

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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“Christ [was]...
put to death in the
flesh but quickened
by the spirit.”

— 1 Peter 3:18



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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.*"

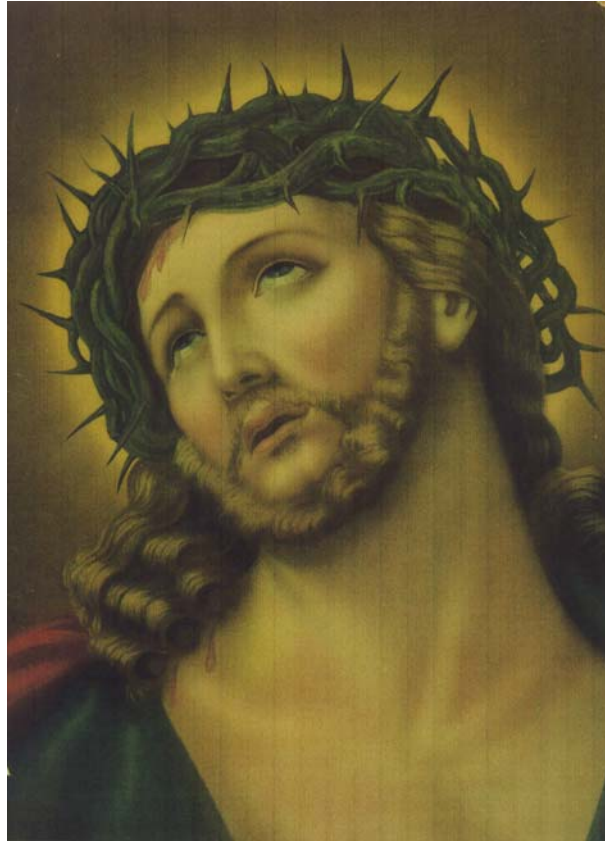
To set forth pertinent historical information which has a bearing upon the Church and to expose modern philosophical thought and the so-called scientific theories which contradict the Word of God.

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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“Jesus, I Will Ponder Now”

This hymn, written by Sigismund von Birken and published in Nürnberg in 1653, is a great Lenten favorite in Lutheran hymnody. As are many of the hymns written during this period, this one is very subjective or personal in its confession and in its message, with the pronouns “I,” “me,” and “my” throughout all six stanzas. It is, of course, very fitting for the season of Lent (Hymn #140 in the *Lent* section of *The Lutheran Hymnal*); but it can, with profit, be sung and “pondered” during every other season of the Church Year as a meditation on Christ’s *vicarious atonement*, as a confession of faith in its efficacy, and as a humble prayer for its benefits in the Christian’s life. Directed specifically to our Savior, the hymn is a very intimate and grateful prayer from the heart of a believer.

In the **first stanza**, the child of God, according to his “*new man*” (Ephesians 4:24), confesses and petitions:

*Jesus, I will ponder now
on Thy holy passion.
With Thy Spirit me endow
for such meditation.
Grant that I in love and faith
may the image cherish
of Thy suffering, pain, and death,
that I may not perish.*

The disciple of Jesus desires to “ponder,” to meditate upon, to consider in his mind and heart the holy, sinless “passion,” suffering, and death of “*the Lamb of God*” (John 1:29) “*for the sins of the whole world*” (I John 2:2). Is there anything more comforting and reassuring for the child of God to meditate upon “*day and night*” (Psalm 1:2b) than what God has graciously done in Christ Jesus for every single sinner who has lived in the past, is living at the present, or will live in the future?

“*With Thy Spirit me endow for such meditation.*” “Graciously send me Thy Holy Spirit, working through the written and spoken Word of God, which is His ‘*sword*’ (Ephesians 6:17b) in piercing, penetrating, and entering human hearts and souls, richly to bless my pondering and meditation on Jesus’ *vicarious atonement*, that perfect, finished, and completely satisfactory work by my Substitute before God, not only for me, but for all other human beings.” This is the plea of one of Jesus’ “*sheep*” (John 10:27), one who has been brought “*out of [the] darkness*” of ignorance and unbelief into the “*marvelous light*” (I Peter 2:9b) of God’s “*grace*” (Ephesians 2:8a), brought to receive, embrace, and enjoy for himself **the priceless gifts** of this undeserved love of God on account of Jesus’ passion. The first of these priceless gifts is the pardon of every sin (“*not imputing their trespasses unto them*” – II Corinthians 5:19b), and the second priceless gift is righteousness before the one, true and holy God (“*by the obedience of One shall [the] many be made righteous*” – Romans 5:19b).

“*Grant that I in love and faith may the image cherish of Thy suffering, pain, and death, that I may not perish.*” Here we have the petition of the disciple of Jesus that with grateful love and persistent trust he may continue to cherish, may continue to treasure, and may continue to remember that “*Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for*

the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but quickened by the Spirit" (I Peter 3:18). However, because of the wicked, evil, and completely corrupt "*flesh*" (Romans 7:18) with which all Christians have to contend during their earthly life, the warning of the writer to the Hebrews in chapter 3, verse 12, is needed and should be taken with due seriousness: "*Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.*" It was because of this ungodly flesh that some professing disciples of Jesus, as recorded in John 6, arrogantly dismissed what Jesus was teaching them: "*This is a hard saying; who can hear it?*" (v. 60). Sadly, we are informed by the Apostle John that "*from that time many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him*" (v. 66). It was at this point that the Savior said to the twelve: "*Will ye also go away?*" (v. 67). Peter spoke up and gave this answer to Jesus' question: "*Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God*" (vv. 68-69). Oh, let us, by God's grace, with His help and strength, ever make it clear, as Peter did, that we want to continue to follow our dear Savior and His precious Word when we are tempted to turn away from Him and His Word. What real encouragement we receive from Jesus in John 8, where He says to us and to all of His followers: "*If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know **the truth**, and the truth shall make you free*" (vv. 31-32).

In the **second stanza**, we have this fervent, yet grateful plea to the Lord Jesus to impress upon the believer's heart *the cost* of his redemption:

*Make me see Thy great distress,
anguish and affliction,
bonds and stripes and wretchedness,
and Thy crucifixion.
Make me see how scourge and rod,
spear and nails did wound Thee;
how for man Thou diedst, O God,
who with thorns had crowned Thee.*

The disciple of Jesus prays that he would be brought to see more and more the magnitude of his Savior's suffering and His death by crucifixion for every man, woman, and child. How easy it is for us either to take for granted this unmerited and undeserved substitutionary work by

our Savior, or to think little of it in our busy and full daily schedules. What wonderful spiritual profit is given to us and what excellent reminders are supplied to us when, in Philippians 2, the Apostle Paul addresses us with these words: “*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, 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 unto death, even the death of the cross*” (vv. 5-8).

