

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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We believe
that Jesus died
and rose again.

1 Thessalonians 4:14





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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.

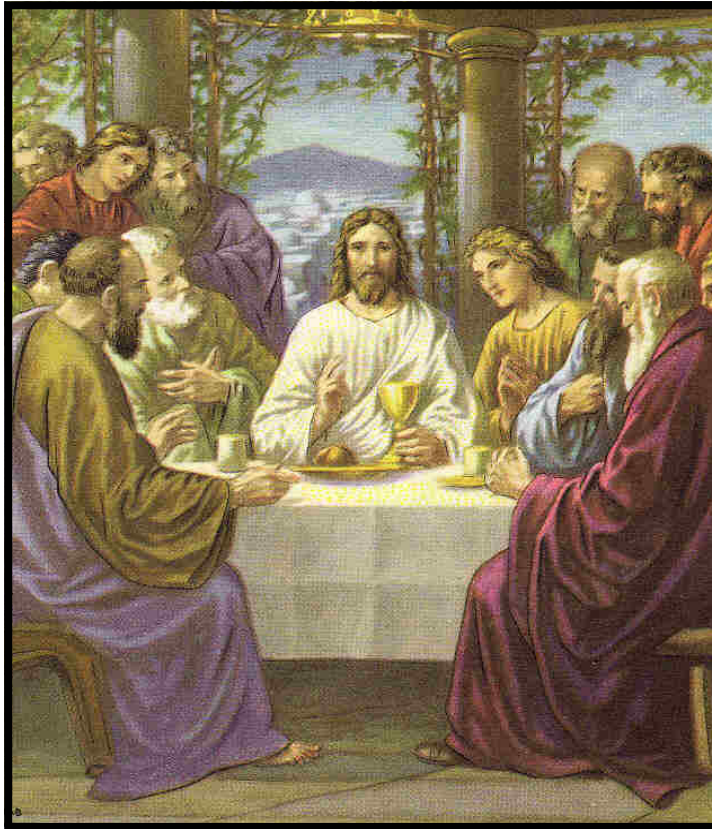
To expose particularly the false teaching and practice of the various so-called "Lutheran" church bodies by comparing their teachings and practices with what is plainly recorded in the Word of God, in the Lutheran Confessions, and in the old orthodox Lutheran writings.

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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Is the Finite Capable of the Infinite?



“This is My body. ... This is My blood”
—Matthew 26:26, 28

Is it *possible* for the true body and blood of Christ to be present in, with, and under the bread and wine received by the communicants in the Sacrament of the Altar? A simple Christian with even only an elementary knowledge of the Bible can answer that question correctly, and say: “Of course it is possible! God is able to do anything!” And though that answer may sound simplistic to some, it is established and confirmed by the Scriptures, which emphatically state: “*With God nothing shall be impossible*” (Luke 1:37); and again: “*With God all things are possible*” (Matthew 19:26). The Re-

formed, however, actually say that it is *not* possible for the true body and blood of the Savior to be present in the Sacrament, because, according to their reasoning, that would be inconsistent with His humanity. They claim that the body of Jesus must be “*finite*” in order to be a *true human* body, and that it is, therefore, incapable of actually possessing any of God’s *infinite* attributes (such as having a presence that is not restricted to a specific locality). The rationalistic axiom of the Reformed (gleaned from Aristotelian philosophy) that “the finite is not capable of the infinite” (*finitum non est capax infiniti*) has been used to argue against a number of different doctrines set forth in Holy Scripture, including the personal union of the divine and human natures in Christ, the omnipresence and omnipotence of the Lord Jesus according to His human nature, and the real presence of the Lord’s body and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar. For example, they teach that the finite humanity of Christ could not possibly have received the infinite power of God, even though Jesus plainly declares: “*All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth*” (Matthew 28:18)—which could only be said with reference to His *human nature*, since all power has always been possessed by Him according to His divine nature (and hence would not need to be “*given*” to Him).

Relating to their denial of the doctrine of the *real presence* of the Lord’s body and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar, the Reformed claim that the human body of Christ can only have one mode of presence, namely, a *local presence* like every other human body, which occupies a specific, finite amount of space and can only be located in one place at a time. Defending that anti-Scriptural position, John Calvin advances the following argumentation: “The presence of Christ in the Supper we must hold to be such as neither affixes Him to the element of bread, nor encloses Him in bread, nor circumscribes Him in any way (this would obviously detract from His celestial glory); and it must, moreover, be such as neither divests Him of His just dimensions, nor dissevers Him by differences of place, nor assigns to Him a body of boundless dimensions, diffused through heaven and earth. All these things are clearly repugnant to His true human nature. ...Let no property be assigned to His body inconsistent with His human nature. This is done when it is either said to be infinite, or made to occupy a variety of places at the same time” (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Vol. 4, chapter 17, §19).

The Reformed teach that the human body of Christ is currently restricted to heaven, at the right hand of God (which they regard as a specific locality in heaven). Therefore, they conclude that His true body and blood cannot be present anywhere on earth at the same time it is in

heaven—especially not present everywhere throughout the world where the Lord’s Supper is being observed at any given time, because they maintain that “the finite is not capable of the infinite” (the finite humanity of Jesus is not capable of an infinite presence). In opposition to that rationalistic argument, it should be remembered and carefully considered how Jesus told Nicodemus that while He was speaking to him on the earth, He was also in heaven at the very same time (John 3:13). And Jesus’ words on that occasion cannot be restricted to His divine nature, because He there calls Himself “*the Son of man*,” which was a personal designation that specifically referenced His *humanity*.

Another rationalistic objection is this, that even if it were possible to divide the body of Christ across the many places where Christians receive Holy Communion, that His body would be completely consumed by now. This, again, is a direct result of the limitations that the Reformed themselves, without any Scriptural support, place upon the body of Christ, namely, that it is only capable of a *local presence* like that of any other human being. Now all such objections would quickly vanish if they correctly understood and accepted what the Scriptures teach about the communication of divine attributes to the human nature of Christ as a result of the personal union (*genus maiestaticum*). At the time of His incarnation in the womb of the virgin Mary, the eternal Son of God took into His divine person a true human nature (not a separate human person); and that human nature of God the Son possesses all of God’s divine attributes (Colossians 2:9). One of those attributes is that He is at all times present everywhere (in and through all things). This is called God’s *omnipresence*, or *repletive presence*. Thus Jesus, the God-Man, is omnipresent; His entire person, which includes both the divine and human natures, fills all things in heaven and in earth (Ephesians 1:23; 4:10).

