance with God’s Word and sound Lutheran practice, we observe “*close*” (sometimes also called “*closed*”) *Communion*, that is, we admit to the Lord’s Table only those who are members of our “communion” or fellowship. This is not the practice of ecclesiastical snobbery or of arbitrary exclusivity, but it expresses what the Bible itself teaches about the nature, purpose, and proper use of the Lord’s Supper.

The contrary practice, appropriately called “*open* Communion,” is championed in these days of laxity, liberalism and false ecumenism, as “more inclusive,” as “non-judgmental,” and as “an open testimony to the communality of God’s people” regardless of their faith and confession. In *open* Communion, all present are invited to partake of the Sacrament, or, if there is any restriction at all, all professing “Christians” are offered the opportunity to participate in joint Communion, regardless of what they believe, teach, and confess — even regarding fundamental doctrines.

Open Communion is, of course, commonly observed among the **Reformed** sects, for whom what they call “the Lord’s Supper,” administered contrary to Christ’s own institution, is nothing but a *symbolic* feast and a celebration of *remembrance*. Sadly, however, *open* Communion is also practiced by many so-called “**Lutheran**” churches and church bodies, which want to be recognized as progressive, politically correct, and “open” to the idea that there should be room for “honest divergence of opinion,” even in matters of doctrine and practice, and that such differences should not be seen as “divisive” of fellowship.

Our orthodox practice of *close* (or *closed*) Communion has been observed among faithful Christians and Christian congregations since the time of the apostles; and, although *open* Communion is common today even in the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, Dr. Francis Pieper, in his

“standard text” on Christian doctrine, summarized briefly the thoroughly Scriptural and Lutheran position of our fathers in the “old” Missouri Synod, saying:

Christian congregations and their public servants are only the administrators and not the lords of the Sacrament. The Lord’s Supper is not their institution, but Christ’s. Therefore they must follow Christ’s instructions in administering the Sacrament. On the one hand, they are not permitted to introduce “Open Communion”; on the other hand, they must guard against denying the Sacrament to those Christians for whom Christ has appointed it. (Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, III, p. 381)

The argument is often made (except on the part of those among the Reformed who teach *particular* redemption, namely, the idea that Christ died only for the elect) that, since Christ sacrificed His body and shed His blood for all, that same body and blood, proffered in the Sacrament, is likewise intended for all. However, this argument, while belonging to the “*good words and fair speeches*” of false teachers who “*deceive the hearts of the simple*” (Romans 16:18), is purely *rationalistic*, based NOT on Scripture but on human reason and emotion.

The sacrifice of Christ’s body and blood on the tree of the cross was indeed intended for *all mankind* as payment-in-full for their sins (Isaiah 53:4-12; II Corinthians 5:15; I John 2:2); and in view of Christ’s perfect, all-sufficient *vicarious atonement*, God reconciled *the world* unto Himself, not charging men’s sins against them but forgiving even the *ungodly* (Romans 4:5), justifying “*all...freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*” (Romans 3:23-24), and declaring *all* of them righteous in His sight (II Corinthians 5:19). All who cling in confidence to this accomplished fact *have for their very own* the forgiveness and righteousness which Christ purchased and won for them (Romans 3:28), as well as the peace which that forgiveness brings to the believer’s heart (Romans 5:1).

However, the Holy Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, which is NOT the oft-repeated “unbloody sacrifice” of the body of Christ nor an offering of His blood “for the sins of the living and the dead” (Roman Catholic dogma) is NOT intended for *all*, for St. Paul expressly states that *unworthy* communicants partake of the Lord’s body and blood to their *damnation* instead of to their blessing (I Corinthians 11:27-29).

Therefore we do *not* admit to the Lord's Table: **a**) those who are known to be ungodly and impenitent (Mark 16:16b; Luke 13:3; I Corinthians 11:29); **b**) those who have given offense and have not removed it (Matthew 5:23-24); **c**) those who are unable to examine themselves, such as young children and adults who have not been sufficiently instructed, unconscious persons, and those who by virtue of infirmity cannot truly examine themselves and discern the Lord's body (I Corinthians 11:28); and **d**) those of a different faith, since participation in the Lord's Supper is a testimony of unity in faith and profession (I Corinthians 10:17; Acts 2:42; Amos 3:3; I Corinthians 1:10; Romans 16:17).