In the **third stanza**, the follower of Jesus makes this humble appeal, that he be brought to acknowledge himself and his own sins as the cause of the Savior’s bitter suffering and death:

*Yet, O Lord, not thus alone
make me see Thy passion,
but its cause to me make known
and its termination.
Ah! I also and my sin
wrought Thy deep affliction;
this indeed the cause hath been
of Thy crucifixion.*

Here the Christian testifies that sin (including his own sin) was the cause for Jesus’ passion. The Old Testament prophet Isaiah supported this testimony when in chapter 53 he confessed in prophesy concerning Jesus’ passion and its cause: “*He was wounded for OUR transgressions; He was bruised for OUR iniquities; the chastisement of OUR peace was upon Him, and with His stripes WE are healed. ...The Lord hath laid on HIM the iniquity of US ALL*” (vv. 5 and 6b). Moreover, the suffering and death of Jesus was carried out as an offering to God, vicariously, that is, in the place and in the stead of sinners, “*once*” (Hebrews 10:10b), not repeatedly, “*for all.*” The writer to the Hebrews, in chapter 7, provides further detail on this once-for-all sacrifice in verses 26-27: “*Such an High Priest became us who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice first for His own sins and then for the people’s; for this He did once when He offered up Himself.*” And in I Corinthians 15, the Apostle Paul set forth this clear declaration: “*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” (vv. 1-4). How true, wonderful, and comforting are the words written down by St. Paul in Romans 5: “*Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound”* (v. 20b).

Now let us go on to the **fourth stanza** of this very personal and edifying hymn:

*Grant that I Thy passion view
with repentant grieving,
nor Thee crucify anew
by unholy living.
How could I refuse to shun
every sinful pleasure,
since for me God's only Son
suffered without measure?*

What is the response of the child of God to Jesus' passion (His suffering and death in behalf of all mankind) as God's abounding gift to poor sinners? Should the response be the callous words of the spiritual ingrate written by the Apostle Paul in Romans 6: “*Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?*” (v. 1b). Oh, no!! “*God forbid!*” he says (v. 2a). Rather, we ought humbly to join the psalmist in confessing to our gracious God: “*I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid; I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin*” (Psalm 32:5). Young Joseph in Egypt could not even entertain the thought of indulging in fornication with another man's wife; as a child of God he could not do otherwise than to say to her: “*How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?*” (Genesis 39:9). His refusal to say “Yes” to her sinful advances and wicked suggestions was anchored to the goodness and mercy of his God in promising and giving the “Seed” of the woman — His Son, the Redeemer of Israel — who would “bruise” or crush the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15), defeating the devil and bringing victory over sin for “*all the nations of the earth*” (22:18a). It was God's undeserved lovingkindness in the Messiah toward Joseph (and all other sinners) that moved him to “*hate evil*” (Psalm 97:10a). The Apostle Paul, speaking for himself and all other believers in the Savior, made it clear why Christians want to lead God-pleasing lives, when he wrote in

II Corinthians 5: *“The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that He died for all, that they which live [the born-again, spiritually alive believers in Christ] should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto Him which died for them and rose again”* (vv. 14-15).

In the **fifth stanza**, we have more applications of how the passion of Jesus helps His followers in their daily lives:

*If my sins give me alarm
and my conscience grieve me,
let Thy cross my fear disarm,
peace of conscience give me.
Grant that I may trust in Thee
and Thy holy passion.
If His Son so loveth me,
God must have compassion.*

Here we see that the only real remedy for the guilt of sin and an accusing conscience is what God has done through Christ Jesus for the whole world of sinners, as we have that marvelous message placed before our hearts and souls in II Corinthians 5: *“God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them”* (v. 19a). This message is marvelous because it clearly reveals that God in Christ has objectively given to every sinner in the world peace with Him and forgiveness for all sins. It is this message, worth more than all the money in the world, which God wants all sinners to receive and take for themselves. God *“will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time”* (I Timothy 2:4-6). In his Gospel, the Apostle John sets forth these **two truths**: First of all, *“He that believeth on Him [Christ Jesus] is not condemned [on account of his sins]”* (3:18a); and **secondly**, *“He that believeth not is condemned already [for his sins] because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God”* (3:18b).

The child of God, already having been brought to saving faith in Jesus, desires, according to His new man, to remain and continue to be a believer in the only Savior and Hope for sinners. How is this possible? It is possible to be preserved in the saving faith only through God’s *means of grace*: ■ **The precious Gospel** of God’s

grace and mercy in Christ Jesus on the basis of His finished active and passive obedience for all mankind, as this Gospel is revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and as it is preached and taught in its truth and purity. In Romans 1, the apostle confessed: “*I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is **the power of God unto salvation** to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek*” (v. 16). ■ **The Sacrament of Baptism**, with its God-given, certain blessings: “*As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ*” (Galatians 3:27); “*Baptism doth also now save us*” (I Peter 3:21a). ■ **The Lord’s Supper**, with its priceless gifts: In Luke’s Gospel, we have these documented truths – “*And He took bread and gave thanks and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, ‘This is My body, which is given for you; this do in remembrance of Me.’ Likewise also the cup, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you’*” (vv. 19-20).

Zacharias, upon having his speech restored, as recorded in Luke 1, declared: “*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up an Horn of Salvation for us in the house of His servant David, ...to perform the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant*” (vv. 68-69 and 72). It is most certainly true that God’s compassion toward the undeserving world of sinners showed itself most wonderfully in the promising, the sending, and the giving of His Son “*not...to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved*” (John 3:17).