Now the *real presence* of Christ’s body and blood in the Lord’s Supper is *not* the same thing as His omnipresence. However, in a discussion with the Reformed, it is still important to establish the fact that the divine attribute of omnipresence has been communicated to Jesus’ human nature, because, *as long as it is believed that Jesus’ body is restricted to a local presence, the real presence of His body and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar will be denied* (believed to be impossible). On the other hand, once a person has been convinced by the Scriptures that the true body and blood of Christ *can* be present in an *illocal* manner (not taking up space) without compromising His humanity (because of the communication of the divine attributes to His human nature), then it should also be accepted that His true body and blood *are*, indeed, present in the Communion bread and wine, since that is what the Scriptures clearly teach.

Our catechism (*A Short Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism*, CPH, 1943, Q/A 300) lists four important points of evidence from the Scriptures that support the doctrine of the *real presence*, the first of which emphasizes the very words with which Christ instituted this Sacrament. In connection with the bread that He gave to His disciples in that first Lord's Supper, Jesus plainly told them: "*This is My body*" (Matthew 26:26); and of the wine He said: "*This is My blood*" (v. 28). Interestingly enough, in Greek (the language in which the New Testament was written by inspiration of the Holy Ghost) the word "is" does not even *need* to be specified in such a statement, and it would still be understood. For example, Mark 12:30 records the words of Jesus as "*This is the first commandment,*" even though the word "is" is not in that statement as it is found in the original Greek. The translators correctly added "is" in Mark 12:30, because English grammar requires it. Accordingly, even if the words of Jesus with which He instituted the Sacrament had simply been recorded as "This My body" and "This My blood" (without the "is") in the original text, it would still mean "*this is My body,*" because of the way Greek grammar works. However, in the words of institution, the word "is" is not merely implied or understood, but is *specifically stated* in the inspired Greek text! This is why Luther kept pointing to the word "is" in his meeting with Zwingli (who denied the doctrine of the real presence) at the Marburg Colloquy in 1529.

Specifying the word "is" in the inspired Greek text, God shows that He certainly wants us to accept the fact that the true body and blood of Christ are, indeed, present in His holy Sacrament, and are received by the communicants together with the bread and the wine. That the *real* body and blood of Christ are *actually present* (not merely symbolized) under the visible elements of the bread and the wine gives us the assurance of *real blessings* being conveyed to us through them. Giving us the very body and blood with which He paid the penalty of our transgressions, the Lord Jesus offers, gives, and seals to us the benefits of that redemptive work (His body broken for us and His blood shed for us), even the forgiveness of all our sins. He says: "*This is My body which is given for you*" (Luke 22:19); "*This is My body which is broken for you*" (I Corinthians 11:24); "*This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you*" (Luke 22:20); "*This is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins*" (Matthew 26:28). The Gospel covenant ("the New Testament" connected with Christ's blood) assures us of God's grace and mercy on account of the propitiation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, through this Sacrament, the Gospel's strengthening power is conveyed to all those who receive it in true faith.

However, the real presence of the Lord's body and blood also brings with it real *consequences* for those who partake of this Sacrament "*unworthily*," namely, without saving faith in the Lord Jesus, or in denial of the doctrine of the real presence. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul writes: "*Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body*" (11:27, 29). Therefore, it is not the faith of the communicant that effects the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament. On the contrary, it is the pronouncement of the Lord Jesus when He instituted this Sacrament that has placed His body and blood into the bread and wine for us to eat and to drink. Consequently, the hypocrite who foolishly despises the warnings of Holy Scripture and comes to the Lord's Table under the pretense of oneness with his fellow communicants still receives the body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar, but for his *judgment* instead of his blessing.

The warning against receiving the body and blood of Christ "*unworthily*" does not refer to personal worthiness or deservedness; for, as sinful human beings, we deserve nothing from God (Cf. Genesis 32:10, etc.; also Luther in the *Fifth Petition*). The blessed fact that, as believers, we cling by faith to the Savior's cross and to the forgiveness merited by Him for all mankind and declared for all the world by God Himself, thus being "*cleanse[d] from all unrighteousness*" (I John 1:9), does not mean that we "deserve" anything of the Lord. But we are to partake of the Sacrament, having *examined* (tested) *ourselves* (v. 28) as to our penitence and faith — including our faith in the *real presence* — so that we come to the Holy Supper ***appropriately, properly***, as is ***befitting*** the Sacrament, "*discerning the Lord's body*" as penitent and believing communicants, regarding it as what it truly IS ("*This is My body...this is My blood...given and shed for you for the remission of sins*") and not a mere symbolic meal of bread and wine.

Thankfully, in His Holy Supper the Lord does *not* present us with a mere *symbol* of His body and blood (conveying merely *symbolic* benefits), but, instead, tenders His real, actual body and blood—supernaturally connected with the bread and the wine—that convey the real, actual benefit of what that body and blood secured for us, namely, the forgiveness of sins, life, and eternal salvation! We gratefully believe, teach, and confess the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar, not because of any philosophical or rationalistic reasoning, but because of the

clear and certain testimony of our Savior and Redeemer who instituted it for our spiritual and eternal welfare. Thus we sing to the Lord in one of our beloved Communion hymns:

Although Thou didst to heav'n ascend
where angel hosts are dwelling,
and in Thy presence they behold
Thy glory, all excelling,
and though Thy people shall not see
Thy glory and Thy majesty
till dawns the Judgment morning,

