

The
Concordia Lutheran



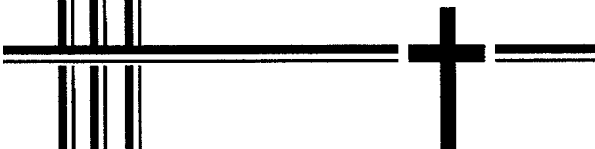
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“He is
risen, as
He said.”

— Matthew 28:6



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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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Remembering the Lord's Death in His Holy Supper

*“As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup,
ye do show the Lord's death till He come.”*

— I Corinthians 11:26

Maundy Thursday evening is, historically speaking, the very night on which the Lord Jesus instituted His Holy Supper, “*the same night in which He was betrayed,*” the Bible tells us (I Corinthians 11:23). He and His twelve disciples had gathered together in an upper room somewhere in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover for the last time. We say for the last time because, as we know, that Passover, with its sacrifice of an unblemished male lamb, was a **type** or **picture** of the **REAL PASSOVER LAMB, Jesus Himself**, whose one sacrifice on the tree of the cross would forever deliver men from bondage to sin and from fear of everlasting death. Now that the **real “Lamb of God”** was ready to be offered, the Old Testament ritual was no longer needed; and God's mighty deliverance of His people from slavery in Egypt was to pale into insignificance when compared to the deliverance that Christ was about to accomplish for all mankind!

But, just as the Passover *seder* had been intended not only as a **type** or foreshadowing of what was prophesied to come but also as a feast of remembrance of what great things God had already done for His people of old, just so is Christ's Holy Supper of the **New Testament** to be a feast of remembrance for US; for He told His disciples in the plainest of terms: “*This do in remembrance of Me*” (Luke 22:19; I Corinthians 11:24). While this is by no means the **ONLY** purpose of the blessed Sacrament, as the Reformed teach that it is, nevertheless it is **ONE** of the reasons for which our Savior instituted this holy feast, as His words clearly indicate. It is therefore meet and right that, during this holy Lenten season, and very particularly on Maundy Thursday evening, the very night in which our Lord Jesus began His Great Passion and was

“brought as a lamb to the slaughter” (Isaiah 53:7) to buy us back from bondage to sin, death, and the devil, we pause to reflect upon His immense sacrifice and to **remember** His death *in His Holy Supper*.

In I Corinthians 11:26-28, of which the first words serve as the title-text of this article, the Apostle Paul lays out for us a threefold “*remembrance*” of our Savior in His Supper: We are, first of all, remembering to **DECLARE His death** for poor sinners as the very heart of His saving Gospel; secondly, we are remembering to **VALUE His death** as the ransom-price of our redemption; and thirdly, we are remembering to **PARTAKE of His death** and its precious benefits by faith in His gracious promise.

After quoting the Savior’s own words of institution in verses 23–25, St. Paul says: *“For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till He come.”* The word “*show*” is really better translated “*declare*” or “*proclaim*.” Whenever we Christians partake of the blessed Sacrament of our Savior’s body and blood —“*given and shed for [us] for the remission of sins,*” as Jesus Himself assures us and as we confess in our Catechism— we **proclaim**, as a bold testimony to all the world, the **death** of our Savior.

Now what exactly does that mean? Is our partaking of this Holy Sacrament merely a declaration of the FACT of Jesus’ death?? No indeed; for the objective fact of His death is disputed by no one —not even by unbelievers, not even by the so-called “modernists” who deny, together with the Jews, that Jesus of Nazareth is the very Son of God! No, the mere **death** of Jesus needs no confirmation or declaration; but what His death **MEANS**, and what it **ACCOMPLISHED** for poor sinful human beings, **THAT** *needs to be and is declared* every time we partake of this Holy Supper. It is the **GOSPEL declaration** of the **CROSS OF CHRIST** and of His **VICARIOUS ATONEMENT**, “*unto the Jews a stumblingblock and unto the Greeks foolishness*” (I Corinthians 1:23), but nevertheless “*the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth*” (Romans 1:16).

And when we Christians partake of this Holy Sacrament **together**, we don’t only declare the precious value of Jesus’ death in an **objective** way, but we show plainly by “*eat[ing] this bread and drink[ing] this cup*” that **we ourselves BELIEVE** the Gospel of Christ crucified and **TRUST** in it with all our heart; that we by God’s grace, by the effectual working of His Holy Spirit through that Gospel, “**GLORY** *in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ;*” and that we **RELY solely** upon His merits for salvation. What a blessed **privilege** is ours to make this declaration, this proclamation of the Lord’s death in His Holy Supper, “*till He come*”!

“Wherefore,” the Apostle continues in verse 27, “whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord **unworthily** shall be guilty of **the body and blood of the Lord.**” Partaking of this Holy Sacrament is not an act of “remembrance” only of the intellect. It is not merely a *symbolic* remembrance, as the Reformed churches teach, in which the bread and wine are only pictures of the body and blood of the Savior. For Paul tells us that whoever partakes of those visible elements “**unworthily**”—that is, without being **truly sorry** for his sins, without **truly confiding** in Jesus as his Savior, without **really believing** Jesus’ words about the nature, power and benefit of this holy Sacrament, and without **sincerely intending** to amend his sinful life — such a person is “**guilty**” not merely of bread and wine but “*of the **body and blood** of the Lord.*” The Lord Jesus did NOT say of those earthly elements: “This *represents* My body; this merely *represents* My blood;” but He said in unmistakable language: “*This **IS** My body; this **IS** My blood.*” Thus we Lutheran Christians believe according to clear Scripture in the **Real Presence** of our Savior’s **TRUE** body and blood in the Sacrament, namely, that **in, with, and under** the bread and wine (which also are present in the Sacrament, as Paul indicates in verse 27), we receive the **TRUE BODY** and the **TRUE BLOOD** of our Savior in a **REAL** but **MIRACULOUS** way —*because He said so.*

Thus, when we partake of the Holy Supper, the Sacrament of our Savior’s **TRUE BODY** and **TRUE BLOOD**, we are remembering His death in a special way: **By valuing it as the price of our redemption.** “*Forasmuch as ye know,*” writes Peter in his first Epistle, “*that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold...but with the **precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot***” (1:18-19). When, therefore, we receive this Sacrament as **worthy** (penitent and believing) communicants, we do it “*in remembrance of [our Savior],*” receiving the **SEAL** of forgiveness, life, and salvation in His very own body and blood, “*given and shed for [us] for the remission of sins,*” the ransom-price far beyond any human valuation!

But merely valuing this Sacrament highly and thereby remembering to value also the sacrifice on which it is based, is **not enough**. For, as St. Paul also shows us in the third place, remembering the Lord’s death in His Holy Supper also means **remembering to partake of it often with proper preparation**. He writes in verse 28: “*But let a man **examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.***” Self-examination requires that we take a hard, close look into the mirror of God’s holy Law to see there our sins in all their ugliness and filthiness before God; that we sincerely repent of them with true Godly sorrow at

having offended our Lord Jesus (and one another, where such is the case); that we **trust** with **confident faith** in Jesus' merits alone for forgiveness and salvation (and trust as well **His words** concerning this blessed Sacrament); and that we have the sincere and earnest **desire and intention**, with the help of God's Holy Spirit, to **amend our sinful lives**, living ever better unto Him who died for us and rose again (Cf. *Exposition of the Small Catechism*, 1943, Q/A 324). "**SO let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup**," Paul tells us; for then we truly receive the **benefits** of the Holy Supper: **Forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation**. Then and **only** then do we **PARTAKE OF** Christ's death, as the **best and everlasting way** of remembering it— remembering it with **profit** for our **souls**, so that we receive from it the strength to lead a holier life *in proof of our faith and to the glory and praise of Him* whose holy, precious blood "*cleanseth us from all sin*" (I John 1:7b).