The **sixth and final stanza** of this hymn has a number of pleas that the precious Savior grant the petitioner the fruits of saving faith in His holy passion even unto the end:

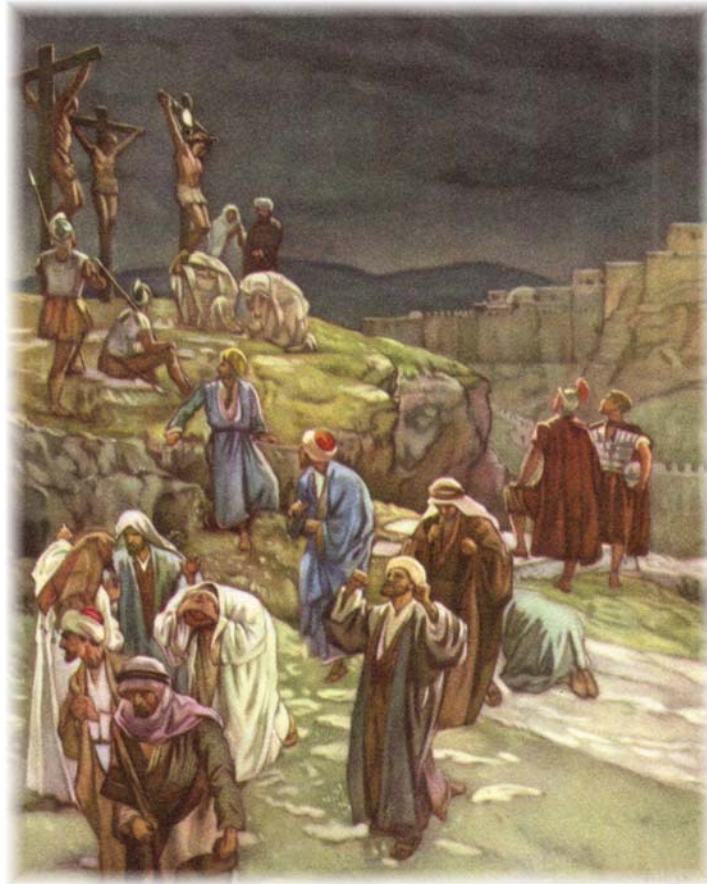
*Grant that I may willingly
bear with Thee my crosses,
learning humbleness of Thee,
peace mid pain and losses.
May I give Thee love for love!
Hear me, O my Savior,
that I may in heaven above
sing Thy praise forever.*

The child of God, attached by faith to Jesus’ passion, prays that he would more willingly bear whatever crosses God allows to come into his life, ever remembering how Jesus willingly bore His cross for the justification of all

sinner (Romans 3:24). In his future days here on earth, the follower of Jesus desires to grow more and more in humility and submissiveness, recalling again and again the example of Jesus, who *“humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”* (Philippians 2:8b). In gratitude for the sacrificial love which the Good Shepherd revealed when He gave *“His life for the sheep”* (John 10:11b), the redeemed and believing sheep now want to reveal and show their love for Him more and more (Philippians 1:9). Oh, our dear and only Savior, hear us *as we confidently pray according to Thy will* (I John 5:14-15), ever looking forward with great anticipation to that *“inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for [every believer]”* (I Peter 1:4), where we can praise, bless, and adore Thee forever and ever for all of Thy *“benefits”* (Psalm 103:2b) graciously showered on us, Thy dear children.

— R. J. L.





The Real Cost of Our Redemption

“Ye know that ye were...redeemed...with the precious blood of Christ.” I Peter 1:18-19

During this holy Lenten season, it behooves us to consider in true contrition and repentance not only our many **sins** by which we have offended our God and Lord but also **the cost** of our reconciliation to Him rendered by His only-begotten Son in His work of redemption (Romans 5:10a), His all-sufficient obedience to divine justice which, in the stead and in the place of every human being, satisfied both the demands of God’s Law and its punishments required of every transgressor. Particu-

larly regarding Christ's *passive obedience*, which paid the penalty of men's guilt, the Apostle Peter takes up the examination of that cost in the words of our title-text, which read thus in their entirety:

"Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot."

Peter first reminds us of the **state of depravity** from which we were bought back by Christ's wonderful work of redemption. He says: "*Ye know that ye were...redeemed...from your **vain conversation**, received by tradition from your fathers.*" The word translated in our King James Version as "*conversation*" really means, according to the original Greek, the "*way of life*" or "*conduct*" by which the whole human race since the fall of Adam and Eve is known, the "*way of life*" in which "*they are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one!*" (Psalm 14:3). That "*conduct*" is "**vain**," Peter says; it is empty, meaningless, and completely devoid of merit in the sight of God, because, out of all the people in the world, including those who lead an outwardly righteous and exemplary life in the sight of men, "*there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not*" (Ecclesiastes 7:20). And even we Christians, if our deeds were judged according to their merit and reckoned against our debt to God, find ourselves compelled to confess with Isaiah: "*We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags!*" (64:6).

This depraved condition in which we find ourselves by nature has been "*received **by tradition** from [our] fathers,*" Peter tells us. Literally, it has been "*handed down*" and "*passed along*" from generation to generation from our ancestors as their legacy of shame. "*By one man [namely, Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,*" Paul writes in Romans 5 verse 12. Since the fall of Adam and Eve, all men have been conceived and born in sin, as the Psalmist confesses of his own wretched heritage, saying: "*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*" (51:5). This "original sin" or "inherited sin" is the total corruption of our whole human nature, so that, by nature, man is, according to his spiritual heredity — which we

might liken to corrupted spiritual DNA — ruined in body and soul and, as we confess in our Catechism, “without true fear, love, and trust in God; he is without righteousness, is inclined only to evil, and is spiritually blind, dead, and an enemy of God” (*Explanation of Luther’s Small Catechism*, St. Louis, CPH, 1943, Q/A 95). And this inherited condition of depravity and vanity “*received by tradition from [our] fathers*” causes us to commit all manner of “**actual**” sins— **acts of our own doing** in our rotten, wretched, vain and morally bankrupt “*way of life*”— whereby we “**actively**” transgress God’s holy Law in thoughts, desires, words, and deeds, and thereby **compound the guilt** passed down to us by inheritance! —Yes, even we Christians, who have been regenerated or “*born again*” (John 3:3) by the power of the Holy Ghost (Titus 3:5) through the Means of Grace (I Corinthians 4:15; John 17:20; I Peter 1:23; etc.), brought to saving faith in Christ, our Savior, and made *new creatures* (II Corinthians 5:17) in whom the **New Man** is now operative in a *renewed* (Psalm 51:10) way of life —even we Christians, because of our old sinful flesh, continue to sin, continue to do what we know we should not do, continue to do (in spite of our best intentions and efforts) what we really don’t **want** to do contrary to God’s Law, so that we cry out with Paul in Romans 7: “*O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death??!*” (v. 24; cf. also vv. 18-23).