Considering the penalty that is attached to the grievous sin of partaking of the Lord's Supper as an unworthy communicant, namely, God's own "*condemnation*" (I Corinthians 11:29), resulting in everlasting "*damnation*" if not repented of, it is vain to appeal to "love" in defense of *open* Communion; for "this practice is contrary both to love of God and love of the neighbor, for it ignores that the Sacrament of the Altar must be properly used, as prescribed in Scripture, and it leads the neighbor to sin by partaking unworthily of the Sacrament" (Pieper, *op. cit.*, pp. 385-386). No Christian pastor, therefore, to whom the charge has been given by the Lord of the Church to watch for the souls of his people as he that must give account (Hebrews 13:17; etc.), can in good conscience forsake the sound, orthodox, yea, Scriptural practice of **close communion**; for, by the grace and with the help of God, "*we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth*" (I Corinthians 13:8). May He continue to preserve us steadfast in this Scripturally-sound practice for Jesus' sake!

—D. T. M.



The Bodily Resurrection of Christ

A Fundamental Doctrine

“If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins....”

—I Corinthians 15:17, 19-20



In orthodox Christian theology we use the term *fundamental doctrine* in a very clear and specific manner, namely, a doctrine that is so essential to the Gospel, so central to the Christian faith, and so integral to the assurance of reconciliation, justification, and everlasting life that, in the words of Johann Andreas Quenstedt (1617-1685), well noted for his precise definitions and theses in Lutheran orthodoxy, it “cannot be denied consistently with faith and salvation, being the very foundation of the Christian faith” (Quoted in J. T.

Mueller. *Christian Dogmatics*, p. 48).

The doctrine of the **bodily resurrection** of Jesus Christ is a fundamental doctrine. This is clearly stated by the Holy Ghost through the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 15: “*And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins*” (v. 17). Moreover, we have this direct statement regarding saving faith in Romans 10:9: “*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*” The many reasons why this doctrine is fundamental will be laid out as we consider how important it is on the basis of Holy Writ.

What do we mean by the term “**bodily resurrection**”? By this term we refer to the miracle or act of supernatural power that grants life to a body previously dead. The same body from which the soul departed is reconstituted: The soul returns, and whatever caused the temporal death of the deceased is reversed, including all post-mortem consequences. The same body, once dead, is made alive. The New Testament Greek word *anastasis*, translated “*resurrection*,” literally means “a raising up again,” clearly indicating that the previously dead body is alive *again*. The Greek verb

egeiro, translated “*raised again*” in the New Testament, means to arouse from the sleep of death, to recall the dead body to life again, clearly showing that the same body, once dead, is brought back to life. The examples of resurrection, both in the Old and New Testaments, always deal with previously dead bodies restored to life (see I Kings 17:22; II Kings 4:35; II Kings 13:21; Matthew 9:25; Matthew 27:52; Luke 7:15; John 11:44; Acts 9:40). Bodily resurrection is clearly confessed by Job: “*For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself; and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me*” (Job 19:25-27). The very fact that the objects of resurrection are those very bodies “*that are in the graves*” (John 5:28-29) proves that what are brought to life are previously dead bodies.

By the phrase “the **bodily resurrection of Christ**,” we are referring to the historical fact that early Sunday morning, the third day after His crucifixion, as the Jews of that day reckoned time, the very body of Jesus Christ that hung lifeless on the cross on Friday afternoon was *made alive* in the tomb; and, having been *made alive*, Christ manifested Himself to “*witnesses chosen before of God*” (Acts 10:41). He exited the tomb and “*showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs*” (Acts 1:3). This **bodily resurrection** was a fulfillment of both Old Testament prophecy (Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:27, 31; Acts 26:22-23) and Christ’s own prophetic statements (Matthew 16:21; Matthew 26:32; Mark 9:9; Mark 14:28; John 2:19). When the Lord told the Jews, “*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*” (John 2:19), Scripture tells us, “*But He spake of the temple of His body. When therefore He was risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this unto them; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said*” (John 2:21-22). Yes, both Scripture and the Savior Himself had foretold His bodily resurrection! His body would rise again to life on the third day! As He later declared in John 10: “*Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father*” (John 10:17-18). The efficient cause of the bodily resurrection is both the Father (Acts 2:24; Acts 3:15; Acts 4:10; Acts 5:30-31; Acts 10:40; Acts 13:30; Ephesians 1:20) and the Son Himself (John 2:19; John 10:17-18).

The proof that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and had the same body as before is **manifold** and **incontrovertible**. In John's Gospel we read: *"And when He had so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. ... The other disciples therefore said unto him [i.e., to Thomas], 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said unto them, 'Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.' And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst and said, 'Peace be unto you.' Then saith He to Thomas, 'Reach hither thy finger and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side; and be not faithless but believing'"* (John 20:20, 25-27). The Savior offered all the evidence necessary to prove His bodily identity! In addition we read in Luke 24 that Jesus told His disciples: *"Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have.' And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, He said unto them, 'Have ye here any meat?' And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And He took it, and did eat before them"* (Luke 24:39-43).