"*This do in remembrance of Me*," the Savior exhorts us. Let us then come to His Holy Table, not only on Maundy Thursday evening but "*as often as [we] eat this bread and drink this cup*," **remembering**, as we partake of the Sacrament, to **DECLARE** His death to all the world and to **CONFESS** our **faith** in His wounds as the price of our own redemption — **remembering** to **VALUE** the sacrifice of our Savior's body and blood on the tree of the cross as the **payment-in-full** for all our transgressions, and the gift of His true body and blood in this Sacrament as the **seal** of our redemption — **and remembering** to **PARTAKE** of His death by receiving His body and blood as truly worthy and well-prepared communicants. For then we receive the Sacrament, this precious Means of Grace, "*for the remission of sins*," first of all, but then also for the **strength**, not only to remain **steadfast** in Christ's Word and faith unto our end, not only to **amend** our sinful lives in grateful evidence of our faith, but also to **overcome** the temptations of the devil, the world, and our flesh and cheerfully to **face** whatever trials lie ahead for us in this present life, **knowing** that they are the evidence of God's love to us, His dear children (Hebrews 12:6), and **trusting** that He will turn them all into good for us according to His promise (Romans 8:28).

*Approach we then, with faithful hearts sincere,
to take the pledges of salvation here.
O Lamb of God, our only Savior Thou,
in this, Thy Feast of Love, be with us now! Amen.*

— D. T. M.



Christ Suffered the Pains of HELL to Redeem Us

And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying: “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is to say, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me??” —Matthew 27:46

During the holy season of Lent, we Christians have a special opportunity to study in detail and to reflect upon in grateful faith the **VICARIOUS ATONEMENT** of Jesus, our Redeemer. And while that atonement, that satisfaction, for our sins includes ALL that He accomplished **in our place** — both by His *active obedience*, according to which He was made under the Law (Galatians 4:4), perfectly kept the Law in our stead (I Peter 2:22), and thus earned righteousness in the sight of God for every soul of man (Romans 5:19; 10:4), and by His *passive obedience*, wherein He took upon Himself the guilt of all mankind (II Corinthians 5:21) and bore in His own sinless soul and body the punishment justly deserved by every sinner (Romans 6:23a; Isaiah 53:4–6) — it is this **passive obedience** upon which we focus in particular during Lent, as we study the *Passion History* of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We, together with his own disciples, are directed by John the Baptist to “*behold the **Lamb of God**, which taketh away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29). That very **imagery** of the eternal, only-begotten Son of God, appointed, yea, *anointed*, in eternity already as the *Messiah*, the *Christ* of God, the bonafide, all-sufficient **sacrificial offering** to be slain in the place of sinners, goes back as far as Abraham’s offering of his son, Isaac, in Genesis 22 and God’s own provision (v. 8) of “*a ram*

caught in a thicket by his horns” (v. 13) as a *substitutionary* offering to be slain in place of Isaac. The imagery was continued in God’s institution of the **Passover** in remembrance of His deliverance of His people from slavery in Egypt and bondage to Pharaoh (Exodus 12:3–11) — “*a lamb...without blemish, a male of the first year*” was to be killed and its blood painted on the doors of the children of Israel to keep the angel of death [“*the destroyer*” (v. 23)] away from their homes. And St. Paul refers particularly to this imagery and its fulfillment in Christ, saying: “*Even Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us*” (I Corinthians 5:7). The *lamb* as a “*peace offering*” was instituted in the Levitical law (Leviticus 3), as a “*sin offering*” (Leviticus 4), and as a “*burnt offering*” of thanksgiving (Leviticus 23). And in the classic Old Testament prophecy of the Messiah’s *VICARIOUS ATONEMENT*, Isaiah declares: “*He was oppressed, and He was afflicted; yet He opened not His mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth*” (Isaiah 53:7). All of these images were “*a shadow of things to come,*” St. Paul writes to the Colossians; “*but the body is of Christ*” (2:17); and John the Baptist pointed to **Christ**, in whom “*dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*” (Colossians 2:9), and said: “*Behold the Lamb of God!*”

Thus, during this holy Lenten season, we too have been looking at Jesus, our Savior, “*beholding*” Him as “*the Lamb of God,*” the Offering of Sacrifice whom God the Father appointed to **take our place** under the shadow of divine justice and to **pay in full** the debt we owe Him because of our sins — a debt which **we** could never pay by our own works of merit (Psalm 49:7–8; Titus 3:5a; Ephesians 2:8–9; Romans 3:20, 28b; etc.). Not only did this spotless Lamb perfectly fulfill all the demands which God’s Law makes of **us**, laying down His righteousness at His Father’s throne with **our names** on it; but He also suffered the punishment that the Law of God requires of all that transgress His Commandments, so that God’s perfect justice would be satisfied.

We have “*beheld*” this “*Lamb of God,*” not merely as a historical figure, not as a tragic victim of social injustice, not even as a “*savior*” of the world in a general sense (as one often hears concerning men like Lincoln, Ghandi, and Martin Luther King) — but we have beheld Him as the **Holy Scriptures** present Him to us, namely, as the only-begotten Son of God Himself, who was made flesh (John 1:14) to become one of us, so that He could be our *Substitute*, our *vicarious* Redeemer. Though He was true God from all eternity, Jesus “*humbled Himself,*” becoming “*obedient*” to the Law, to its demands and punishments, yea, obedient

unto **death itself**, “*even the death of the cross*,” the Bible tells us (Philippians 2:8). All this Jesus did **in our place** to be our Savior; “*forasmuch as [we] know that [we] were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold... but with the precious blood of Christ*,” Peter writes in his first epistle, chapter 1, “*as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot*” (vv. 18-19), offered in **our place** as the only Sacrifice capable of propitiating God (Romans 3:25; I John 2:2), fully satisfying His justice and thus causing Him to reconcile the whole world of sinners unto Himself (II Corinthians 5:19).

And in the title-text of this present article we “*behold*” Him hanging on that cross, **forsaken by God**, paying the ultimate price for our sins — not just suffering the excruciating pains of crucifixion (which the malefactors also suffered), not merely dying the death of a criminal among criminals (John 18:30; Isaiah 53:12; II Corinthians 5:21), though He was completely innocent, but suffering the very pains of **HELL ITSELF** in our place, in our stead.

As we read of Jesus’ *Great Passion* in the Gospels, our hearts melt in shame when we see our Savior **in agony of soul** in the Garden of Gethsemane; we are shocked at **the abuse He took** in the High Priest’s palace, being slapped around and blasphemed because He truthfully confessed that He was the Son of God; we wince in sympathetic pain as **the scourge of Pilate** tears into Jesus’ back, laying it open in cruel lacerations; we recoil in horror as the sight of the **thorn-crowned, bruised, and bloodied** Savior paraded before us in the judgment hall; “*and we [hide] as it were our faces from Him*” (Isaiah 53:3) when Pilate tells us: “*Behold the man!!*” (John 19:5). What reaction is left to us as we now see Him **nailed hand and foot** to the cross on Calvary’s hill??