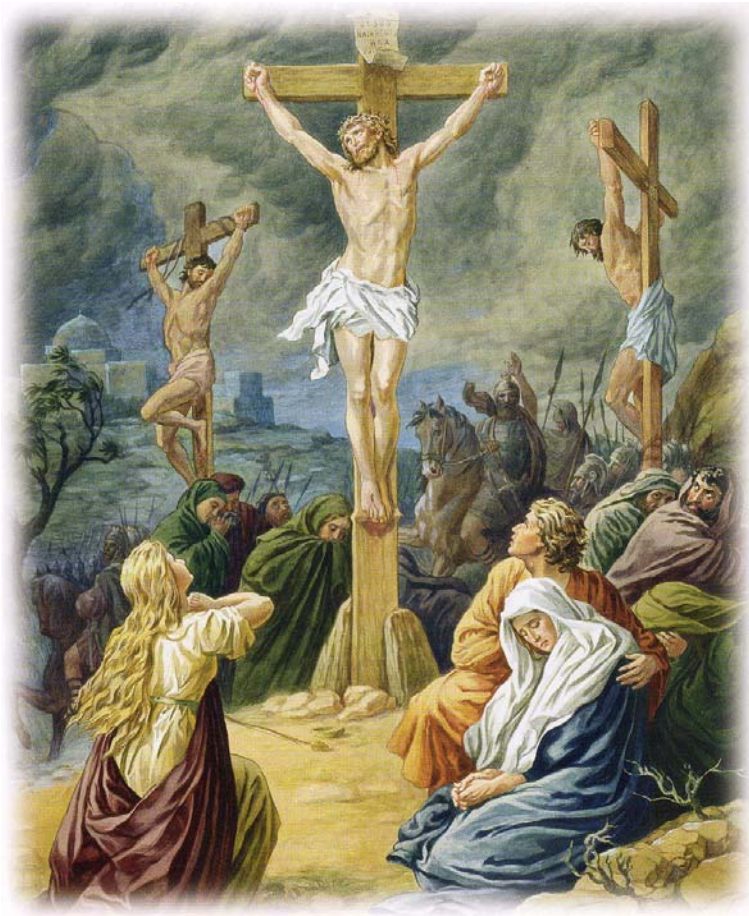
Yet, Savior, Thou art not confined
to any habitation;
but Thou art present ev'rywhere
and with Thy congregation.
Firm as a rock this truth shall stand,
unmoved by any daring hand
or subtle craft and cunning.

We eat this bread and drink this cup,
Thy precious Word believing
that Thy true body and Thy blood
our lips are here receiving.
This Word remains forever true,
and there is naught Thou canst not do;
for Thou, Lord, art almighty.

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, vv. 2–5)

— P. E. B.



Τετέλεσται! “It is finished!”

*“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

Work-righteousness — the most popular false doctrine! Millions of souls practice a false religion of human merit: *“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of*

God” (Romans 10:3). Every false religion in the world teaches a form of salvation by human effort and merit. By fallen nature, man is filled with pride. Therefore, work-righteousness finds a willing devotee and disciple in man. Is it any wonder then that so many souls are caught in the web of work-righteous false religion?

Even in so-called “Christian” churches, many think they must “do their part” to be saved. Whether they place their works at the *beginning* as a start toward heaven or at the *end* as a completion to supplement the work of Christ, they still ascribe their salvation, to some extent, to themselves and, therefore, merit the curse of the Law: “*For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them’*” (Galatians 3:10).

In our title and title-text we have a powerful proof against all work-righteousness, as we hear, regarding our salvation, a statement of fact from the cross: “*It is Finished!*” From Holy Writ we learn that Jesus Christ died declaring salvation to be His *finished* (*accomplished*) work in history.

Our title-text is John 19:30: “*When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And He bowed His head and gave up the ghost.*” This declaration from the Savior’s own holy lips as He hung on the accursed tree shows that He lived up to His holy name: **Jesus** — “*Jehovah is Salvation.*” It was near the end of His great passion as He hung, forsaken by God, in darkness — stricken, smitten and afflicted — that Jesus died. He knew, then, at that point in the time-line of salvation history, that nothing remained for Him to do or to suffer; His saving work was now brought to its termination. He had finished His Father’s business. He had fulfilled His Father’s commandment. He had received the painful baptism He had painfully longed to receive. The plan had been executed, by His active and passive obedience, by His perfect life and by His bloody ransom death; and the redemption of the world had been “*accomplished*” [Greek: *τετέλεσται*], both as to the fact of its completion and as to its continuing effect — the perfect tense in Greek.

The long, great work was (and is) completely done, brought to a successful end. God’s plan revealed by promise throughout the Old Testament had been executed in history. This is what Jesus referred

to when He said: *“My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me and to finish His work”* (John 4:34) and again when He prayed to His Father: *“I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do”* (John 17:5). Now the entire Scripture stood fulfilled regarding the sufferings of Christ for sinners. God’s determinate counsel and foreordained plan was fully carried out. The Lamb *“slain before the foundation of the world”* (Revelation 13:8) in God’s eternal mind had been *“taken and by wicked hands ...crucified and slain”* in history (Acts 2:23). And the blessed result of His redemptive work stood then and continues to stand as *“accomplished.”*

The Savior solemnly announced that our salvation was now wrought in history: *“All things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man”* had been and continue even now to stand as *“accomplished”* (Luke 18:31). Earlier, on Maundy Thursday evening, the Lord had told them: *“For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in Me: ‘And He was reckoned among the transgressors;’ for the things concerning Me have an end”* (Luke 22:37). But now the end has come: Isaiah’s 53rd chapter is a prophetic statement of historical fact for all the world to see, namely, that there, atop the hill of Calvary, God hung on the sinner’s tree of punishment. *“It is finished,”* God-manifest-in-the-flesh declares from His own mouth!

By His holy life Christ fulfilled the Law of God perfectly: *“Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous”* (Romans 5:18-19; cf. Romans 8:3-4, 10:4). And by His bloody ransom-death Christ fully atoned for all sins of mankind: *“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, ‘Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree”* (Galatians 3:13). *“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). The Son of Man came to give His life a ransom for many, and His work is finished. He came to seek and to save the lost, and His work is finished. He came to save the world, not to judge and condemn; and His work is finished. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; and His work: *“It is finished,”* He declares from the altar of sacrifice, the cruel crucifixion tree.

The entire ungodly world has been redeemed and reconciled to God (Romans 5:10; II Corinthians 5:19), ransomed and atoned for. God's wrath is forever appeased, and His justice stands eternally satisfied. God's Law — both its demands and the punishment it pronounces — was fulfilled by Christ (Matthew 5:17).