There indeed is the key, isn’t it? We desperately **need** to be “*delivered*” or **redeemed** “*from the body of this death,*” “*from [our] vain conversation received by tradition from [our] fathers.*” And the **price** did not come cheaply!! In fact, Peter here in our title-text **devalues** (for the purpose of our **redemption**) what you and I here in this world reckon to be “legal tender for all debts public and private.” “*Silver and gold*” —money, the “coin of the realm,” the riches of this world after which man covets and to which he looks for temporal security and the “good life”— is “*corruptible,*” Peter says. It is subject to devaluation in the precious metals markets of this world, to fluctuations in the world’s economy, to pressures brought to bear by geopolitical and social conditions, etc. Moreover, besides being an **unstable** commodity in and of itself, money, in **any** amount — even in the form of **precious metals** — is unable to compensate God for the sins of the world. The Apostle Peter calls it “*gold that perisheth*” (I Peter 1:7); and those who regard it as a stable “hedge against inflation” in a volatile economy and ask in precious metals commercials “What’s in YOUR safe?” comfort themselves thereby with the empty assurance of security in this transitory world, but have nothing of value for the world to come.

Money doesn't turn God's head the way it turns ours. (Witness, for example, the ineffectual third temptation of the devil by which he sought to "buy off" the Lord Jesus and suborn His allegiance, as we hear of his vain effort in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter four, the Gospel Lesson for the first Sunday in Lent.) —And if such "*corruptible things*" as **mere money** — even in the form of **precious metals** — are not able to render to God the purchase price of our redemption, how much **less** shall the "*dead works*" of **sinful human beings** avail before God in compensation for the debt owed to His divine justice! For "*none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; for the redemption of their soul is precious,*" writes the Lord's Psalmist (Psalm 49:7-8).

No, my dear readers, "*ye know that ye were NOT redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*" Here again we see the prophetic imagery of Christ as "*the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.*" For, throughout the Old Testament, the Children of Israel were directed by the "*shadow of things to come,*" the **ceremonial** sacrifices ordained by God for His people **then**, to the **one Sacrifice** that would, "*in the fulness of the time,*" in the place of sinners, atone for the sins of the world. Among such shadows of things to come we reckon, for example, the ram caught by its horns in the thicket, which Abraham offered instead of his son, Isaac, as a **substitutionary offering** to God (Genesis 22:13). Then, at the time of the Exodus from Egypt, God commanded that each household slaughter a *male lamb*, a yearling *without blemish*, whose *blood* was to be painted on the side posts and lintel of the door of each house, and whose flesh was to be roasted with fire and eaten by the family. The blood was to be a signal to the Angel of Death to "*pass over*" the houses of the Children of Israel and to spare their lives, while he struck down in death the firstborn in every house of the Egyptians (Exodus 12:3-13). In commemoration of their salvation from the tenth plague of death, the Jews were to celebrate the Passover every year with a similar symbolic sacrifice (v. 14-20). This **Passover Lamb**, the Bible tells us, along with all the ceremonial laws of old, was "*a shadow of things to come*" (Colossians 2:17), a picture-in-advance of God's Messiah, who "*was brought as a lamb to the slaughter*" (Isaiah 53:7), upon whom the Lord "*laid the iniquity of us all*" (v. 6) as the Sinbearer, who "*offered Himself without spot unto God*" (Hebrews 9:14), who "*loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor*" (Ephesians 5:2). In fact, St. Paul calls Jesus "**our Passover**" who was "*sacrificed for us*" (I Corinthians 5:7).

It was “*the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*” that “*redeemed*” us, Peter writes in our title-text, as the price that could not be equaled by men. It is “*the blood of Jesus Christ, [God’s] Son, [that] cleanseth us from all sin,*” John tells us in his first epistle (v. 7b). Christ “*made peace through the blood of His cross*” (Colossians 1:20), having offered it to God as the “*propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*” (I John 2:2). And “*through faith in His blood,*” through confidence in the all-sufficient value of Christ’s blood as the **only sacrifice** that avails before God, we have imputed to us the righteousness of Jesus Himself which God declared and accepted on our behalf as payment-in-full for the reconciliation of the world (Romans 3:25). Yes, Jesus’ **precious blood**, painted, as it were, by faith upon the doorposts of our heart, protects us from the angel of eternal death, the devil himself, who otherwise would be able to claim us as his own, hold us forever in slavery to sin and bondage to his wicked will, and destroy us ultimately with the plague of everlasting damnation! (Hebrews 2:14-15).

When you and I consider the tremendous **cost of our redemption** and see in the bloody sweat of our dear Savior, in the lacerations on His scourged back, in His thorn-pierced brow, and in the spike-torn hands and feet of “*God manifest in the flesh,*” the “*precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot,*” how our hearts must truly melt in **humble contrition** for the sins which caused His deep affliction, and how we must cling in **childlike confidence** to the all-sufficiency of the blood-atonement of God’s only-begotten Son for our redemption! Indeed, how the words of Luther in the **Second Article** take on even more significance for us in the light of our title-text, as we confess in humble gratitude for our redemption: “*I believe that Jesus Christ, true God begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord; who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death; that I may be His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness!*”

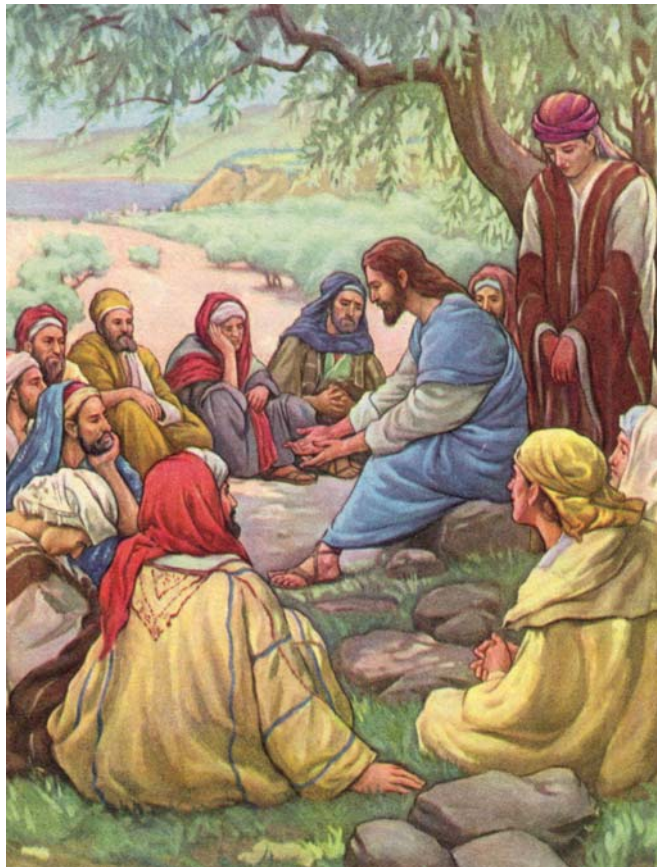
*O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world,
have mercy upon us, and grant us Thy peace!*

— D. T. M.