“*But He was wounded for OUR transgressions; He was bruised for OUR iniquities*,” Isaiah reminds us (53:5). This is what **you and I** deserve to suffer, my fellow-sinner, not the Lord Jesus! But He endured it **for you and for me**, “*the Just FOR the unjust, that He might bring us to God*” (I Peter 3:18). He was made “*a curse for US, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree’*” (Galatians 3:13).

*Ye who think of sin but lightly, nor suppose the evil great,
here may view its nature rightly, here its guilt may estimate!
Mark the Sacrifice appointed! See who bears the awful load!
‘Tis the Word, the Lord’s Anointed, Son of Man and Son of God!*
(TLH 153, 3)

But the intense physical pain which our Savior endured for us was **nothing** compared to the **agony of soul** that He was suffering —the **wrath of God** that He was bearing because of our sins! That wrath became evident even in **nature**, as the Lamb of Sacrifice was being slaughtered! For Matthew writes just before our title-text that “*from the sixth hour there was **darkness** over all the land unto the ninth hour*” (v. 45). This strange darkness that lasted from high noon until three o’clock in the afternoon was no mere thunderstorm-in-the-making, as so many films portray it; for no storm of any kind is reported by even **one** of the evangelists! Neither was it a solar eclipse that occurred that day, as many scoffers theorize in their vaunted ignorance! For a solar eclipse cannot take place at the time of a full moon — as at **Passover** time! Any amateur astronomer can tell you that! No, this was a **divinely-created, miraculous darkness**, reported even by heathen, secular historians of that period as being most strange and inexplicable! **God Himself** withheld the sun’s light from that horrible scene as a fitting reminder of the “*outer darkness, [where] there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*” (Matthew 22:13), the outer darkness of **damnation in hell**, where unrepentant, unbelieving sinners are forever separated from God!

For out of that darkness, at three o’clock in the afternoon, Matthew tells us that “*Jesus cried with a **loud voice**, saying: ‘**Eli, Eli, lama sabach-thani??**’ that is to say, ‘My **God, my God, WHY** hast Thou **forsaken ME???**’” This anguished cry of the Lord Jesus was directly quoted by David in prophecy in Psalm 22, verse 1. But it is not so much the fulfillment of that prophecy that is so astounding and remarkable, but the **words themselves** and what they **convey**:*

Jesus Christ, the very Son of God, has been **FORSAKEN by God!!** There is one and only one condition in which a person is truly and totally **forsaken by God**, cut off from His grace forever to languish without let-up in utter contempt and despair!! ...and that is the **damnation of HELL!** No one in this present life —no matter how depressed, no matter how wracked with pain, no matter how hopelessly mired in wretchedness and helplessness— is totally forsaken by God; “*for His mercy endureth forever*” (Psalm 118:29). His door is ever open to us as we live and breathe in this our time of grace, no matter how great our trespass, no matter how often, how long, or how far from His mercy our hearts have wandered! —But for **JESUS**, the “*Lamb of God*,” the Sacrifice being offered in the sinner’s place, there was **NO mercy**, only the **full extent** of the **wrath of God’s perfect justice** against sin and the

sinner, only the **just punishment** for **OUR** transgressions and **OUR** iniquities!! For “*the wages of sin is death,*” the Bible tells us, what we have *earned* by our transgressions, not just *temporal* death (the separation of the soul from the body at the end of this present life), but **eternal death** (the separation of both soul and body from God *forever* in **HELL!!**) **THAT** is what he suffers when a person is “*forsaken by God,*” as our dear Savior was **for US!**

When we speak of our Savior having “**died**” for us, of His having been “**slain**” for us, let us never forget what those words really involve!! For “*Christ hath redeemed us from the CURSE of the LAW,*” the sentence of **everlasting death**, “*being MADE a curse for US*” (Galatians 3:13). “[*Christ*] *His own self bare OUR SINS in His own body on the tree*” (I Peter 2:24). “[*God*] *spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for US ALL!*” (Romans 8:32). The Bible couldn’t speak more plainly than that!! God the Father made His holy, innocent, only-begotten Son “*to be SIN for us*” (II Corinthians 5:21), to be the “*scapegoat*” (Leviticus 16:8ff.) for **us**, to bear the full brunt of **His righteous anger** against sin and sinners, to suffer the **punishment** that **we** deserve because of **OUR** transgressions! Jesus had to pay “*the wages of sin*” in **our place** in order to satisfy the demands of Divine Justice against **us!** —Yes, Jesus “*suffered*” (I Peter 3:18) for us all right, but not just emotional pain, not just the trauma of a guilty conscience before God, not just the excruciating physical torture of crucifixion — and **certainly not** merely the “*feeling,*” the psychological “*separation anxiety,*” of being deserted by God in His hour of utmost need (as some have dared to claim)! No, He suffered the untold horrors of **HELL ITSELF** in **our place**, as **our Substitute!** —No wonder He cried out as He did: “*My God! My God! WHY hast Thou forsaken ME??!*” — in fulfillment of Divine Prophecy, in description of His indescribable agony, and in demonstration of the **PURPOSE** for which He endured it! “*Why??*” Not because of any sin on *His* part, but “*for YOUR sakes*” (II Corinthians 8:9) and for mine.

“**Behold the Lamb of God,**” my dear fellow-sinner, as He humbly, yea, willingly, suffers YOUR punishment! Behold Him with “*a broken and a contrite heart*” (Psalm 51:17), knowing what your sins cost Him! Behold Him in childlike confidence, trusting that for His sake God in heaven has reconciled you and all mankind unto Himself, no longer counting your sins against you (II Corinthians 5:19)! Behold Him in sincere gratitude for accomplishing **in your place** the other-

wise impossible (Isaiah 53:4-5)! And behold Him with the earnest intention and fervent desire, with the help of His Holy Spirit, not to “*continue in sin*” (Romans 6:1), as if His sacrifice meant nothing to you (Hebrews 10:29), but rather, out of love to Him who so selflessly loved you first (I John 4:19), to “*live unto Him*” (II Corinthians 5:15), presenting your body a “*living sacrifice*” of thanksgiving to your merciful and gracious God in Christ Jesus, “*which is your reasonable service!*” (Romans 12:1).

*What can I for such love divine to Thee, Lord Jesus, render?
No merit has this heart of mine; yet, while I live, I'll tender
myself alone and all I own in love to serve before Thee.
Then, when time's past, take me at last to Thy blest home in glory!*

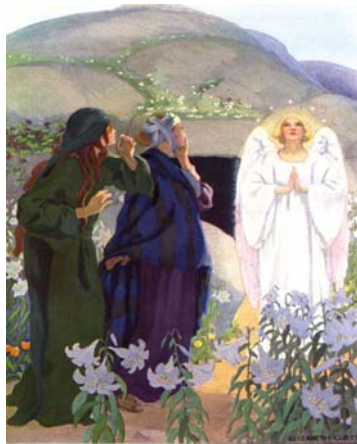
(TLH 150, 5)

— D. T. M.



Did Christ *REALLY* Rise from the Dead on Easter Morning?