The utterance, "*It is finished,*" is only a single word in the original Greek, *τετέλεσται*. But this one little word is not short on comfort! The perfect tense in Greek indicates not only that something *was done*, but that the *effect* of what was done *carries forward* into the *present* time. When the Law resounds in our ears and strikes our conscience with the condemnation: "*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:22a), the penitent sinner is assured by Christ's sure and certain declaration that Christ did not "come short" but finished His saving work in his place and on his behalf! In the daily life of a Christian the Law constantly reproves and rebukes his many failures and moral shortcomings, but this Gospel declaration from the Savior's lips tells us that He has made up for all failures and paid for all sins. It is the historical declaration also confirmed by the Apostle John in this declaration of salvation: "*If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*" (I John 2:1-2). This satisfaction, the atonement, this wrath-appeasing sacrifice once accomplished by Christ (Hebrews 9:28; I Peter 3:18) continues to avail to all eternity (Hebrews 10:18)! The Lamb of God has taken away the sin of the world (John 1:29) with one sacrifice for sins forever (Hebrews 10:14)! "*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 7:25; John 1:29; Hebrews 10:12). Everything necessary to save a sinner's soul from eternal death in perdition's flame was finished and accomplished by Jesus Christ that dark Friday atop Golgotha — everything!

What did Jesus do on the cross for you? All that is necessary for your eternal pardon! What must *you* do to be saved? Nothing! He has done it all! How then do you receive the gift? By God-wrought, Gospel-generated, Holy Spirit-created faith — confidence of the heart in the merits of Jesus! Scripture says: "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*" (Acts 16:31a). Dr. Martin Luther, on February 18, 1546, prayed: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit. Thou hast redeemed me, faithful God." In such faith Luther then died. To all those who would die happy, Luther said to think and say as follows:

Merciful God, be gracious to me. I am a sinful being and deserve nothing but Thy displeasure. But regardless of my past life, I know without doubt that I am baptized and made a Christian for the forgiveness of sins and that my Lord Christ was born, suffered, died, and rose for me and gave His body and blood for the nourishment of the soul and the strengthening of faith. Therefore, I am absolved and freed from my sins in the name and power of Christ. Such a heart and faith can fare ill and be lost, as little as God's Word can fail or be false. Of this I can assure you, for God Himself is your security through His Word. (#222 of *Luther's Prayers*; reprint by Holy Cross Ev. Lutheran Press, 1976; original publication date 1917; p. 89).

Saving faith comes by hearing the Word of the Gospel (Romans 10:17), the gift of the Holy Ghost, wrought in the heart. Saving faith clings to the Word of the Gospel exclusively. When the world, the devil and the sinful flesh attack a Christian, he, by the grace of God's Spirit through the Gospel, flees for refuge to the Crucified Christ and His assurance of salvation, "*It is finished.*" The Psalmist declares: "*What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee. In God I will praise His Word; in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me. ...When I cry unto Thee, then shall mine enemies turn back. This I know, for God is for me. In God will I praise His Word; in the Lord will I praise His Word. In God have I put my trust; I will not be afraid what man can do unto me. ...For Thou hast delivered my soul from death; wilt not Thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?*" (Psalm 56:3-4, 9-11, 13).

In particular when the last enemy, death, seeks to terrify a believer, he finds sure and certain comfort in the assurances of his Savior. Remember John 14? There the Savior tells His disciples: "*Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also*" (vv. 1-3).

When Christ bowed His head in death, He did so in full control of the entire situation! Earlier He told the disciples: "*No man taketh it [My life] 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 10:18). If He would not thereby have completed His saving task (I Timothy 1:15), He would not have laid down His life. If anything was left to be done, He would have continued to work and to suffer. But His redemptive work was complete. Yes, if it were not so, Christ would not have bowed His head and given up the ghost. He would have remained in the hell of God-forsakenness until His work was done. But His work was “*finished*,” its goal was “*accomplished*,” so He willingly gave up His soul to the care and keeping of His Father. He yielded up His life with these words, which Luke records: “*Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit*” (23:46). He died with full assurance that His work was done, and that everything necessary for man’s salvation had been won. He died because He willed to die: “*Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again*” (John 10:17).

Yes, He knew that God was pleased with His holy and precious offering. He knew that He was going home to Paradise in His Father’s favor. He knew that the curse of God’s Law had been fully borne, and that all sins and their guilt had been atoned for completely and forever!

Given this fact, we readily see His gracious love for us sinners: “*Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us*” (I John 3:16a). Nothing shall separate us from this love of our God and Savior: “*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ...Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (Romans 8:35,37-39).

Confident of the everlasting, unchanging, gracious and merciful love of God toward us for the sake of Christ, we can face temporal death with the confident assurance of childlike faith, knowing that “*to depart and to be with Christ is far better*,” and that “*to die is gain*” (Philippians 1:23, 21). For, by the Gospel, we know that our redemption is complete, that our deliverance from sin, death and hell is a concrete, historical fact, that our sins have all been forgiven, and that salvation is 100% sure to every believer (Mark 16:16a). For God, who cannot lie, not only promised us eternal life (Titus 1:2), but His Son declared concerning the price of our salvation, “*It is finished!*” Our mansions above are already prepared; our eternal inheritance is reserved in heaven for us (John 14:1f; I Peter 1:3

ff.). For the God-Man, Jesus Christ, “*offered one sacrifice for sins forever*” and “*by one offering ...perfected forever them that are sanctified*” (Hebrews 10:12, 14). God says to us in the Gospel: “*Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more*” (Hebrews 10:17) for the sake of Christ’s blood “*shed for the remission*” of our sins. “*Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin*” (Hebrews 10:18).

Don’t be deluded by work-righteousness. As the hymn so aptly says:

By grace! None dare lay claim to merit!
Our works and conduct have no worth.
God in His love sent our Redeemer,
Christ Jesus, to this sinful earth.
His death did for our sins atone,
and we are saved by grace alone.

(*TLH 373, verse 2*).

When it comes to salvation, we have Christ’s final word on the subject; and that’s all we need: “*It is finished!*” He declares. “*It has been and stands accomplished!*”

God grant us all so to believe today and especially when our last hour comes!