Christ's Prophetic Office Manifested in the Scriptures

*"Then opened He their understanding,
that they might understand the Scriptures."*

Luke 24:45



Our Savior's official name is the title of His three-fold office, that of our Divine Prophet, our Divine Priest, and our Divine King: "[The] Christ" (from the Greek); "[the] Messiah" (from the Hebrew); translated as "the Anointed One." As our Prophet, the incarnate Son of God revealed Himself by word, *i.e.*, through His preaching, and by deed in all the actions per-

formed during His entire life here in this world, especially those which confirmed the Word of God (His miracles, wonders and signs). Through Moses God foretold of His Son's work as our Prophet: "*The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken*" (Deuteronomy 18:15). The Father also testified regarding Him on the Mount of Transfiguration, when Moses and Elijah also appeared as witnesses: "*While he [Peter] yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud which said, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him'*" (Matthew 17:5).

The Apostle John notes exactly what we need to understand to distinguish Christ the Prophet from all other prophets, especially Moses, in these words: "*For the Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him*" (John 1:17-18). Mark well the two key points! First, Christ brings God's saving grace, His undeserved love, and His saving truth, the Gospel of righteousness imputed and remission granted! Secondly, unlike even the greatest Old Testament prophet (Moses), who spoke *with* God (Exodus 34), Christ is the eternal God Himself, one in essence with the Father and Holy Ghost, in continual communion with them in the sublime Holy Trinity, declaring God's Word as the source thereof, with infinite divine knowledge (omniscience)! Other prophets bring God's Word to us *from* God (Luke 10:16), but Jesus Christ *is* God, bringing us His own Word as the living incarnate "*Word*" and Oracle of God (John 1:1ff.)!

Even before He was manifested in the flesh, He revealed Himself through the prophetic Word of the Old Testament: "*Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow*" (I Peter 1:10-11). Christ gave God's Word to the apostles and caused them to remember all He taught so they could, and did, teach all of us in the New Testament. This is brought out by Christ Himself in His high-priestly prayer (John 17): "*I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world. Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me; and they have kept Thy word*" (v. 6; cf. vv. 14 and 24). He also assures us: "*But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom*

the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26). “Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine; therefore said I that He shall take of Mine and shall show it unto you” (John 16:13-15). “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away” (Matthew 24:35).

The prophetic work of Christ was highlighted by what He did immediately after His resurrection and over the forty days before His ascension. He gave His apostles the definitive “refresher” course in God’s Word: *“To whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3).* A prime example of His work at this time is found in Luke 24. Here is the context: *“And as they thus spake, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them and saith unto them, ‘Peace be unto you.’ But they were terrified and affrighted and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And He said unto them, ‘Why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? 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” (vv. 36-43).* In Jerusalem “the eleven” were gathered together and were hearing the reports of His resurrection appearances (Luke 24:33-35). Suddenly the risen Lord manifested Himself, standing visibly in their midst and offering proof He was real and not a ghostly apparition (Luke 24:36-43). At once He reminded them that everything had happened exactly as He had foretold it, exactly as the Old Testament writers had prophesied: *“He said unto them, ‘These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning Me’” (Luke 24:44).*

Designating the entire Old Testament with the common threefold title *“The Law, the Prophets and the Psalms,”* He laid it all out! *“Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scrip-*

tures, and said unto them, *‘Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things’*” (Luke 24:45-48). What Christ told them was what the Old Testament had already revealed, what *“the Spirit of Christ”* had already testified to through the prophets (I Peter 1:10-11). But now, from hindsight, the disciples were able to look back on the most recent events in particular (Christ’s suffering, death and resurrection) and behold the prophetic Scriptures in living, realtime fulfillment! They themselves had witnessed how Christ fulfilled each and every statement uttered by Himself through the prophets over 4,000-plus years of the Old Testament and during His own public ministry! Now *“the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God”* (Acts 2:23) was played out before their very eyes. Isaiah 53, for example, was a script that was followed and fulfilled to the letter!

And as Christ spoke, He *“opened their understanding”* of the Scriptures. Finally, the light shined in their hearts and minds as to what exactly God’s Word revealed! Note: The Scriptures *are* clear! The problem of not understanding or of misunderstanding always lies in man! Christ did not rewrite the Old Testament for them, as if it needed explanation, as if it were not accurate. He opened their understanding so that they, finally, might understand what Scripture had said all along! The Bible was not a closed book — it was their minds that were closed! What had impeded their understanding prior to that time? Scripture records many examples of their *“closed-mindedness”* as they used human reason and their preconceived worldly notions of the Messiah and the nature of His Kingdom to becloud and thwart the clear Word of God! Remember when Peter had the unmitigated gall to take the Lord aside and to *“rebuke”* Him? *“From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘Be it far from Thee, Lord! This shall not be unto Thee!’ But He turned and said unto Peter, ‘Get thee behind Me, Satan! Thou art an offence unto Me! For thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men’”* (Matthew 16:21-23). In His rebuke of Peter’s audacity, the Lord showed the root cause of Peter’s lack of understanding to be *“savoring the things of men.”* Rather than bringing all his thoughts into obedience to Christ (II Corinthians 10:5b), rather than casting down all the arrogant ideas of his carnal mind and bringing

everything into the captivity of God's sole rule by His Word (II Corinthians 10:5a), Peter chose to *think contrary* to what God expressly *said*. Therefore, the clear teachings of God hit a closed, "*carnal mind*" (Romans 8:7) — a mind which rejected outright anything it did not savor! The rest of disciples too were blind because they refused to see and believe what both Jesus and the prophets had spoken concerning His passion and resurrection (Luke 24:25-26)! But now the Scriptures had been fulfilled *before* their eyes and *in* their ears! Now they could understand and confidently declare what Peter would later write by inspiration of God: "*We have also a more sure Word of Prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the Day Star arise in your hearts, knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*" (II Peter 1:19-21). Putting away their private misinterpretations of God's Word, they, by God's grace and power alone, were enlightened to see what was always there in plain sight! For Scripture is the clear and fully sufficient revelation of God which He has revealed even to "*babes*" (Matthew 11:25) and the understanding of which makes even "*the simple*" wise (Psalm 19:7). St. Paul wrote to Timothy "*that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*" (II Timothy 3:15-17). Finally the disciples had "*ears to hear*" (Matthew 11:15; 13:9; etc.)! What a change! Only days before we read that they all contended against the Lord's clear Word. For example, consider this: "*Jesus saith unto them, 'All ye shall be offended because of Me this night; for it is written, 'I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.' But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.'* But Peter said unto Him, '*Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.*' And Jesus saith unto him, '*Verily I say unto thee, that this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice.*' But he spake the more vehemently, '*If I should die with Thee, I will not deny thee in any wise.*' Likewise also said they all" (Mark 14:27-31). What arrogance! But now they had been *changed* by and through God's unchanging Word!