*“He is not here; for He is risen, as He said.
Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” —Matthew 28:6*



Each and every year, we feature in the March–April issue of our *Concordia Lutheran* an article — perhaps even several — on **the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**. Why? Not because it is a “calendar item” that deserves ink in the spring issue of a “church paper.” Certainly not because of a perceived need to convince *ourselves* of this momentous event as a literal fact of history when the Word of God unequivocally testifies to it! Not even to play “David” to the “Goliath” of the skeptical, unbelieving world round about us and to set forth the “*many infallible proofs*” (Acts 1:3) which positively defeat its blasphemous claims to the contrary! Nor yet to draw a sharp contrast between **our orthodox** stand on this fundamental doctrine of Holy Scripture and the *liberal, modernistic* view of so many today who **represent** themselves as “Christians,” yea, even as “Lutherans,” and yet deny the bodily resurrection of Christ from the dead! Let’s face it, brethren, the masses of name-only Lutherans do not read, nor do they have any interest whatsoever in, our *Concordia Lutheran!* And, sad to say, many who posture themselves these days as “confessional” Lutherans are so busy debating “hot-button” topics — church polity within and without synodical bodies, the nature of truly “Lutheran” liturgy, the question of “when” the Real Presence occurs in the Lord’s Supper, and how pastors of autonomous congregations are to be supervised by super-pastors in a neo-episcopal church structure — that the consideration of truly *doctrinal* matters has to “take a number” and wait its turn! Among a growing number of them, our Concordia Lutheran Conference is derided as a “micro-synod” that is stuck in a

kind of theological time-warp and hardly on the “cutting edge” of 21st Century *confessionalism*. Their derision of our small size (Luke 12:32) and of our consistently Scriptural position (Mark 8:38) for now almost sixty years after our separation from the heterodox Missouri Synod is of no consequence to us whatsoever (Matthew 10:22); for it is by the grace of God that we are what we are (cf. I Corinthians 15:10).

The moment we begin to take for granted the basic, fundamental doctrines of Holy Scripture and deem them unworthy of preaching, teaching, discussing, publishing and defending (in favor of theological and ecclesiastical fluff), we shall lose our orthodox character altogether and become a mere flash-in-the-pan of trendiness and unworthy of true discipleship. The doctrine of **the bodily resurrection of Christ from the dead** on Easter morning is worth every inch of space we devote to it **because of its profound, essential importance** to our faith as Christians. Its *denial* means the denial of Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Matthew 12:39-40; Romans 1:4; Acts 2:23ff.). Its *denial* means the denial of His promises and assurances as the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth (John 2:19, 21-22; Luke 18:33; 24:6-8). Its *denial* means the denial of Holy Scripture as the verbally-inspired, inerrant, infallible, authoritative, clear and all-sufficient Word of God (I Corinthians 15:4; Luke 24:25-27)...which we preach (I Corinthians 15:14-15). Its *denial* means the denial of Christ’s vicarious atonement as payment-in-full for the sins of all mankind (Romans 8:34; 14:9; II Corinthians 5:21). Its *denial* means the denial of God’s justification of the entire world of sinners in view of His Son’s all-sufficient propitiation (Romans 3:25; I John 2:2; I Corinthians 15:17; II Corinthians 5:19; Romans 4:25). Its *denial* means the denial of the resurrection of the body at Christ’s second visible advent (I Corinthians 15:16, 20-23; I Thessalonians 4:14, 16). And its *denial* means the denial of conversion, regeneration, sanctification in the narrower sense, the significance of Holy Baptism, and a whole host of other sacred teachings of Holy Writ which are tied to His resurrection. Its *denial* means the denial to ourselves of the very comforts that distinguish the Christian’s hope from the hopelessness of unbelievers (I Corinthians 15:19; I Thessalonians 4:18; I Peter 1:3; etc.)!

The simple, yea, childlike answer (Matthew 18:3; Mark 10:15; etc.) to the question that serves as the title of this article, “**Did Christ REALLY Rise from the Dead on Easter Morning?**” is an unequivocal “**Yes!**” Our confident answer is not based on human scholarship, not on archaeological “digs” and the discoveries of “relics,” not on the testimony

of the “ancient church,” nor on the Lutheran Confessions (in which there are few references to it since it was never a doctrine in controversy among professing Christians up to that time). For us Christians, the witness of **Holy Scripture** is, of course, sufficient *on its own* as the infallible source and norm of **Divine Truth**; for the Lord Jesus says in John 8:31-32, “*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.*” And again: “*Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice*” (John 18:37). Jesus Himself said that He would rise again, and Jesus Himself did in fact rise again, “*as He said*” (Matthew 28:6). The Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments comprise “*a more sure Word of Prophecy*” (II Peter 1:19) than either eye or ear witness, as Peter points out concerning Christ’s manifestation of Himself on the Mount of Transfiguration. Therefore, when the Apostle Paul writes in I Corinthians 15:4 that “**He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures**” and confirms in verse 20, “**Now is Christ risen from the dead,**” that is **PRECISELY WHAT HAPPENED** on Easter morning. That is not the Apostle’s personal *opinion* based upon the risen Savior’s personal appearance to **him** on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-5; I Corinthians 15:8), but the testimony of the **Holy Ghost** Himself, as Paul also states concerning *verbal inspiration*: “*We speak not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the **Holy Ghost** teacheth*” (I Corinthians 2:13).

It is the **RECORD** of **Holy Scripture** that convinces us to acknowledge the facts, the **RECORD** of **Holy Scripture** whereby the Holy Ghost causes us to assent to that record as being completely true; and it is the **RECORD** of **Holy Scripture** whereby, as His means, the Holy Ghost creates in our hearts the confidence to trust in it for our comfort and assurance. Human beings, being arrogant and self-assured by nature (even we Christians in our Old Adam, Romans 7:18), are quite ready to accept the testimony of fellow human beings — of historians, of scientists, of scholars — but “*the witness of God is **greater***” (I John 5:9). “*He that believeth not **God** hath made Him a liar because he believeth not the record that **God** gave of His Son*” (v. 10). **THIS** is the record:

—The pre-incarnate Christ Himself, speaking through the Psalmist, prophesied His resurrection from the grave (Psalm 16:10); and this prophecy was fulfilled (Acts 2:29-31).

—Job confidently speaks of his Redeemer as *living* (Job 19:25), although Isaiah testifies that He vicariously *died* (Isaiah 53:8-12). Both Scriptures must be true (John 10:35; 17:17).

—Jesus, before His great passion, foretold and promised His resurrection on the third day (John 2:19, 21-22; Luke 18:33). And our Savior never lied or was deceitful (I Peter 2:22).

—The Jews well knew His prophecy and feared its fulfillment (Matthew 27:63).

—The guards posted at the Savior’s grave witnessed it firsthand (Matthew 28:2-4), reported it to the Jews (v. 11), and were bribed to lie about what had happened (vv. 12-15).

—The angels at the tomb plainly stated that Jesus was risen (Matthew 28:6; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:5-8).

—At least *twelve appearances* were **recorded**— to Mary Magdalene; to the women on the road to Jerusalem; to Peter; to the disciples on the way to Emmaus; to the ten disciples on Easter evening; to the eleven one week later; to the seven fishing; to the eleven on a mountain in Galilee; to 500 brethren at once; to James; to the eleven at His ascension; and to Paul on the road to Damascus after His ascension. (Compare the Gospel accounts and St. Paul’s statement in I Corinthians 15:5ff.)

—The apostles and evangelists bore witness publicly to the Savior’s resurrection, and not one word of contradiction is recorded as having been lodged by ANYONE (See the Gospel accounts; Acts 1:3; 15, 22; 2:22-36; 4:33; Acts 10:40-41; Romans 6:5, 9; I Corinthians 15:4-8 and 12ff.; Philippians 3:10; I Peter 1:3; 3:21; etc.)

Those who *reject* what the Scriptures plainly state, *refuse to hear* what they say, and do whatever they can to *discredit* the record of Holy Writ, are simply not Christians and heirs of everlasting life. They are unbelievers, headed for damnation (John 8:47; Mark 16:16b); and we should not at all be bothered by their skepticism, blasphemy, and hardness of heart.