Once again the risen Christ did all that was necessary to prove that it was really He and not some ghost or non-corporeal thing! He manifested His true bodily form to a long list of eyewitnesses who were enabled thereby to testify to His physical resurrection (see Acts 1:22), as the Apostle records those appearances in I Corinthians 15:4-8. In addition to the testimony of human eyewitnesses, we have the record of the angels at the empty tomb (Matthew 28:5-7; Mark 16:5-6; Luke 24:4-7). The angels not only asked, *"Why seek ye the living among the dead?"* (Luke 24:5); they also told the women: *"He is not here, but is risen"* (Luke 24:6) and reminded them of the words of Jesus regarding His resurrection on the third day (Luke 24:6-7). The *"many infallible proofs"* (Acts 1:3) also include the empty tomb and grave clothes (John 20:3-9), the plot by the Jewish religious leaders to cover up the resurrection by bribing the Roman soldiers to lie about what took place at the tomb on Easter morning (Matthew 28:11-15), and the fact that the disciples did not believe the reports of His resurrection and needed Christ Himself to convince them (Luke 24:11; Mark 16:11, 13-14; Luke 24:25-26, 41-46; John 20:29), clearly proving they had not imagined it or fabricated the story.

The **bodily resurrection** of Christ is a **fact**. It is a historical event that **took place** as it was foretold. Why is this doctrine so vital, so necessary, so essential? Why is this doctrine *fundamental*? There are several Scriptural reasons: The bodily resurrection of Christ is **proof positive** that Christ accomplished His saving work in our place and on our behalf, namely, that God the Father accepted the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ, for the redemption of mankind, for the reconciliation of the whole world unto Himself, for the salvation of sinners. The resurrection of Christ Jesus is God's public declaration of His justification of the entire world; for, as it is written of His Messiah, "*[He] was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification*" (Romans 4:25). On Good Friday Jesus bore the sin, guilt and full damning punishment of the world to satisfy God's justice and to appease His just wrath against all mankind: "*And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*" (I John 2:2). If our Substitute had failed to atone for even one sin, He would not and could not have risen from the dead! But, thanks be to God, He **did** rise. His statement from Calvary's cross, "*It is finished*" (John 19:30) **was**, and **is**, most certainly true! He **did** indeed give "*one sacrifice for sins forever*" (Hebrews 10:12) "*when He offered up Himself*" (Hebrews 7:27); and that sacrifice was "*an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor*" (Ephesians 5:2). The "*God of peace,*" now fully reconciled, "*brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant*" (Hebrews 13:20), the covenant of the gracious forgiveness of all sins that lasts forever! The last will and testament of Christ is confirmed by His **bodily resurrection** on Easter Sunday! Our Savior has an everlasting and unchangeable priesthood of salvation and is consecrated for evermore, as it is written: "*But this man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them*" (Hebrews 7:24-25). Scripture thus assures us: "*...if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous*" (I John 2:1b, cf. Romans 8:34). Our Mediator "*gave Himself a ransom for all*" (I Timothy 2:5-6), and that ransom was accepted by the Father as payment in full for all transgressions: "*He hath made us accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace*" (Ephesians 1:6b-7).

The proof is Christ's **bodily resurrection** on Easter morning! For, as the Apostle says in one of our title theme verses: "*If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins*" (I Corinthians 15:17). Therefore it follows that, since Christ **is** raised, our faith is **not** vain or meaningless, we are **not** still in our sins! "*Now IS Christ risen from the dead*" (v. 20)! St. Paul cites Christ's effectual **vicarious atonement** as having been required by God to satisfy His justice with respect to our transgressions —so great, innumerable and heinous were they in His sight— and Christ's mighty **resurrection from the dead** as God's own testimony that, for Christ's sake, He had declared the whole world righteous in His sight. "[*Christ*] was delivered **for** [*4 with the accusative case = "*on account of*"] *our offenses, and was raised again for* [*4] *our justification,*" on account of our having been declared righteous (Romans 4:25; compare II Corinthians 5:19). The **price** required by God's justice because of the heinousness of our transgressions was set already *in eternity* according to the eternal decree of redemption (Acts 2:23; 4:28; I Peter 1:20; etc.), although the **payment** of that price occurred *in time* in the redemptive work of Christ. Likewise, the **fruit** of Christ's redemptive work, that is, the **justification** of the world in the non-imputation of men's transgressions and the declaration that Christ's righteousness was imputed to all mankind because of His vicarious atonement took place already *in eternity*. God did not have to "wait around" to see first whether Christ would make good on His promised payment! And the evidence of that justification *in eternity already* is the **Election of Grace in eternity**, which pre-supposed God's gracious justification of the world for Christ's sake. Nevertheless, Christ's mighty **resurrection from the dead** occurred *in time* "*for* [i.e., because of] *our justification,*" as God's own declaration and evidence that He was satisfied with His Son's vicarious atonement for the reconciliation of the world unto Himself (II Corinthians 5:19), "*which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began*" (II Timothy 1:9). Thus the **bodily resurrection** of Christ on Easter morning is a divine "Amen!" to the substitutionary satisfaction, the vicarious atonement, that Christ accomplished for the reconciliation of all sinners by His suffering and death on Good Friday (see Romans 5:18-19) and the seal of the world's justification on account of His fully-accepted sacrifice.