How extensive this revelation was, as they were all taught of God, is also clear as we hear of the Lord's procedure with the two disciples on

the road to Emmaus: *“Then He said unto them, ‘O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?’ And, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself”* (Luke 24:25-27). Their response is also very telling: *“They said one to another, ‘Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?’”* (Luke 24:32). In addition, everything that has been *delivered to us* (cf. I Corinthians 11:2, 23, etc.) in the New Testament stands as proof that their understanding was complete. Consider, for example, the initial sermons delivered in the Pentecost time period and recorded in the Book of Acts! These *“unlearned and ignorant men”* (Acts 4:13) were, like also Apollos, *“mighty in the Scriptures”* (Acts 18:24)!

As our Prophet, now in His *state of exaltation*, Christ still reveals Himself as our Savior and Lord through the Prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures, the Holy Bible (Ephesians 2:20). And His purpose in doing so is the same as it ever was: *“That repentance and remission of sins”* be proclaimed *“in His name”* (Luke 24:27), that is, for His sake, *“among all nations”* (Acts 24:47). In this the Law serves the Gospel. How so? By the Law, God convicts us, working in our hearts the sorrow of true repentance (Psalm 51:17) so that we admit our guilt, knowing the true wages of our sin (*“[eternal] death,”* Romans 6:23a). With this God-wrought conviction of sin, our heart is prepared for God’s only solution: The saving grace of blood-bought remission of sins, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ! It is written: *“For it pleased the Father that in Him [Christ] should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven, whereof I, Paul, am made a minister”* (Colossians 1:19-23). By the way, the Apostle Paul was also *“taught of God”* (John 6:45; cf. I Thessalonians 4:9) as the Christ directly revealed Himself to him and gave him all the enlightened understanding required for the apostleship (Acts 9:3-6, 15-16). The apostle mentions this fact: *“But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither re-*

ceived it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. ...But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me that I might preach Him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia and returned again unto Damascus” (Galatians 1:11-12, 15-17).

Christians often imagine how wonderful it would be to have been in Galilee or Judea when our Lord walked visibly among men, preaching and doing His work. But we have all we need to be “*taught of God*” in Holy Writ! “*Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book. But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name*” (John 20:30-31). “*There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written*” (John 21:25).

May God grant each of us open ears and enlighten our understanding of the Scriptures as we hear the Savior in His prophetic office teach us His precious, saving Word, indeed, as we hear *His very own voice* (Luke 10:16) in the preaching and teaching of His Word by the “*pastors and teachers*” He has given to His Church on earth to *perfect His saints*, to *serve them* as overseers of His flocks (Acts 20:28), and to *edify His mystical body* (Ephesians 4:11-12; cf. *Catechism Q/A 155A*) in the true faith unto life everlasting (I Peter 1:5).

— E. J. W.



Christ's Resurrection Is a Prototype of Our Own

*"[Christ] shall change our vile body,
that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body..."*
— Philippians 3:21

Having once again, during the holy Lenten season, reviewed and examined in detail the *vicarious atonement* of our Savior in His great passion, we not only witnessed in the Scriptures what all He bore and suffered in our place and in our stead to be "*the Propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world*" (I John 2:2); but we also gratefully observed the **fruit** of His redemptive work in reconciling us unto God by His death (Romans 5:10). Knowing as we do "*the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*" toward us, manifested in His *state of humiliation* (II Corinthians 8:9), and beholding in the Gospel what great things God wrought for us and for our salvation, "*in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*" (II Corinthians 5:19), how can we sufficiently thank Him for rescuing us poor mortals "from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil" (Luther; Hebrews 2:14-15)? Yea, how can we sufficiently thank Him for making us His own dear children and heirs of everlasting life by bringing us to that saving faith whereby we lay hold on the blessings of redemption (I Timothy 6:12), have peace with God (Romans 5:1), and rejoice in His salvation (Psalm 51:12)?

Moreover, having just recently celebrated the mighty *resurrection* of our Savior from the dead — the miracle of miracles that sealed to us those blessings and gave us the assurance that our faith in Him is not in vain (I Corinthians 15:14, 17, 20a) — we enjoy its **fourfold comfort** from what it definitely proves, namely, that the risen Christ is truly the Son of God, that His doctrine is the truth, that God the Father accepted His Son's sacrifice as payment in full for the world's reconciliation unto Himself, and that all true believers will rise in their very own glorified bodies to everlasting life on the Last Day (Cf. 1943 *Catechism*, Q/A 152).

It is the last comfort in particular upon which we focus in this present article, as we consider **the risen Christ as the prototype of our own resurrection**, “*who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body*” (Philippians 3:21). The fourth comfort actually hinges upon the first three; for if Christ were not indeed the very Son of God, if His Word were not absolutely true and reliable, and if His *vicarious atonement* had not been sufficient for the world’s redemption, then He, as a mere man, helpless to help even Himself, would be helpless to help us and helpless to effect *our* resurrection from the dead. Let us therefore examine **those first three comforts** to see how they are essential to the fourth.

Jesus is truly the SON OF GOD. He was “*declared to be the Son of God with power...by the resurrection from the dead*” (Romans 1:4). — As the **Son of God**, Christ had fully participated with the Father and the Holy Ghost in the creation of the world, including that of mankind: “*By Him [Christ] were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible*” (Colossians 1:16). “*And the Lord God [the Triune God] formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul*” (Genesis 2:7). —But, even after our first parents flagrantly disobeyed Him, God did not cut us off in His wrath and destroy His creation: “*He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust*” (Psalm 103:14), physically the material from which He made us in the beginning. Instead “[*He preserveth*] *man and beast*” (Psalm 36:6), “*upholding all things by the word of His power*” (Hebrews 1:3). —And, at the time of temporal death, when the breath of life departs from the body, “*all go unto one place; all are of the dust [even the animals, cf. Genesis 2:19], and all turn to dust again*” (Ecclesiastes 3:20). “*Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God, who gave it*” (12:7). —Nevertheless the Bible teaches that, on the Last Day, **Christ Himself** will re-create from our “*dust*” the same bodies which died and decayed in the earth. Job testifies: “*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 [all my vital organs] be consumed within me*” (Job 19:26 and 27). “*Martha saith unto [Jesus]: ‘I know that he [her brother Lazarus] shall rise again in the resurrection at the Last Day’* (John 11:24). *Jesus said unto her: ‘I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live’* (v. 25). “[**Christ**] *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 3:21). “*All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth*” (Matthew 28:18). These and many other passages show conclusively that Jesus Christ is **the Son of God**, who, as such, is our **Creator**, our **Preserver**, and our mighty **Resurrector** from the dead, “[*who*] is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Ephesians 2:20), including the resurrection of our bodies from the dust of decay to life everlasting in heaven.