It is only of incidental interest to note that, in addition to the **clear and unequivocal statements** of Scripture that Christ did in fact rise from the dead as He promised, statements “*written for our learning*” (Romans 15:4) and summarized above, there are “*many infallible proofs*” (Acts 1:3) — also recorded in the Scriptures by verbal inspiration of the Holy Ghost — which establish the facts, even according to the rules of evidence and testimony admissible even in a *civil court*.

These are well known to every knowledgeable Christian, but we summarize them again in this present article for ease of reference and for edifying discussion:

QUESTION: Was Jesus *really dead* when He was laid in the tomb? In direct contradiction of the popular theory, the so-called “swoon theory,” that Jesus had not in fact died on the cross but was only in a coma when laid in Joseph’s sepulcher and exited it on the third day after having revived in its cool and refreshing atmosphere, there is *more than sufficient evidence* that the Savior was **really DEAD** when He was laid in the tomb.

There is first of all *circumstantial evidence* — readily admissible in court. Consider the following: **a)** The centurion in charge of the crucifixion has no vested interest at all in the faking of Jesus’ death. He would have been summarily executed if he had. Dereliction of duty was a capital crime among the Romans. **b)** The rest of the soldiers, all heathen Gentiles (and probably Romans) also risked execution if they had conspired in the faking of Jesus’ death. What could they have possibly gained?? **c)** Apart from Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (and perhaps Lazarus of Bethany), none of Jesus’ disciples were men of means capable of offering a bribe sufficiently large to turn the heads of the soldiers and tempt them to risk their very lives in the perpetration of a hoax. **d)** Jesus’ friends buried Him!! Because He was **dead!** If He had still been alive, they would have given Him medical attention and then removed Him to a suitable facility for treatment, for intensive care, and for eventual recovery! No reasonable or sane person would *bury* a person *alive* —especially a loved one! No reasonably intelligent person would leave a friend in critical condition without medical care for thirty-six hours!! —Friday evening at sundown to Sunday morning at dawn.

There is, as we know, *medical evidence* that no forensic pathologist would dispute: Jesus’ blood had separated into lymph and clotted solids — a sure sign of **physical death** (John 19:34).

There was the *testimony of trained personnel* who would qualify even today as “expert witnesses” in court: **a)** The centurion supervising Jesus’ execution *saw* that He “*gave up the ghost*” and reported this to Pilate (Mark 15:39, 44, 45). **b)** The detail of soldiers that inspected the bodies and finished off those who were still alive “*saw that He was dead already*” and so did not break His legs but rather pierced His side with a spear, yielding the medical evidence referred to above as proof that **true death** had in fact occurred (John 19:31-37).

QUESTION: Did Jesus *really rise* from the dead on Easter morning? And in direct contradiction of the so-called “stolen body theory,” according to which scoffers and skeptics allege that Jesus’ admittedly dead body was removed from the tomb by the disciples and buried elsewhere in some secret location, the following *evidence* is *more than adequate* to prove that He was **definitely** “*alive after His passion,*” (Acts 1:3), **really** “*risen*” from the dead “*as He said*” (Matthew 28:6).

Again, there is the following *circumstantial evidence*: **a)** The guards had to be *bribed* to keep them from reporting what they in fact *saw!* (Matthew 28:11-15). **b)** The body of Jesus had been *unwrapped*, and the grave clothes were neatly *laid aside* (Luke 24:12); and the napkin that had covered Jesus’ face was *folded* in a place by itself (John 20:7) — completely out of character with the haste required by a body snatching under the eyes of Roman sentries! **c)** If Jesus’ friends had been party to a “hoax” to influence public opinion, they would not have been hiding after having re-buried Jesus’ body, but would have been spreading the *concocted* story of His resurrection (John 20:19).

There is *physical and medical evidence* that the risen Christ was not a figment of someone’s imagination or a hallucination: **a)** Jesus *spoke* (Matthew 28:9-10; Luke 24:17-27, 30, 32; John 20:15-17,19-29); **b)** He *ate* (Luke 24:41-43); **c)** He had a *material body* that was able to be *felt* and *examined* (Luke 24:39-40; John 20:25-27); and **d)** no evidence *to the contrary* was ever found!! Those who still seek Jesus’ dead body seek it in vain!

Moreover, as noted above, there was more than ample *eyewitness testimony* regarding Jesus’ **appearances**. At least **twelve** appearances were **recorded** — and St. Paul challenged any skeptic to interview the witnesses personally! Of the “*five-hundred brethren*” to whom Jesus appeared *as a group* on one specific occasion, Paul states that *over half of them were still alive* (I Corinthians 15:6) and thus able to be consulted at the time he wrote his first letter to the Corinthians (roughly at Easter time in 58 A. D.), twenty-five years after Jesus’ resurrection!

Of Christ’s bodily resurrection from the dead there is simply **no doubt whatsoever!** He **IS** risen! He is risen **INDEED!** Hallelujah!

—D. T. M.



Walking with the Risen Savior in His Word

*“And 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



Many of us have hanging in our homes the beloved painting of Jesus walking with two disciples on the way to Emmaus on Easter afternoon. And, although the occasion itself is specifically connected to the Savior’s mighty resurrection from the dead, and the content of their conversation was a discussion of what

had just happened in Jerusalem and how all those things had been prophesied of old in the Holy Scriptures of *“Moses and all the prophets”* (v. 27), both the image of that intimate walk with the Savior and the content of His “Bible class” are truly timeless. As we wistfully look at the three figures standing on that dusty road shaded under the lush canopy of the forest, we can almost hear strains of “Abide with Me! Fast Falls the Eventide” (*TLH 552*) and imagine *ourselves* enjoying that blissful communion with the Lord Jesus and then inviting Him to spend even more time with *us* in *our* Christian home and family circle (v. 29).

We would hope, of course, that the picture has *just such* significance for us and for our dear people and is not merely decor to be displayed and dusted — as are many family Bibles on coffee tables and in book cases. And yet, Christian art, pictures and images should not just serve as *sentimental* “triggers” to evoke superficial emotionalism in us. For it is a cunningly-devised myth (II Peter 1:16a) and therefore a deceptive error that there is a “closer walk” with our Savior that involves something MORE than His indwelling presence (John 14:23) which we have by

faith in Him (Ephesians 3:17a), a walk that requires “feeling” His presence and “experiencing” Him in our lives. And, closely attached to that error, is the false teaching (also a cunningly-devised myth) that God communicates with us apart from His written and spoken Word, the *Holy Scriptures*, and that therefore we should want to have, look for, and even expect personal, special revelations from our Savior as evidence of our communion with Him. Those who accept and trust in this latter myth often speak of prayer as a “dialog” with God in which they speak with Him and in which He answers them directly apart from the Scriptures. We apply to all such the term “enthusiasts” [German: *Schwärmer*] to identify their fanatic, anti-Scriptural position and their insistence that the Holy Ghost works in the hearts of men apart from the Gospel and the Sacraments as the “means of grace.”

Jesus said to Thomas, who had demanded to *experience* His risen Savior with his *senses* (John 20:25): “*Blessed are they that have NOT seen and YET have believed*” (v. 29b). The writer to the Hebrews defines faith as “*the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things NOT seen*” (11:1); and that faith is created, strengthened, and preserved in us by the Holy Spirit of God **through His Word** (John 17:17, 20; I Peter 1:23; Romans 1:16; 10:17; John 8:31-32; I Peter 1:5; etc.), a “*more sure Word of Prophecy*” (II Peter 1:19) than even **eye-** and **ear-**witness testimony. Therefore, when Christ dwells in our hearts by faith (Ephesians 3:17a), we have His sure promise: “*Lo, I am with you [believers] always, even unto the end of the world*” (Matthew 28:20b) — “*whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*” (I Peter 1:8).