—**E. J. W.**



*Salvation unto us has come
by God's free grace and favor.
Good works cannot avert our doom;
they help and save us never.
Faith looks to Jesus Christ alone,
who did for all the world atone.
He is our one Redeemer.*

*Yet, as the Law must be fulfilled,
or we must die despairing,
Christ came and hath God's anger stilled,
our human nature sharing.
He hath for us the Law obeyed
and thus the Father's vengeance stayed
which over us impended.*

*Since Christ hath full atonement made
and brought to us salvation,
each Christian therefore should be glad
and build on this foundation:
"Thy grace alone, dear Lord, I plead;
Thy death is now my life indeed,
for Thou hast paid my ransom!"*

(TLH 377, vv. 1, 5, and 6)



PROPITIATION

*“...we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous;
and He is the PROPITIATION for our sins, and not for ours only,
but also for the sins of the whole world.” — I John 2:1-2*

During the holy season of Lent each year, from Ash Wednesday to Good Friday, we Christians take special time and opportunity to study in detail and to meditate upon the redemptive work of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ — in particular His *vicarious* or substitutionary

atonement for the sins of the world. We follow Him in spirit from Gethsemane to Golgotha, witnessing with eyes of faith riveted upon His precious Word the anguish, mockery, suffering and death which He endured for us poor sinners as the Lamb of God. And when, in the waning moments of His life in the *State of Humiliation*, we hear Him cry out from the cross those triumphant words, “*It is finished!*” we ourselves yield a grateful sigh of relief, as it were, not merely because the Savior’s suffering had finally come to an end, but because of what His words, better translated, really mean for us and for all the world: “*It is accomplished!*” — “The work which My Father sent Me to do has been completed, and the purpose which that work was intended to accomplish has been fully realized: The reconciliation of the world unto Himself by My heavenly Father in view of My all-sufficient work of redemption.” And so we sing with the beloved hymnwriter:

“Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,
dearest Jesus, unto Thee!”
(*TLH* 151, 1).

Had the suffering and death of Jesus Christ been what the so-called “modernists” claim that it was, namely, a historical event of purely social significance, the martyrdom of a “divine” activist in the cause of human justice, love and brotherhood among men of good will, then “*we are of all men most miserable*” (I Corinthians 15:19), having hope in Christ “*in this life only*,” as in a social “savior” who couldn’t even save Himself and certainly was not able to raise Himself from the dead! But thanks be to God that He raised up Christ on the third day, glorifying Him and exalting Him to His own right hand in the heavenly places (Ephesians 1:20); for the Father thereby sealed to us the fact that Jesus Christ is His only-begotten Son, God from all eternity, that the Father was satisfied with Christ’s redemptive work for the reconciliation of the world, and that Jesus Christ, “*because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able 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). Christ’s redemptive work was indeed finished and had accomplished its blessed purpose when He died on the accursed tree of the cross, but His work as our perfect High Priest continues as He intercedes or pleads for us with His Father in heaven. There He functions as our “*Advocate*” (I John 2:1b), our defense lawyer, at the bar of God’s justice, eminently qualified to represent us: *Jesus* (our Savior), *Christ* (the Anointed One of God

Himself), *the Righteous* (the only One who can stand before the Father's throne clad in His own righteousness as the holy Son of God). Approaching God through any other mediator is not only time lost and effort wasted; it is an affront or insult to the Son of God; "*for there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*" (I Timothy 2:5).

How effective is His advocacy with the Father? What is the plea that He enters on our behalf at the throne of God? Does He perhaps beg mercy for His clients on the grounds of "diminished capacity," since we are incapable of saving ourselves? Does He plead us innocent by reason of "ignorance of the Law"? Does He claim "lesser guilt" for those who have tried their best to obey God's Law and still "*come short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23) or for those who falsely claim to have only "passively resisted" the efforts of His Holy Spirit to convert them? — No, **none** of those pleas would avail before the throne of Him who demands absolute perfection of all His subjects (Leviticus 19:2; Matthew 5:48), and in whose sight the transgression of just "*one point*" in His holy Law makes the sinner "*guilty of ALL*" the Law (James 2:10). What plea then can our Advocate enter on our behalf to gain our acquittal from the sentence of death that we have brought upon ourselves (Romans 6:23)?

The Apostle John answers this question fully in verse two of the passage before us as our title-text. Christ, our Divine Advocate, points not to US but to HIMSELF. He covers our disobedience with His perfect obedience; He drapes the filthiness of our transgressions with the spotless robe of His righteousness; He overlays the death warrant - outstanding against us with a copy of His own death certificate, as it were, offering it as a substitute for OUR death.

The word "propitiation," as we have it in verse two, is often read as "payment" in order to simplify the language for hearers not acquainted with the older and longer word. However well-intended such an effort may be, a simplification often becomes an *over*-simplification when the full meaning of the original word is sacrificed in the process; and that may indeed be the case here. "Propitiation" means a gift or payment of sufficient value as to win or regain the goodwill and favor of one who has been wronged. It is not a sort of "down-payment" or partial payment, to which subsequent payments must be added; neither is it a payment merely offered but not necessarily accepted as full compensation for a grievance. It is a payment of such overwhelming compensation that the creditor dismisses from his mind

and memory the “deadbeat” character of the unworthy former debtor (Cf. Isaiah 43:25; Jeremiah 31:34; Hebrews 8:12).

“*He is the propitiation for **our sins***” — Christ Himself is the ransom-payment to God of sufficient value to win forgiveness for our sins, to gain for us God’s favor instead of His displeasure, to secure for us everlasting life in place of eternal death — and not just of sufficient value but of appropriate and actual value for the purpose, so that the desired result has in fact been fully achieved. “[God] hath made Him who knew no sin (namely, Christ) to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (II Corinthians 5:21). “Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, ...He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, ...and with His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:4-5). “Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood” (Revelation 5:9). “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” (Romans 3:23-24).

“...and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the **whole world**” (I John 2:2). Christ’s perfect keeping of the Law in the place of sinners satisfied God’s demands against every single sinner of all times and places, past, present and to come (His *active obedience*); and His suffering and death in the place of sinners, He Himself having been punished by God in their stead, satisfied God’s justice with the payment of sin’s wages in full (Christ’s *passive obedience*). What had Christ **accomplished** (John 19:30) by His redemptive work, by His “vicarious atonement”? “*He is the PROPITIATION for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*” Christ was the payment-in-full, the sacrifice necessary, the righteousness required, to “propitiate” the Father — to satisfy Him completely, to gain back His favor toward those who had offended Him, to persuade Him in mercy to put all our sins behind His back and to remember them no more (Isaiah 43:25; Jeremiah 31:34; Hebrews 8:12).