The **fundamental** status of the doctrine of the **bodily resurrection** of Christ is also established by the fact that it is a **proof** of His essential **deity**, as it is written: "[Christ was] *declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead*" (Romans 1:4). The fact that He took His life again, raising Him-

self from the dead (John 10:17-18), proves His divine identity: He is the only-begotten Son of God the Father Almighty! Consider also Colossians 2:9: “*For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*” Here we have the present tense verb “*dwelleth*” indicating that in Christ continues to dwell all the fullness of the Godhead bodily after His death and resurrection and to all eternity!

Moreover, the **bodily resurrection** of Christ assures all believers that they too shall rise unto eternal life. The sure and certain hope expressed by Job was based on the work of the Redeemer (Job 19:25-27). Even so, our Redeemer states: “*Because I live, ye shall live also*” (John 14:19) and “*...I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?*” (John 11:25-26). Therefore, since Christ is risen, those who died in faith will surely experience their own resurrection; and we have sure and certain hope for the life beyond this one! Christ is the “*firstfruits*” of the dead with many more fruits to come, namely, the resurrections on the Last Day. The Apostle Paul assures us: “*But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you*” (Romans 8:11). Scripture assures all believers: “*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*” (I John 3:2). “*When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory*” (Colossians 3:4). We await a glorious resurrection unto life; “*for our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself*” (Philippians 3:20-21). The good news of Easter gives us the Gospel certainty to live in this glorious resurrection hope! Our hope in Christ makes us, of all men, most happy and content! In time of trouble we cling to God’s Word by His grace and power and hear our risen Savior assure us: “*...I am the First and the Last; I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death*” (Revelation 1:17c-18). This is our Easter-wrought hope in Christ: We, too, shall rise to glorious and unending life!

Finally the doctrine of the **bodily resurrection** of Christ is *fundamental* because, if it were not true, God’s Word would err, God would be a

liar, and Christ Himself would be a false prophet and a gross deceiver. God forbid! God's Word foretold Christ's **bodily resurrection**, and "*the Scripture cannot be broken*," that is, done away with or set aside (John 10:35); and it is impossible for God to lie (Romans 3:4-5; Hebrews 6:18; Deuteronomy 32:4). Since Christ Himself also foretold His resurrection (John 2:19, *et al.*), He, too, would be found a liar if He had not truly risen "*as He said*" (Matthew 28:6). "*But now IS Christ risen from the dead*" (I Corinthians 15:20), and what He said came to pass to the very letter! God's Word is true! God is true! And the apostolic witness is also true (cf. I Corinthians 15:15).

In summary then, the doctrine of **the bodily resurrection of Christ** is a *fundamental* doctrine, which dare not be denied, because it is essential to the Gospel: "*Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand, by which also ye are saved if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures*" (I Corinthians 15:1-4). The Gospel is "*the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth*" (Romans 1:16b). To deny a key element of the Gospel is to deny the faith.

Throughout history there have been individuals and groups that have denied the **resurrection of the body** in general and the **bodily resurrection of Christ** in particular. Recall how the Sadducees opposed the general resurrection (Matthew 22:29-32; Acts 23:8), and the Greeks mocked that teaching also (Acts 17:18); some even in the congregation at Corinth denied it (I Corinthians 15:12). To this day, rationalists and Gnostics deny it. We read of individuals in the New Testament making shipwreck of their faith in such a denial (cf. I Timothy 1:19-20; II Timothy 2:17-18). Those who deny the doctrine of the **general resurrection** also deny the **bodily resurrection of Christ** because of the relation of the two, as Paul explains in I Corinthians 15 (see especially vv. 12-13). Satan does all he can to attack the doctrine which clearly proclaims Christ's victory over him and his works; and the world readily receives every *competing* teaching (reincarnation, evolution, spiritism, etc.) rather than the truth of God Himself. This should not surprise us, for "*the things of the Spirit of God*" are both foolish and unknowable to carnal minds (I Corinthians 2:14). Even the sinful flesh of Christians, in its enmity against God, fights and wars against the truth (Galatians 5:17). Only the

Spirit of God can grant and preserve saving faith in **the bodily resurrection of Christ from the dead**, and He does this gracious work through the very Gospel that proclaims the fact (Romans 10:17). May that same Word of Faith, the efficacious means of His grace preached into your heart, grant you true knowledge, assent, and confidence in **the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**, namely, “*that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved*” (Romans 10:9). For Christ **IS risen!** He is risen **INDEED!** Hallelujah!