It is, of course, significant that even the two disciples walking with the risen Savior on that road to Emmaus did NOT **really** “see” Him **at all**, did not even recognize Him, “*while He talked with [them] by the way;*” for “*their eyes were holden that they should not know Him*” (Luke 24:16). When, therefore, we Christians pray the Savior to abide with us, when we utter that prayer also in our hymns and spiritual songs, we do not look for a visual manifestation, nor for an auditory manifestation, nor even for an emotional manifestation of Him that we can “experience” or perceive with our senses. For we already have **BETTER-THAN-THAT** in the certainty of His promises. We have His *mystical* presence with His indwelling in our hearts (Ephesians 3:17a); we have His personal *illocal* presence, also according to His human nature, “*even unto the end of the world*” (Matthew 28:20b); we have His *sacramental* presence in the Holy Supper of His true body and blood which we eat and drink in, with and under the visible ele-

ments of bread and wine (I Corinthians 11:24ff.); and we have His *reple-*
tive presence, according to which He fills all things with His divine power
and majesty (Ephesians 4:10). Concerning the Savior's **presence** among
us, therefore, we should "*be not faithless but believing*" (John 20:27b).

What was even **more striking** to the Emmaus disciples than the fact that
they had actually walked with their risen Savior, in His visible presence,
without even realizing it, was the **content** of their **conversation** with
Him and what He had **revealed** to them. Note their words in our title-
text: "*Did not our heart burn within us while He **talked** with us by the
way and while He **opened to us the Scriptures?***" Though He seemed to
them to be "*only a stranger,*" they shared with Him the information that
made them sad (v. 17), the fact that they had trusted in Jesus of Nazareth
as a great prophet and as the Redeemer of Israel (vv. 19 and 21), the
tragic news that the Jews had delivered Him to be condemned to death
and had crucified Him (v. 20), and their almost vain hope — on the basis
of the women's testimony and that of Peter and John — that He had per-
haps risen from the dead, but that no one had actually *seen* Him. You
see, His mere "presence" did nothing to allay their fears, to comfort
them, to convince them, and to focus their "*holden*" eyes on His prom-
ises. He "lit into them," as we sometimes say, with a forceful admoni-
tion concerning their foolish reticence "*to believe*" ...NOT what their
friends had told them, not what their hearts hoped for, not what their
gut" was revealing to them, but rather "*all that **the prophets** have spo-*
ken" (v. 25). For, as Abraham had said to the rich man in hell concern-
ing his unbelieving brothers, "*If they hear not **Moses and the prophets***
[that is, the written Scriptures], *neither will they be persuaded **though***
one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31). It would not be His mere
"presence" that would persuade them, nor a mere "appearance" to them
"*at meat*" in Emmaus (v. 30) and later that evening to the ten disciples
in Jerusalem (vv. 36ff.). For Jesus had "*showed **Himself alive** after His*
*passion by many **infallible proofs**, being seen of them,*" Luke tells us in
Acts 1:3; and yet the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is
denied still today **despite** those "*infallible proofs.*"

The mere **perception** of Christ's presence with us, whether real or imag-
ined, is **NOT** what enables us to "*walk in **Him**, rooted and built up in
Him and **stablished in the faith** as [we] have been taught, abounding
therein with thanksgiving*" (Colossians 2:6-7). But the Psalmist con-
fesses to the Lord: "***Thy Word** is a **lamp** unto my feet and a **light** unto
my path*" (119:105); His Word is that perfect illumination "*whereunto*
*[we] do well that [we] take heed, as unto a **light** that shineth in a dark*

place” (II Peter 1:19). And the Lord Jesus states in His prayer to His heavenly Father: “*Thy Word is **truth***” (John 17:17). “*Everyone that is of the **truth** heareth **My voice**,*” He testified to Pilate (John 18:37). Therefore if we are to be His true followers (John 10:27), those who walk in Him (Colossians 2:6), those who are His “*disciples indeed,*” who “*know the truth*” and are *made free* thereby from soul-destroying error, Jesus tells us: “*Continue in **My Word***” (John 8:31-32). For “*[we] are built upon the foundation of the **apostles and prophets** [the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments], **Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone** [the essential, central, and indispensable *key-stone* or *capstone*], in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, in whom [we] also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:20-22). If Jesus is to abide in us and we in Him, then it is **His Word** that must abide in us (John 15:7) as the only source and standard of the “*one faith*” (Ephesians 4:5), “*the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*” (Jude 3), “*the doctrine which is according to Godliness*” (I Timothy 6:3; cf. 4:6).*

If we hear Jesus’ Word and refuse to follow it, we foolishly build upon a foundation of “*sand,*” He says (Matthew 7:26) and should expect a great fall (v. 27), a fall about which we have been amply warned (I Corinthians 10:12), a fall “*from [our] own steadfastness*” (II Peter 3:17) into doubt, misgiving, unbelief and despair! How do we avoid that catastrophic collapse of our faith? Peter writes that if we truly want to beware of “*being led away with the error of the wicked*” and falling from faith, we need to “*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ*” (v. 18) — growth which comes only from that perfect, pure, and essential spiritual “*milk*” which God Himself has given to us for our sustenance (I Peter 2:2).

No wonder the hearts of Cleopas and his fellow disciple *burned within them* as Jesus “*talked with [them] in the way,*” while they were walking along the road with that “*stranger in Jerusalem*” who they imagined to be ignorant of all the things that had transpired on the first Good Friday and on that very Sunday morning! It was not Jesus’ PRESENCE; it was His **WORD!** No wonder their hearts *burned within them* as Jesus, the “*stranger,*” “*opened to [them] the Scriptures!*” It was NOT the “vibes” of Jesus’ PRESENCE that warmed the cockles of their hearts, but the spiritual heat generated in them by the Holy Spirit through the **SCRIPTURES**, the Scriptures which “*are able to make [us] wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*” (II Timothy 3:15).

The hearts and minds of those who refuse to **walk with the risen Savior IN HIS WORD** will never “*burn within [them]*” with the knowledge of the truth, with the surety of salvation, with the comfort of the Gospel, with steadfastness of faith, with “*the peace of God which passeth all understanding*” (Philippians 4:7), and with the ready ability “under fire” to “*give an answer to every man that asketh [them] a reason of the hope that is in [them] with meekness and fear*” (I Peter 3:15). Instead they will be as unsteady, as uncertain, and as ungrounded as a paper boat on a breezy pond, “*tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive*” (Ephesians 4:14). We have heard of their own mouths NOT the “*oracles of God*” (I Peter 4:11) but the “*good words and fair speeches*” (Romans 16:18) of rationalism, subjectivism and emotionalism that leave them without “*an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast*” (Hebrews 6:19) — the “*good words and fair speeches,*” however, “*whereby they lie in wait to deceive*” the unwary (Ephesians 4:14b), and, in the case of shepherds, whereby they destroy their own flocks (Jeremiah 25:34; Ezekiel 34:2-10; etc.)!!