And the RESULT of that “Propitiation”? “*God was IN CHRIST reconciling the WORLD unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*” (II Corinthians 5:19). For Christ’s sake (that is, because of what Christ did and bore in the place of sinners to atone for their sins and to regain for them God’s favor, without any merit, worthiness or participation on their own part), God in heaven has already forgiven the sins of every human being in this world, declaring for each one a full and unconditional pardon (*Objective Justification*). That is what Christ, our

“*Propitiation*,” accomplished for us! That is what Christ accomplished for “*the ungodly*” (Romans 4:5)! That is what Christ accomplished even for those who ultimately deny Him as their Redeemer, reject the gracious forgiveness He merited for them, and perish everlastingly in unbelief (II Peter 2:1b).

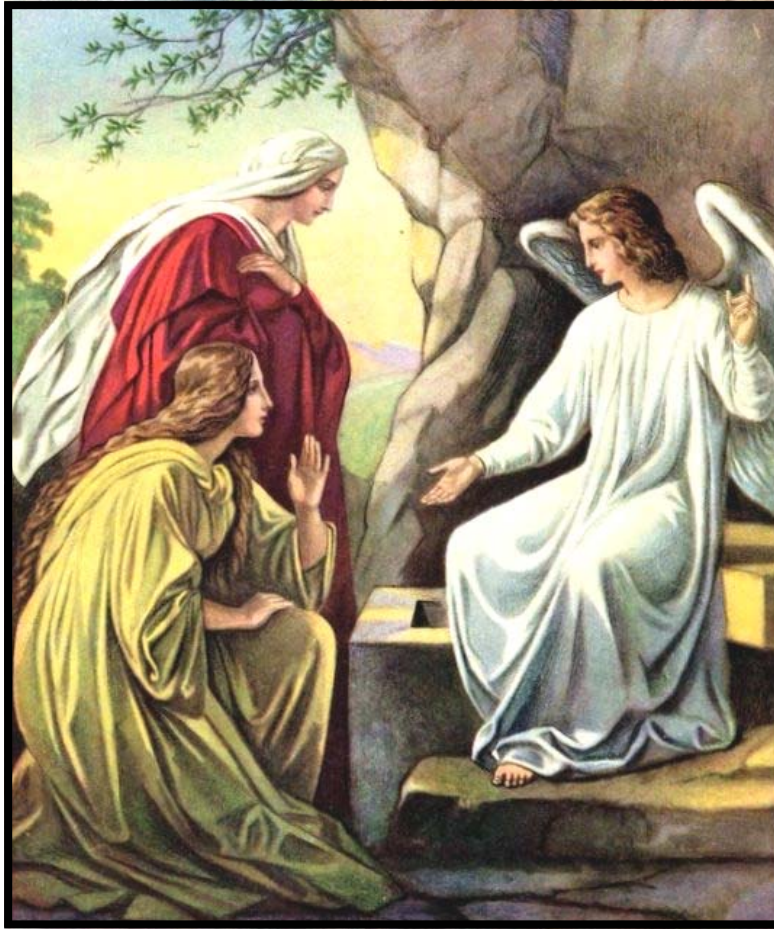
This pardon, whereby God has now reconciled the whole world unto Himself, is announced to all men in the Gospel, which Paul calls “*the Word of Reconciliation*” (II Corinthians 5:19b); and he begs us in Christ’s stead to avail ourselves of its precious benefits — not by works, penances, deeds of love to God and our neighbor, or any such device — but simply by accepting and receiving by means of God-wrought faith His gift of forgiveness (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 5:1). Cling to Jesus’ merits alone for salvation and trust without any doubt that, for His sake as “*the Propitiation for [your] sins*,” you are already forgiven and stand righteous before God. For, by faith in that gracious amnesty on God’s part, merited, secured and won by Christ, you are God’s child (Galatians 3:26) and an heir of everlasting life (4:7). Therefore, confess with boldness in the words of the beloved hymn:

Lord, I believe Thy precious blood,
which at the mercy-seat of God
forever doth for sinners plead,
for ME, e’en for MY SOUL, was shed.

Lord, I believe were sinners more
than sands upon the ocean shore,
Thou hast for ALL a ransom paid,
for ALL a full atonement made!

(*TLH* 371, 4 and 5)

— **D. T. M.**



The Fourfold Comfort and Assurance We Have in the Message of the Easter Angel

“And he saith unto them: ‘Be not affrighted. Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. Behold the place where they laid Him. But go your way, tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee, as He said unto you.’” —Mark 16:6-7

On Easter Sunday we Christians marked once again, as we do each and every year, the most **significant**, the most **essential**, the most **glorious**, and to be sure the most **comforting** festival on our church calendar: The Festival of the ***Resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, from the Dead***. Indeed, the event we commemorate on Easter Day is **absolutely central** to our entire Christian faith, as central as the hub is to a wheel; for virtually every fundamental doctrine of Holy Scripture is inseparably linked to the *fact* of Christ's resurrection — either pointing **to** it, stemming **from** it, or depending **upon** it! In fact, Jesus' life here on earth, His entire public ministry, and His death on the cross for the sins of the world — all would be **for NOTHING** if He had not truly risen from His grave on Easter morning! For Jesus of Nazareth would have been the greatest fool, fraud, and "flim-flam" con-artist the world had ever seen, a liar and deceiver without equal in the annals of history! And WE, His disciples, would be fools as well to have fallen for His "line" and placed our confidence in Him!