Christ’s DOCTRINE is the TRUTH. For this doctrinal point in our *Catechism* (CPH, St. Louis, 1943, Q/A 152b), we find as the single proof passage John 2:19, where Jesus says: “*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*” and thus prophesies His own act of resurrecting His own 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*” (v. 22). His enemies believed it as well and cited it to Pilate as justification for the sealing of His tomb and for the assignment of a detail of soldiers to guard it (Matthew 27:63). But in other passages as well, Jesus clearly testified of His resurrection from the dead well in advance of Easter morning. We note, for example, His reference to His resurrection in Matthew 17:9 following His transfiguration before Peter, James and John (cf. Mark 9:9). It was the “*sign*” of His Messiahship which He gave to the Scribes and Pharisees, comparing His resurrection to the re-appearance of Jonah after “*three days and three nights in the whale’s belly*” (Matthew 12:38-40). It was the triumphant victory over death after His great passion, which He foretold specifically on many occasions to His disciples (Matthew 20:19; Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34; Luke 18:33; 24:7) before He suffered, died and was buried. By His mighty resurrection, He proved His statements to be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and proved as well that ALL of His Word is the truth (John 8:31-32), a fact which is of immeasurable and lasting comfort to us Christians.

Christ’s VICARIOUS ATONEMENT was accepted by the Father as THE ALL-SUFFICIENT SACRIFICE for the world’s redemption and reconciliation. “*If Christ be NOT raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ [who died confiding in Him as their Redeemer] are perished. ...But now IS Christ risen from the dead...*” (I Corinthians 15:17-18, 20a). The Apostle Peter, in his Pentecost sermon, noted that Jesus had been “*delivered by the*

determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” in eternity already (cf. Revelation 13:8) to be “*crucified and slain*” by the Jews (Acts 2:23), and that the Father raised Him up (vv. 24 and 32), according to the prophecy of David (Psalm 16:10, Acts 2:31), as evidence that He had made “*that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both **Lord and Christ***” (Acts 2:36). God “*highly exalted Him*” (Philippians 2:9) because of [“*wherefore*”] His perfect active and passive obedience in His *state of humiliation* (v. 8) and made it clear by raising Him from the dead that Jesus of Nazareth is not only **true God** (“*Lord*”) but also the **Anointed One** (“*Christ*”), “*the Holy One of Israel, [its] Savior*” (Isaiah 43:3a), who successfully completed and *accomplished* (“*finished*,” John 19:30) the work of redemption which His Father had sent Him to do (John 17:4; 18:11). God the Father “*raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead*,” writes the Apostle Paul in Romans 4:24-25, “*who was delivered for [literally, on account of] our offenses*” —compare Isaiah 53:5-6, 8c— “*and was raised again for [literally, on account of] our justification*” —compare II Corinthians 5:19, 21. God the Father did not raise from the dead and validate the redemptive work of a failure, of a pretender, of a propitiation-wannabe!! He raised His only-begotten Son, who is “*the Propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world*” (I John 2:2), the Sacrifice that rendered to God on behalf of and in the stead of all mankind perfect satisfaction of divine justice, “*that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him*” (II Corinthians 5:21b).

Now, as to Christ’s ability to raise the dead and to glorify the bodies of those who will not yet have died when the Last Day occurs, we should recognize, first of all, that Christ, even in His *state of humiliation*, though He “did not always and not fully use the divine attributes communicated to His human nature” (*Catechism* Q/A 134), had the power to do so (John 5:21) and indeed used that power on several occasions recorded in the Scriptures “*that [we] might believe*” (John 20:31): He raised the young man of Nain (Luke 7:11ff.), the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:22-24, 35ff. and Luke 8:41-42, 49ff.), and Lazarus of Bethany (John 11:1ff.). In John 5:21, the Savior Himself refers to that power and His will to exercise it at His own good pleasure, saying: “*As the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth them, even so **the Son** quickeneth whom **He** will.*” And, with specific reference to the Last Day and to the resurrection of all flesh, Jesus said of Himself: “*The hour is coming in the which **all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth***” (vv. 28-29a) ...as Lazarus “*came forth*” at Jesus’ call (John 11:44), as the daughter of Jairus “*arose and walked*” at Je-

Jesus' bidding (Mark 5:42), as the young man at Nain "*sat up and began to speak*" at Jesus' command (Luke 7:15).

Indeed, "*all...shall come forth;*" but the resurrection of **unbelievers** will not be an event in which they can even now rejoice with grateful anticipation (as is the resurrection of **believers**); for Jesus speaks of it as "*the resurrection of damnation*" (John 5:29). Their "*vile body*" will remain just that, a *vile body* that will **not** be "*changed,*" a body of "*corruption*" that will **not** be raised in "*incorruption,*" a body "*sown in dishonor*" that will **not** be "*raised in glory*" in contrast to the change that will occur in the resurrection of all true believers (I Corinthians 15:42-44). For Isaiah writes of the perpetual, horrific state of the unbelievers: "*Their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh*" (Isaiah 66:24).