Instead of proclaiming **rock-solid Scripture** upon which to base **true surety**, we hear their uncertain, equivocating buzz-words again and again: “*We consider this to be the truth...*” “*we perceive this to be right...*” “*we are not comfortable with the use of this passage...*” “*the maturity of my faith enables me to distinguish between true and false doctrine...*” “*we believe that the strict application of a clear passage of Scripture is an overemphasis and is an unevangelical policy...*” “*I find as a pastor and theologian that trying to follow the logic and thinking of a false prophet is helpful...*” “*we deplore the use of Romans 16:17;*” etc.

It is even dangerous to quote “orthodox fathers” indiscriminately, giving the impression that just because they wrote or said something, it must be true. The “fathers” dare never become our authority! When we cite them, we should be careful to limit our acceptance of their words and of their judgment, saying, for example, “as Luther [Walther, Chemnitz, Quenstedt] rightly points out in conformity with Scripture... on the basis of Holy Writ,” etc. Even our *quia* subscription to the *Book of Concord* (1580) is predicated on the fact that the Lutheran Confessions are a correct exposition of the **Word of God** in those matters which they treat. However, we cannot give, nor do we require, a *quia* blanket subscription to the writings of our “fathers.”

By God’s grace and with His help, “*let US hold fast the profession of*

OUR faith without wavering, for He is faithful that promised” (Hebrews 10:23) — “*hold fast*” with the strength that only **His Word** supplies; “*the profession,*” speaking “*as the oracles of God*” (I Peter 4:11); “*of our faith,*” that ONE faith “*built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets*” (Ephesians 2:20); “*without wavering,*” steadfastly anchored on the Rock of our Salvation and His precious **Word** “*which liveth and abideth forever*” (I Peter 1:23). “*For He is faithful that promised*” — promised in His faithful **Word**: “*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life!*” (Revelation 2:10b).

“Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent” (Luke 24:29).

Lord Jesus Christ, with us abide,
for ‘round us falls the eventide;
nor let Thy Word, that heavenly Light,
for us be ever veiled in night!

In these last days of sore distress
grant us, dear Lord, true steadfastness;
that pure we keep ‘til life is spent
Thy Holy Word and Sacrament!

Oh, keep us in Thy Word, we pray;
the guile and rage of Satan stay!
Oh, may Thy mercy never cease;
give concord, patience, courage peace!

The haughty spirits, Lord, restrain,
who o’er Thy Church with might would reign
and always set forth something new
devised to change Thy doctrine true.

A trusty weapon is Thy Word,
Thy Church’s buckler, shield and sword.

Oh, let us in its power confide
that we may seek no other guide!

Oh, grant that in Thy holy Word
we here may live and die, dear Lord!
And, when our journey endeth here,
receive us into glory there!

(*TLH 292, selected verses*)

— **D. T. M.**

For our youth in particular...

To Be Content, Trust God's Will and Promise!

"Having food and raiment let us be therewith content."

— I Timothy 6:8

"How are you?" someone asks. You reply, "I *can't* complain." What?! *Can* refers to ability. You certainly have the *ability* to complain. How so? Your sinful flesh is a complainer from the womb! Thank your *parents* for that — not your immediate, biological parents, but everyone's *first* parents, Adam and Eve. Because Eve believed the lie of the devil and willingly yielded to his temptation, and since Adam also transgressed when he "*hearkened unto the voice of [his] wife*" and ate of the forbidden fruit, they both lost the image of God which included *knowing* God and being *perfectly happy* in such knowledge! (See Genesis 3:1-19; cf. Colossians 3:10, Ephesians 4:24). Immediately their now sinful heart moved them to complain — complain *against God!* Adam and Eve blamed God for their sin and, by extension, their resulting *unhappiness!* (See Genesis 3:12-13). Thus began an interminable chain of complaints down through human history as the corrupt human will manifests enmity against God (Romans 8:7a). Even true believers have their Old Adam fighting against their new man (Romans 7:14ff.; Galatians 5:17). Only in heaven will this enmity cease, as the Psalmist writes: "*As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness*" (Psalm 17:15). True, ultimate and complete contentment, with every negative thought, desire and complaint utterly banished forever, will only occur in glory (Revelations 21:4-5, Psalm 16:11, I Corinthians 15:42ff.). So the bottom line is this: You *can* complain; it is the flesh that works in you both to will and to do of God's displeasure and then to complain against Him for this self-caused misery! But *should* you complain? Are you *morally justified* in your *fleshly* complaints? What saith the Scripture?

Our theme text covers the subject completely as a *sedes* about the *proper attitude* of heart and mind that a true believer of any and every age *should* have by the grace and power of God. Consider these sim-

ple, clear words of God: “*Having food and raiment let us be therewith content*” (I Timothy 6:8). At once you are struck by the *present tense* nature of these words — they are all about the *now*, your *present* situation. “*Having*” means what you hold in hand at present, what you currently possess. The inventory list is easy to scan; it consists of **two** necessary items:

First, there is “*food*,” your daily sustenance, that which nourishes your body. God provides this food also to the heathen (Acts 14:16) as testimony of His benevolent providence, as it is written: “*Nevertheless He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness*” (Acts 14:17). Scripture is replete with references to food for human beings as a gift from God (Genesis 2:9, *et al.*). Job refers to “*necessary food*” (Job 23:12), thereby indicating that food is a basic need for temporal life and general health. In the Book of Proverbs, Solomon asks God: “*Feed me with food convenient for me*” (Proverbs 30:8c). “*Convenient*” does not mean “microwaveable” or available at the local “convenience” store, but “my portion,” what is *needed* each day. The Apostle James speaks of “*daily food*” (James 2:15) as that “*which [is] needful to the body*” (James 2:16c). Do you see a pattern here? If we have food enough today to keep hunger away, we should thank God, the Giver of all food, and “*be content.*”

Secondly, there is “*raiment*” as that which “belongs to the support and wants of the body” (Luther: 4th Petition). “*Raiment*” here means “a covering” *really necessary* to the body to keep it *alive* and *healthy*, “a covering” for nakedness and bodily protection and thus a direct parallel to “food” as the daily portion allotted to keep us from going hungry.

“*Let us be therewith content.*” With the basic necessities of life we are to be content. The future passive indicative indicates what the situation *will be*: If we have food and clothing we as Christians shall be content because God, our dear heavenly Father for Jesus’ sake, has provided for our needs as He best knows them.

Now comes the key word “*content.*” The Greek word refers to *satisfaction* based on having *enough*, or a certain level of sufficiency to meet genuine *needs*. The word is translated “*enough*” in reference to the lamp oil in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins (Matthew 25:9) and “*sufficient*” in the feeding of the five thousand concerning bread “*not sufficient for them that every one of them may take a little*” (John

6:7), as well as God's grace being "*sufficient*" for Paul in his affliction (II Corinthians 12:9). Moreover, the soldiers were to be "*content*" with their wages (Luke 3:14) as being paid "*enough*" or "*sufficient*" for their livelihood. Especially relevant to our topic is the exhortation of the holy writer to the Hebrews: "*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have; for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*" Hebrews 13:5. Note: "Be satisfied with what you (presently) have," and be "*without covetousness*" or the "desire to have" *beyond* what God has already bestowed, especially any desire flowing from the deceitful lusts of the flesh. (Compare Luke 21:34 and especially Mark 4:19, "*cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things,*" to the verses just after our text, I Timothy 6:9-10: "*will be rich...many foolish and hurtful lusts...the love of money*" *et al.*). At once you see that the word "*content*" means to be satisfied with what one *has*, and refers to the *willingness* to accept what God in His infinite and loving wisdom provides. Contrast this with *discontent*, that restless unhappiness about current or prevailing circumstances or conditions which leads to grumbling and complaining, "belly-aching," moaning and groaning — "*murmuring*" like the children of Israel in the wilderness (I Corinthians 10:10)! To be content is an *internal* matter of the *will*. Do you trust God's *will* in giving you what you need to have and thus *submit* your will to His, leaving the future to God's sure care (Matthew 6:24-34)?