— E. J. W.

*Christ is arisen
from the grave's dark prison!
We now rejoice with gladness!
Christ has ended sadness!
Lord, have mercy!
All our hopes were ended
had Jesus not ascended
from the grave triumphantly!
For this, Lord Christ,
we worship Thee!
Hallelujah!*

(TLH 187)

Chronology of the Risen Savior's Appearances

□ Mary Magdalene; Mary, the mother of James (“the less”) and of Joseph; Salome, the wife of Zebedee; Joanna; and “*other women*” came to the sepulchre at the rising of the sun on Easter morning. (Matthew 28:1ff.; Mark 16:1ff.; Luke 24:1ff.)

- Seeing the tomb open, Mary Magdalene immediately left the group and returned to the city in panic. She found Peter and John and told them that someone had taken Jesus’ body from the grave. John, sprinting ahead of Peter, and Mary Magdalene bringing up the rear, headed back to the sepulchre to investigate. (John 20:1ff.)

- Meanwhile the other women had heard the angel’s message and, at his directions, began their return to Jerusalem. They apparently took a different road than that taken by Mary, Peter and John, because there is no indication that they encountered one another en route.)

- While the women were returning to Jerusalem, John and Peter, followed at some distance by Mary Magdalene, arrived at the sepulchre and investigated the empty tomb. Having examined the circumstantial evidence of the neatly-folded graveclothes, they returned home. (Luke 24:12; John 20:4-10)

- But Mary Magdalene, who had trailed along behind them, remained yet for a short time outside the sepulchre weeping. As she then peered into the tomb, she saw for the first time the angels (which apparently had not made themselves visible to Peter and John when *they* looked in). She still was of the mistaken opinion that Jesus’ body had been stolen. It was then that Jesus appeared to her personally —His first appearance on Easter morning. (John 20:11-18; Mark 16:9)

- Meanwhile, the other women were still proceeding on their way back to Jerusalem. Suddenly Jesus Himself appeared before them on the road —visibly, audibly, tangibly— to confirm to them the mission and message which the angel at the tomb had directed them to deliver to the disciples. (Matthew 28:9-10)

- On Easter afternoon, Jesus appeared to two disciples on their way to the village of Emmaus and engaged them in a protracted discussion about His suffering, death, and resurrection on the basis of Old Testa-

ment prophecy. After making Himself known, He vanished. (Luke 24:13ff.)

~ Sometime between His resurrection and His appearance to the assembled disciples on Easter evening, the risen Christ also appeared to Simon Peter, a personal and apparently private appearance of which we know nothing except that it occurred and that the other disciples knew of it (Luke 24:34). St Paul mentions this appearance (“*He was seen of Cephas*”) also in his report (I Corinthians 15:5).

~ On Easter afternoon, Jesus appeared to two disciples on their way to the village of Emmaus and engaged them in a protracted discussion about His suffering, death, and resurrection on the basis of Old Testament prophecy. After making Himself known, He vanished. (Luke 24:13ff.)

~ On Easter evening (and also one week later), Jesus passed thru locked doors and appeared to the assembled disciples as a group, ate before them on the *first* visit, and permitted Thomas to touch Him and examine His wounds on the *second* visit (John 20:19ff.; Luke 24:36ff.).

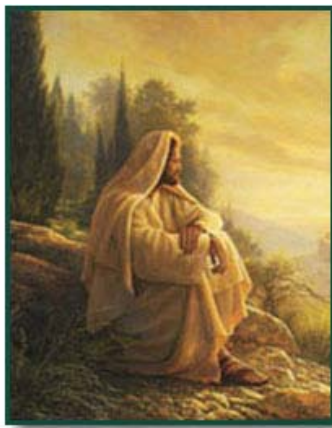
~ Other post-Easter appearances then followed during the 40 days before His ascension into heaven: To the seven disciples at the Sea of Galilee, where the risen Savior also restored Peter to his apostleship (John 21); to the eleven on a mountain in Galilee, where Jesus issued to them their “marching orders” in His *Great Commission* to “*make disciples of all nations*” (Matthew 28:16-20); to “*above five hundred brethren at once*,” of whom the majority were still alive at the apostle’s writing to testify as to what they saw (I Corinthians 15:6); to James, concerning which appearance we have no further details (I Corinthians 15:7); to the eleven at His ascension into heaven from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:2-9).