The devil, of course, would have us and all men for that matter believe precisely that very thing about the Savior and His mighty resurrection; for Satan deeply **resents** that final and ultimate victory which Jesus won over him when He rose from the dead on the third day! And so the Foe's **adherents** have, from that very moment, sought to discredit, disprove, and even poke fun at the resurrection account in hopes of destroying our most holy faith and leading us to everlasting destruction! But these enemies of Christ and His Word are **doomed to failure** from the outset, for they fly in the face of the TRUTH, of established FACT, of incontrovertible EVIDENCE and eye-witness TESTIMONY. For *Jesus of Nazareth did in fact rise from His grave* on Easter Sunday morning after having *died* the previous Friday afternoon! His **true death** was certified by *objective medical evidence* and by *professional evaluation*, and His **true life** after His resurrection was amply demonstrated "*by many infallible proofs*" (Acts 1:3). Consequently, the claims of unbelieving scoffers notwithstanding, the **FACT** of the Lord's resurrection **speaks for itself!**

Therefore, what we want to examine in this present article is not so much the FACT but the **RESULT** of Jesus' resurrection, namely, what it **accomplished** and why it is of such **importance** to us Christians. We note that the Easter angel's message to the women at the empty sepulchre brings us a ***fourfold comfort and assurance*** from the Savior's resurrection — the fourfold importance and comfort that we confess also in our *Catechism* (CPH, 1943, pp. 117-118).

The first of these is that, by rising from the dead, *Jesus of Nazareth proved Himself to be the very Son of God*. The words of the angel were plain enough: “*He is risen; He is not here. Behold the place where they laid Him.*” The fact of Jesus’ resurrection was clear for anyone to see who cared to look at the evidence. “**Behold!**” said the angel; “**LOOK** at the place where you yourselves saw Him laid out on Good Friday afternoon, unmistakably dead, the blood solids already separated from the lymph, as the Roman centurion also saw and testified. **Look NOW** at the empty slab before you, the linen burial windings lying empty and the napkin from Jesus’ face neatly folded and laid aside as no hurried grave robber would have bothered to do. **See** for yourselves!” And this word “*behold*” points not only those women but also **US**, who have the additional Gospel accounts and their evidence, as well as the eyewitness testimony of literally hundreds who saw the Savior alive during the forty days following, yes, that word directs **US** to recognize *without doubt* the **FACT** of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead.

But the words “*He is risen!*” give us much more than a mere report of this **fact**. They convey to us the **assurance** that, in this mighty act, *Jesus proved Himself to be the very Son of God!* For who but **God alone** has the ability to raise Himself from the dead?? Who but the **almighty Lord of heaven and earth** could have exercised such superior might that, concerning His very own life, He could declare in advance: “*I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again*”?? Thus the Apostle Paul, writing to the Romans, chapter 1, verse 4, **confirms** this first assurance of the Easter angel, saying: “*He was declared to be the SON OF GOD with POWER...by the resurrection from the dead.*”

And, lest anyone dare claim that Jesus’ words and promises were mere empty boasts and vain prophecies, the angel brings us his second Easter comfort and assurance, saying: “*Be not affrighted*” — don’t be so **amazed** and **astonished**, as if this were an unexpected development — for, by His mighty resurrection from the dead, *Jesus of Nazareth has shown His Word to be the truth!* “*He is risen; He is not here...But He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you.*” Jesus had not only promised to rise again on the third day, but He had told His disciples that they would see Him face-to-face thereafter in Galilee. And Matthew’s record shows that the angel’s words, “*as He said unto you,*” refer not only to Jesus’ appearance in Galilee but to the **resurrection itself**; for Matthew quotes the angel as saying: “*He is risen, as He said!*” And St. Luke, by inspiration of the Holy Ghost,

adds striking detail, quoting TWO angels at the grave giving the women this assurance of the truth of Jesus' Word: "*Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spake unto you...saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again'? And they remembered His words.*"

Why, even Jesus' enemies knew well His words concerning His resurrection from the dead. Oh, they **pretended** at first not to have understood them, when at His trial before Caiaphas they introduced false witnesses to make it seem as if He had threatened to destroy the Temple in Jerusalem and to rebuild it in three days. But they **gave themselves away** when, after His death, they went to Pilate for a seal on the grave, saying: "*Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, 'After three days I will rise again.'*" Pilate should have marked well and believed those words, for Jesus had told him in advance, "*Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice.*" Yea, **ALL** of Jesus' Word — not just the red print highlighted in modern-day Bibles, but **ALL** of the Holy Scriptures, which He identified as **His precious Word** — is the **TRUTH**, absolutely reliable in every detail; for He assures us: "*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*" (John 8:31-32).

And it is this very freedom to which the angel refers in the third assurance we have in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, namely, that **His heavenly Father accepted His vicarious sacrifice as payment-in-full for the sins of the world**. "*Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified,*" said the Easter angel. The very purpose of Jesus' crucifixion, yea, of all His suffering, was to provide, **in our place** and **on our behalf**, a ransom-price of sufficient value that God in heaven would accept its payment as complete satisfaction of divine justice. "*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). Thus Isaiah had prophesied concerning Jesus in his 53rd chapter: "*The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*" Yes, "*Christ suffered for us,*" Peter writes in his first epistle, chapter 2, "*who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree,*" — "*Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified.*"

And yet, if Jesus had suffered all that anguish, including the very pains of hell itself (Matthew 27:46, etc.) in our place, but then had **remained in the grave**, helplessly bound in the chains of death, His entire sacri-

fice would have been **for nothing!** For He would have been “shown up” to be a mere man, just another human being, “*none of [whom] can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; for the redemption of their soul is **precious!***” (Psalm 49:7-8). Then indeed we would be fools for trusting in Him as our Redeemer; for St. Paul writes in I Corinthians 15:17, “*If Christ be **not** raised, your faith is **vain**; ye are yet in your sins!*” We would still be lost and condemned, headed for hell!

But thanks be to God, beloved fellow-sinners, that Jesus of Nazareth did **NOT** remain in His grave but **rose victoriously** on Easter morning as the **Mighty Conqueror** of sin, death, and Satan — **not** just a mere man whose sacrifice of Himself would otherwise have been an empty gesture and completely in vain, but as the **certified Redeemer** of lost mankind! For the Bible tells us, Romans 4:25, “*Christ was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again **for** [Gk. *because of*] **our justification**,*” as the sure sign that His payment **made good** our debt to God! That was God the Father’s “seal of approval,” so to speak, “*which **He** wrought **in Christ** when **He** raised **Him** from the dead*” (Ephesians 1:20).