But, with respect to **true believers**, Christ's resurrection definitely proves that, on the Last Day, they will rise from the dead with *glorified bodies* to everlasting life in heaven (Cf. *Catechism* Q/A 152D and 196A). "*Because I live, ye shall live also,*" He promised His disciples (John 14:19). Again, Job testifies: "*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 [all my vital organs] be consumed within me*" (Job 19:26 and 27). And St. Paul, writing about those who had died confiding in Christ as their Savior (cf. I Corinthians 15:18; I Thessalonians 4:16; etc.), says: "*The dead shall be raised incorruptible*" (I Corinthians 15:52). Moreover, tying Christ's resurrection in **His** glorified body to the resurrection of believers in **their** glorified bodies, Paul writes in our title-text: "*[Christ] shall change OUR vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto HIS glorious body*" (Philippians 3:21). This is precisely what is meant by the term "*firstfruits*" in I Corinthians 15:20, 23. In the context of the resurrection of the "*dead in Christ*" (I Thessalonians 4:16b), the Savior in **His** resurrection is the **prototype** or one-of-a-kind master-model according to which all true believers shall rise, so that their very own bodies, the very bodies which had died, though "*[their] dust [had] return[ed] to the earth as it was*" (Ecclesiastes 12:7a), "*though [their] reins [had been] consumed within [them]*" (Job 19:27b), shall be "*made alive*" (I Corinthians 15:22) and "*fashioned like unto His glorious body.*"

Although this great "*hope*" (*i.e.* anticipation, expectation) is ours, ac-

according to the Scriptures, not “*in this life only*” (I Corinthians 15:19), it **is** our comfort already “*in this life*” as we joyfully anticipate the second visible advent of our Savior on the Last Day. For then “*we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord*” (I Thessalonians 4:15) shall undergo the *change* in our vile bodies that the blessed dead, “*them which are asleep,*” will have experienced at their *resurrection*. For St. Paul writes further in I Corinthians 15: “*We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible; and we shall be changed*” (vv. 51-52).

All of this wonderful comfort goes back to Christ’s triumphant resurrection from the dead; for “*if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable! But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept!*” (I Corinthians 15:17-20). Because of what His resurrection definitely proves about Him, and according to His promise to all true believers, “[*Christ*] shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body” (Philippians 3:21a); for the glorification of His body is the prototype of our own.

I am flesh and must return
unto dust, whence I am taken.
But by faith I now discern
that from death I shall awaken
with my Savior to abide
in His glory, at His side.

Glorified, I shall anew
with this flesh then be enshrouded;
in this body I shall view
God, my Lord, with eyes unclouded;
in this flesh I then shall see
Jesus Christ eternally!

(TLH 206, 4-5)

HALLELUJAH!

— D. T. M.

**“Now is Christ
risen from the dead**



**and become the firstfruits of them
that slept.” — 1 Corinthians 15:20**

Churches in Fellowship

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SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

Abalama, Nigeria

The Rev. Elison B. Agborubere, Balaiyi Thompson and Bateinm Bestman, Pastors

Thompson Compound Abalama

Abalama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

ST. CLEMENT'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Elem-Sangama, Nigeria

The Rev. Timothy Biobebe Aaron, Pastor

St. Clement Lutheran Church,

Elem-Sangama Arch-Deaconry

Elem-Sangama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

ST. MATTHEW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Port Harcourt, Nigeria

The Rev. Allenson Karibi Asawo, Pastor

76 Abba Street, Mile 1 Diobu

Port Harcourt, Rivers State, NIGERIA

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Kula, Nigeria

Pastoral Vacancy at present

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Kula, Rivers State, NIGERIA

ST. PAUL'S NYEMONI LUTHERAN CATHEDRAL

Abonnema, Nigeria

The Rev. Nimi B. Fyeface and

The Rev. God'stime E. D. Douglas, Co-Pastors

P. O. Box 123

Abonnema, Akulga, Rivers State, NIGERIA

E-Mail: njohnfyeface@yahoo.co.uk



Directory of Member Congregations

www.concordialutheranconf.com

GOOD SHEPHERD EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

On the Web at:

4090 S. Melpomene Way, Tucson, AZ 85730 *GoodShepherdLutheranChurchTucson.com*

Worship Service 9:30 a.m.

Telephone (520) 721-7618

Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 a.m.

The Rev. DANIEL P. MENSING, Pastor

550 North Harrison Road, Apt. 11107, Tucson, AZ 85748 Pastor: (520) 448-8694

E-mail: goodshepherdlutherantucson@gmail.com

PEACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

On the Web at:

Central Avenue at 171st Place, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913 *PeaceEvLutheran.com*

Sunday School & Bible Class 8:30 a.m.

Telephone: (708) 532-4288

Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

The Rev. DAVID T. MENSING, Pastor

17151 South Central Avenue, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913 Pastor: (708) 532-9035

E-mail: pastormensing@yahoo.com

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sixth and Tangent Streets, Lebanon, OR 97355

Telephone: (541) 258-2941

Sunday School & Bible Class 10:00 a.m.

Worship Service 11:00 a.m.

The Rev. PAUL E. BLOEDEL, Pastor

483 Tangent Street, Lebanon, OR 97355

Pastor: (541) 258-2941

E-mail: revbloedel@gmail.com

ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

On the Web at:

5350 South Fountain Street, Seattle, WA 98178 *StLukes-CLC.com*

Sunday School & Bible Class 9:00 a.m.

Telephone: (206) 723-1078

Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

The Rev. EDWARD J. WORLEY, Pastor

9658 – 54th Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98118

Pastor: (206) 723-7418

E-mail: revworley@comcast.net

NOTE: Services are also held in **Victoria, British Columbia** on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. Please call the Pastor for current location.

Worship Service 7:00 p.m.

Adult Bible Class 4:30 p.m.

Adult Catechism Class 8:30 p.m.

ST. MARK'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

On the Web at:

22012 Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, IL 60411 *StMarksEvLutheran.com*

Adult Bible Class 3:00 p.m.

Telephone: (708) 757-6859

Worship Service 4:00 p.m.

The Rev. DAVID J. MENSING, Pastor

22012 Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, IL 60411

Pastor: (708) 655-7549

E-mail: d_mensing@hotmail.com

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

On the Web at:

300 North Ridgeland Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302 *TrinityEvLutheran.com*

Sunday School & Bible Class 9:00 a.m.

Telephone: (708) 386-6773

Worship Service 10:15 a.m.

The Rev. ROBERT J. LIETZ, Pastor

233 North Cuyler Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302

Pastor: (708) 386-4145

E-mail: robertjlietz@gmail.com

**The Sixty-Fourth
Annual Convention**
of the
Concordia Lutheran Conference
June 26th, 27th and 28th, 2015

at

Peace Ev. Lutheran Church
Oak Forest, Illinois

The Rev. David T. Mensing, Pastor

with the

Plenary Pastoral Conference
on June 23rd and 24th

and the

Board of Directors Meeting on June 25th

Convention Motto:

The Sufficiency of Scripture

Ephesians 2:20

The Friday Keynote Sermon is on **Ephesians 2:20**

The Sunday Convention Sermon is on **Luke 16:29**

The Convention Essay:

*"Holy Scripture — The Only Source and Norm
of Christian Faith and Life"*