~ Later, after His ascension, the risen Christ appeared also to Paul, who saw Him on the road to Damascus (Acts 9) just as surely as did those “*who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead*” (Acts 10:41). This is further evidence of the Savior’s personal union and the communication of attributes to His human nature also in His state of exaltation; for Paul reports his own eyewitness testimony right along with the eyewitness testimony of the others (I Corinthians 15:8).

—D. T. M.

Christ's Promised Presence with Us Still Today ...also According to His Human Nature

"He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things." —Ephesians 4:10



After His bodily resurrection from the dead, the Lord Jesus showed Himself to be alive “*by many infallible proofs*” (Acts 1:3) over a period of forty days; and then He visibly ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9). But did He really leave His disciples? No; rather, He simply removed His *visible presence* from them. And this was a good thing for the disciples, since it was important that they learn to walk by faith rather than by sight (II Corinthians 5:7), and because they needed to forget about Jesus setting up an earthly kingdom (Acts 1:6) and to be focused, instead, upon

heaven (I Peter 1:3–4), where Jesus ascended as their Forerunner (John 14:2–3). Prior to His ascension, Jesus had told His disciples: “*Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*” (Matthew 28:20). So their dear Friend and Savior still continued to be with them, as He also continues to be with *us* “*even unto the end of the world.*” But is this a presence only of Christ in His divine nature, or is He also present with us in His human nature? Of course, if it is rightly understood that Christ’s true humanity is, from the moment of His incarnation onward into all eternity, an attribute of His Person, then it should also be understood that if the Person of Jesus Christ is with us, then He *must* also be with us in His true human nature.

Now the Reformed object very vehemently to this. They contend that it is possible for Jesus to be among us only according to His divine nature, and that His human nature was far removed from the earth when He ascended into heaven and was seated at the right hand of God. Interestingly enough, when they argue for the absence of Christ’s human nature on the basis of His ascension into heaven, they are confronted with a passage of Holy Scripture that addresses this very point and actually

supports the omnipresence of Jesus Christ *also according to His human nature*. The Bible says of Christ: “*He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things*” (Ephesians 4:10). On the basis of this verse, the only way that Christ’s filling of all things can be limited to His divine nature would be if His ascension far above all heavens is *also* limited to His divine nature. Nevertheless, the Scriptures clearly speak of Christ’s ascension also according to His human nature, as the disciples received His blessing which He bestowed upon them with His *uplifted hands* and *saw* Him ascend and *visually followed His physically ascending body* until “*a cloud received Him out of their sight*” (Luke 24:50-51; Acts 2:9-11).

But do not the Scriptures restrict Jesus’ body to the specific location of God’s right hand, as the Reformed claim? Not at all; for the Biblical expression, “*the right hand of God*” (Romans 8:34), is a figure of speech known as an anthropomorphism, and does *not* designate a *location*, but is, instead, a reference to the *power* and *dominion* of God (Exodus 15:6; Psalm 110:1; 118:16; Luke 22:69; etc.). Furthermore, the Scriptures specifically connect Christ’s session at the right hand of God with *His filling of all things* (Ephesians 1:20–23) —His *omnipresence*. But how do we know that verse 23, which refers to our Lord Jesus Christ as “*Him that filleth all in all,*” applies also to His *human* nature and is not only describing the omnipresence of Jesus’ *divine* nature (as the Reformed would argue)? Since this verse sets forth Christ’s omnipresence in the context of His *exaltation* —being exalted at the right hand of God— it is certain that this is describing our Lord Jesus Christ specifically according to His human nature. Whenever the Bible describes either Christ’s humiliation or His exaltation (Philippians 2:5–11), it must be understood as applying these conditions or *states* directly to His *human* nature — *not His divine nature*. This is because God in His essence is *unchangeable* (Malachi 3:6). Accordingly, the *divine* nature of Christ could never have been humiliated —though it *did participate* in the state of humiliation (*genus apotelesmaticum*), since it is one of the two natures in the *person* of Christ who “*made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*” (Philippians 2:7–8). So also, the *divine* nature itself could not have been exalted, because it is *unchangeable*; it was never humiliated, and it cannot possibly be made any greater than it already is. Therefore, when in Ephesians 1:20–23 the exaltation of Christ is described —the fact that power and dominion have been given to Him and that He “*filleth all in all*”— this

must be understood according to His *human nature*, since such exaltation was *not* given to Christ according to His divine nature.