What a wonderful assurance and comfort to us Christians is this glorious fact of God’s own Word, that the Father in heaven raised Jesus of Nazareth from the dead as **ironclad testimony** that **He fully accepted the sacrifice of His Son for the reconciliation of the world** unto Himself, and has, because of what Jesus paid on our behalf, forgiven the sins of the whole world and declared all sinners righteous in His sight (II Corinthians 5:19). This free gift of **OBJECTIVE JUSTIFICATION** He has published to all men in the Gospel, earnestly desiring “*all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*” (I Timothy 2:4), “*that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*” (John 3:16). Thus, as His adopted children and heirs of salvation by faith in His Son, we rejoice to praise Him with the Apostle Peter, saying: “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope **by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven **for YOU!***” (I Peter 1:3-4)

And the promise of that blessed inheritance brings us now to the fourth and final assurance and comfort we have in the message of the Easter angel, namely, that ***we too shall see our Savior face-to-face at our own***

resurrection on the Last Day. For the angel instructed the women to tell Jesus' disciples that He would go before them into Galilee; "*there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you.*" We can well imagine the JOY that these words brought to the disciples with the prospect of seeing their Savior alive, face-to-face, just as He had promised them! But the angel's words should fill also **OUR HEARTS** with the very same **joy of anticipation!** For the Lord's promise to **US** is **just as sure** as His promise to the disciples! Yes, the **FRUIT of Jesus' resurrection** will be **our own resurrection**, for He Himself links them together, saying: "*Because I live, ye shall live also.*" (John 14:19) "*I go to prepare a place for you,*" He tells us, "*and I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also*" (John 14:2-3).

In Christ, our risen and everliving Savior, we have the very **prototype** of **our own** resurrection from **our own** graves on the Last Day; for as St. Paul assures us in I Corinthians 15, "*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 firstfruits of them that slept...but every man in his own order: Christ, the firstfruits*" [that is, the *prototype*] "*afterward they that are Christ's at His coming.*" Even Job in the Old Testament was confident of his bodily resurrection to eternal life as an heir of God through faith in Christ his Savior; for he declared: "*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).

O what sweet joy and gladness is ours this holy Easter season — joy not merely in the **FACT** of Jesus' mighty resurrection from the dead, but, **even better**, joy in the **blessed RESULT** of this miracle-of-miracles, yea, His own **assurance** to **quell our fears** and His own **comfort** to **dry our tears!** For Christ's resurrection **proves** without a doubt that He is truly the almighty **Son of God**. It **establishes** beyond any question the **truth** and **absolute reliability** of **His Word**. It **testifies** that God the Father was **completely satisfied with Jesus' sacrifice** for the reconciliation of the world. And it **assures** every believer, according to Jesus' own promise, of **resurrection in like manner** to everlasting glory on Judgment Day.

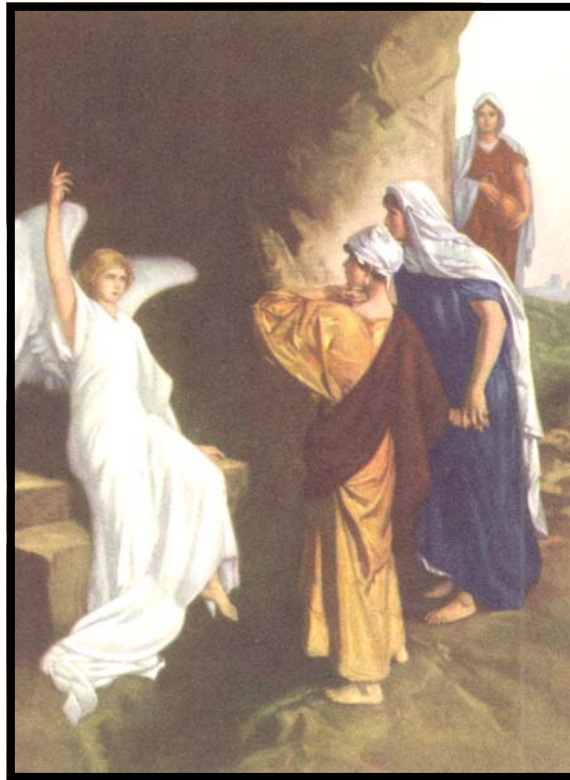
May the words of the Easter angel ever remind us of all these blessed assurances and strengthen our confidence in them day-by-day, until by

God's matchless grace in Christ, our crucified and risen Redeemer, we enter the mansions He has prepared for us in His heavenly home and glorious kingdom!

*He lives! All glory to His Name!
He lives, my Jesus still the same!
Oh, the sweet joy this sentence gives:
"I KNOW that my Redeemer LIVES!"*

(T.L.H., 200, 8)

— D. T. M.





Concordia Theological Seminary

(Concordia Lutheran Conference)

*announces with all glory to God
the Graduation and Certification of*

Daniel Paul Mensing

and

David Joseph Mensing

*as Candidates of the Reverend Ministry
in a Divine Worship Service on
Sunday, June 1, 2014, at four o'clock p.m.*

to be held at

*Peace Ev. Lutheran Church
Central Avenue at 171st Place
Oak Forest, Illinois*

*A reception dinner will be held immediately following
the service for all in attendance.*

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The Rev. Roman G. Schurganoff, Pastor

P. O. Box 27

620039 Ekaterinburg, RUSSIA

E-mail: Schurganoff@mail.ru

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ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Abule Egba, Lagos, Nigeria

The Rev. Onesimus Ekele, Pastor

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Idama, Nigeria

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Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Idama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

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The Rev. Elison B. Agborubere, Pastor

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Elem-Sangama Arch-Deaconry

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The Rev. Nimi B. Fyeface and

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

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Abonnema, Akulga, Rivers State, NIGERIA

E-Mail: njohnfyeface@yahoo.co.uk



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The Rev. ROBERT J. LIETZ, Pastor
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E-mail: robertjlietz@yahoo.com

**The Sixty-Third
Annual Convention**

of the

Concordia Lutheran Conference

June 27th, 28th and 29th, 2014

at

St. John's Lutheran Church

Lebanon, Oregon

The Rev. Paul E. Bloedel, Pastor

with the

Plenary Pastoral Conference

on June 24th and 25th

and the

Board of Directors Meeting on June 26th

Convention Motto:

“Rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings!”

I Peter 4:13

The Friday Keynote Sermon is on **Philippians 1:29**

The Sunday Convention Sermon is on **Acts 5:41**

The Convention Essay:

The Joyful Privilege of Suffering for Christ's Sake