Now instead of even considering the validity of these Scriptural points, the Reformed simply claim that it is impossible for the human nature of Christ to receive any of God's infinite attributes. The Arminian Reformed author, John Miley, writes: "Omnipresence such as the Lutheran Christology affirms of the human nature of Christ is possible only with an infinite extension of being. It is at this point that the doctrine encounters insuperable difficulties, even absolute impossibilities. There is no possibility that the human nature of Christ should possess the attributes of omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence which the Lutheran Christology ascribes to it" (John Miley. *Systematic Theology*. Volume II, pp. 58—59). Notice that the Reformed think that we Lutherans must teach a ubiquitous extension of Jesus' human body—as if His body would need to be *stretched* to infinity in order for His human nature to be omnipresent. This, however, is **not** what we teach **at all**. The Reformed are willing to grant to the human body of Christ only the same kind of presence to which our human bodies are limited, namely, a *local presence*—a presence that occupies and is confined to a definite space, and is incapable of being in more than one place at a time. (As a side note: This Reformed limitation of Christ's body to a *local presence* also undermines the Scriptural doctrine of the *real presence* of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar.)

It should be understood that, in addition to the *local presence* of Christ's body (which He displayed as He walked visibly among men), the Scriptures also ascribe to His true human nature an *illocal presence* (a presence that does *not* take up space) as well as a *repletive presence*, or *omnipresence* (a presence that fills and surrounds all things). Jesus demonstrated the *illocal presence* of His *human nature* when He twice came to His disciples, who were hiding behind closed doors, and stood bodily in their midst without first needing to have a door opened for Him (John 20:19–20, 26–27). With regard to the *repletive presence* of His human nature, in addition to Ephesians 1:23 and 4:10 (which were covered above), we also have the words of Jesus to Nicodemus in which He clearly testified to the *omnipresence* that had been communicated to His *human nature*. The Savior told him: "*No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even **the Son of man which is in heaven***" (John 3:13)—*note the present tense*. So at the very same time that Jesus was talking to Nicodemus here on earth, He was also present in heaven. And it is obvious that Jesus is

including His human nature in this omnipresence, since He refers to Himself as “*the Son of man;*” for not only is this a Messianic title (Daniel 7:13), but it is also one that clearly stresses His true human nature. If He wanted us to think exclusively (or even especially) of His divine nature, He would have called Himself “*the Son of God,*” as He did on other occasions (John 5:25). Of course, these terms “*Son of Man*” and “*Son of God*” do not designate a personless nature (as if only the human nature or only the divine nature is referenced); rather the *entire person* of the God-Man, Jesus Christ, is referred to in both cases. But with “*Son of Man,*” the Person is described with special emphasis given to His *human nature*, just as with “*Son of God,*” special emphasis is given to His *divine nature*.

What is furthermore interesting to note in connection with those words of Jesus to Nicodemus is that He was at that time in His *state of humiliation*; and yet He still possessed this divine attribute of omnipresence also according to His human nature. Why, then, do the Scriptures make a point of connecting His omnipresence with the *exaltation* of His human nature at the right hand of God in heaven (Ephesians 1:23; 4:10)? Because, as was the case with all of the divine attributes — which were communicated to the human nature of Christ at the time of His conception— during His state of humiliation, Jesus, according to His human nature, was not actively making full and constant use of His omnipresence. Accordingly, during His state of humiliation, when He wanted to go from place to place, He did not simply disappear from one location and reappear in another; nor did He manifest His visible presence in multiple places at the same time. Rather, He walked (John 7:1), or rode on the back of an animal (Luke 19:35), or traveled by ship (Matthew 14:13) when He desired to go from one place to another. Now contrast *that* to the way that He would simply appear in and disappear from the presence of His disciples after His resurrection, in His *state of exaltation* (Luke 24:31; John 20:19, 26; Acts 23:11). Of course, He had the ability to do this even during His *state of humiliation*; but He willingly chose, during this time as the Substitute for mankind, *not* to make full or constant use of the divine attributes that were communicated to His human nature.

But despite all of the compelling evidence from the Word of God concerning Christ’s presence with us *also according to His human nature*, the Reformed still deny it. In the *Heidelberg Catechism* of the Calvinists, in answer to question 47 (“Is not Christ then with us even to the end of the world, as He has promised?”), it is stated that “Christ is very

man and very God; with respect to His human nature, He is no more on earth; but with respect to His Godhead, majesty, grace and spirit, He is at no time absent from us.” Thus they separate His person from one of His natures —confining Jesus’ human nature to a local presence in heaven. Now the Reformed do *not* teach that there are two separate persons (Christ the man and Christ the Son of God) as Nestorius did, yet they *do* still divide Jesus’ person by granting Him a presence outside of and apart from His human nature. It must not be forgotten that Jesus’ human nature is who He is, just as much as the divine nature is who He is. If Christ is present among us as God only and not also as a true human being, then He is not the Christ of the Bible.

So then what is the underlying reason for the Reformed putting spatial limitations on the presence of Christ’s human nature? This is not done on the basis of anything found in the Scriptures, but simply because they have blinded themselves to the truth by a rationalistic construct so famously expressed by John Calvin as “the finite is not capable of the infinite” (*finitum non est capax infiniti*). This means that they not only object to the human nature of Christ being given the attribute of *omnipresence*, but they scoff at the idea that *any* of the infinite attributes of God could be communicated to Jesus’ human nature. They believe that granting divine attributes to the human nature of Christ would destroy His true humanity. But this is not the teaching of God’s Word. On account of the broad scope of their objections, the proving of the *general* case (namely, that *all of the divine attributes* were communicated to Jesus’ human nature) can be helpful in the proving of the *specific* case (namely, that *omnipresence* has been communicated to His human nature). As a result of the *personal union* —the union of the divine nature and the human nature in the person of the God-Man, Jesus Christ— the human nature shares in the attributes of the divine nature. “*In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead **bodily***” (Colossians 2:9). This doctrine of the *communication of attributes* is taught in every passage of Scripture that speaks of something belonging to the essence of God being “*given*” (or “*delivered*,” Matthew 11:27) to Jesus. Such verses must be understood as applying specifically to His *human nature*, since His divine nature already from all eternity possesses these attributes. Concerning the infinite attribute of *omnipotence*, Jesus says: “*All power is **given** unto Me in heaven and in earth*” (Matthew 28:18). Not just *great* power, but *infinite* power, “*all power*,” is communicated to Jesus’ human nature. In John 5:26–27 Jesus speaks of some other divine things —belonging exclusively to God— that have been *given* to Him on account of His *human nature*. “*The Father hath...given to the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him*

authority to execute judgment also, *because He is the son of man*” (vv. 26–27). In the original Greek of this verse, there is no article before the noun “son”; so a more literal translation of this last part would be “*because He is a son of man.*” In other words, this verse does *not* say that this authority was given to Him because He is the Messiah (which is what “*the Son of man*” might indicate); but, rather, on account of His human nature (“*because He is a son of man*”), this authority was *given* to Him. “There is a unanimously received rule of the entire ancient orthodox Church that what Holy Scripture testifies that Christ received in time He received not according to the divine nature (according to which He has everything from eternity), but the person has received it in time *ratione et respectu humanae naturae*, that is, as referring, and with respect to, according to the assumed human nature” (*The Formula of Concord: Thorough Declaration*, VIII, §57, *Triglotta*, p. 1035).

Now it should not be thought that when the Scriptures talk about the divine attributes being “*given*” to Christ according to His human nature that this involved a kind of “transfer” of attributes from the divine nature to the human (as if now the divine nature no longer possesses them). Nor should it be thought that this involved a “duplication” of the divine attributes (as if now the human nature has one set of these attributes, and the divine nature has another) —for this would mean that there is more than one God. Even with regard to the three Persons in the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost “are not three Almighty, but one Almighty” (Athanasian Creed). Rather, the human nature of Christ *shares* in the divine attributes; and this certainly includes the divine attribute of *omnipresence*. So we can be sure that, since our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ promises His gracious presence among us (Matthew 18:20; 28:20), He is truly here with us, not only as our God, but also as our Brother in the flesh (Hebrews 2:11), the “*Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*” (I Timothy 2:5).

Though reason cannot understand,
yet faith this truth embraces:
Thy body, Lord, is everywhere
at once in many places.
How this can be I leave to Thee;
Thy Word alone sufficeth me;
I trust its truth unfailing.

(*TLH*, 306, v. 5)

—P. E. B.



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57th Annual Convention
of the
Concordia Lutheran Conference

**Friday, Saturday and Sunday
June 27, 28 and 29th, 2008**

at
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Seattle, Washington

Motto:

*Be married to whom you will,
only in the Lord*

I Corinthians 7:39

The Essay on this topic will be delivered by
Pastor M. L. Natterer

The Friday sermon on Ephesians 6:4
will be preached by
President Edward J. Worley

The Sunday sermon on Proverbs 31:30
will be preached by
Pastor Robert J. Lietz

**The Pastoral Conference on
June 24th & 25th**
**Board of Directors meeting on
June 26th**