Even concerning the course of our life and what "best laid plans" we determine to carry out, James admonishes: "*Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain; whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings. All such rejoicing is evil*" James 4:13-16. To find "joy" in making and carrying out plans without due consideration for the will of God, as if your will determines what will happen tomorrow, is *evil!* It is idolatrous! Our fleshly, selfish, and self-serving will can only *oppose* God (Romans 8:7; Galatians 5:17; *et al.*). But our new man cheerfully submits to God's will; "*for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure*" Philippians 2:13.

Can you avoid complaining? Yes! How? The Apostle Paul answers: "*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*" (Philippians 4:13). How do you know he is referring to being *con-*

tent? He says so in the immediately preceding context: *“Not that I speak in respect of want; for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need”* Philippians 4:11-12. He has *“learned”* to be content — taught by God, who created, preserved and purified his faith in all the various *“states”* or *“conditions”* in which he found himself. (See some examples in II Corinthians 11:23-30, including hunger, thirst, cold and nakedness — the list is staggering!!) Was he made of *“different stuff”*? No. He was a sinner with the same wretched flesh as each of us has (See Romans 7:14ff.). St. Paul’s heroic faith was based on and confided in the same Gospel promises that we all have in Holy Writ. His afflictions were continuous, but he learned to endure, knowing that *“there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it”* I Corinthians 10:13. By God’s grace, Paul *“lived”* Romans 8:28 and II Corinthians 4:17-18 — Look them up if you don’t know them! He *“learned”* to be content in the school of the cross where *“no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby”* (Hebrews 12:11).

Joseph also attended this *“school”* in the Old Testament as he told his brothers (Genesis 50:20). Solomon, who enjoyed great temporal bounty (cf. *“all his glory”* Matthew 6:29), said, as God gave him the very thoughts and words: *“Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith”* (Proverbs 15:16). And again: *“Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain”* (Proverbs 30:8-9). Yes, a believer can be truly content, enabled by God’s grace, as the fruit of his God-wrought faith, and thus trust God’s will and His sure promises: *“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have; for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me”* (Hebrews 13:5-6). Your faithful Creator and Redeemer, your ever-present Helper and Friend, will never, ever, leave you or forsake you — He, who cannot lie, has promised it! (Numbers 23:19). His faithfulness, friendship and care, exceed those of a father, a

mother, and a brother (cf. Psalm 27:10; Isaiah 49:15; Proverbs 18:24; Isaiah 43:1-2; *et al.*). The argument of the Holy Ghost in Romans 8:32 is the real spiritual clincher: “*He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*” (Romans 8:32). If God gave us all we need to live in total joy forever in heaven by not sparing His only-begotten Son but requiring Him to suffer the pains of hell to pay for all our sins and take our full punishment, how shall (in the *future*) He not WITH HIM *freely* give us *all things*? It is *impossible* for this not to happen! Therefore St. Paul states for our assurance: “*But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 4:19). *All our need* shall (in the *future*) be supplied by God!

In the face of these promises, in the light of this clear doctrine, why is it that we are so often *discontented*? When you ask yourself *what makes you unhappy* about yourself or your life, *what moves you* to be internally fretting and externally groaning, moaning, murmuring, grumbling, complaining and whining (as a malcontent), what makes the list? Why are you miserable? —Is it how you *look* (clothes, hair, body shape, skin)? —Are you worried about how smart you are? How fit? How slim? How popular? How funny? How fearless? How “with it,” “cool,” or “hip”? —Are you concerned about your job, your general future (spouse, career, place to live)? —Is it your parents, your “friends,” your pastor, or your congregation? —Could it be your car (or lack thereof)? —Are you looking for freedom to do what *you* want? —Is it your past mistakes that are bothering you? Or your current “rut”? —Do you feel misjudged, labeled or defeated before you even start? OR... is it... *you*?? “Wait a minute! Are you going to blame *me* for my *own sadness*?” “At least let me give my parents (biological, not Adam and Eve) some ‘credit,’ as the author’s little sister once told our parents ‘It’s not *my* fault you borned me!’” “Or let me blame the media with all the false hype and idol-worship, the materialistic advertisements and movies, the Hollywood crowd, the rich and famous, blah, blah, blah!” The world and the devil reinforce the sinful flesh; that is most certainly true (See I John 2:15-17; Romans 12:2a.); but our unhappiness is largely our own doing — it is the result of our own sinful flesh! Consider this solution: “*They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine*” Isaiah 29:24. The true Scriptural antidote to discontent (and the manifest evidence of it — murmuring!) is true spiritual understanding; and that comes as a gift from God when we learn doctrine — the true teaching of God’s Word about the source of real happiness: **Reconciliation** and **peace with God** for Jesus’ sake, so

that, confident of being His own dear child and heir by faith in our Redeemer's merits, we can trust our faithful Lord and Savior to provide all of our needs and make us truly content! Our Lord tells us: "*If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them*" John 13:17. First is doctrine (knowing and accepting the things that Jesus our Lord teaches us); then, trusting in Him as our personal Savior, also relying upon Him to keep His promises; and finally, putting them into practice ("*doing*" them) as the fruit and evidence of our faith. For then we will find true, lasting happiness and contentment under the blessing of God's grace and heavenly benediction!

God-willing we shall continue to study this general topic under the theme "True Happiness — John 13:17" in a subsequent issue.

—E. J. W.

Let us pray on behalf of our Pastors!

"Brethren, pray for us..." — II Thessalonians 3:1

As the manifestation of His great love for them (Hebrews 12:6), the Lord of the Church has, in His all-wise and gracious providence, seen fit to afflict three of our pastors in the past weeks and months with serious illnesses. Both **Pastor Natterer** (Lebanon) and **Pastor Redlin** (Tucson) were hospitalized for a time but are now recuperating at home and, by God's grace, are regaining health and strength. **Pastor Worley** (Seattle) is still very sick and debilitated, though he is struggling to perform his duties in spite of great weakness. The Lord through His Apostle James directs us to pray for our sick brethren (5:13ff.), and St. Paul in the text above likewise beseeches our prayers on behalf of our pastors in particular, that the Word of the Lord may continue to have free course among us in its faithful preaching and teaching to His glory. Let us therefore pray:

O Father of mercies and God of all comfort, our only Help in time of need, look down from heaven, we humbly beseech Thee, behold, visit,

and relieve Thy servants and our dear brethren, Pastors Natterer, Redlin and Worley, whom Thou dearly lovest and for whom we humbly intercede. Look upon them with the eyes of Thy mercy for Jesus' sake; strengthen them with the assurance of Thy grace; comfort them with a sense of Thy goodness and love; preserve them from the temptations of the devil, the world, and their own sinful flesh; give them patience under their crosses and weaknesses; and grant them confidently to cast all their cares upon Thee, who carest for them. Be with them according to Thy promise; grant Thy blessing upon all that is done for them in their treatment; hasten their recuperation according as Thou best knowest; and, if it be Thy will, restore them soon to health and strength again. In the meantime, grant them grace so to receive Thy loving visitation with gratitude and cheerful hope, that, trusting solely in the merits of Thy dear Son, for whose sake Thou hast forgiven the sins of the whole world, they may look forward with confidence to the crown of life which awaits all true believers in Thy heavenly home above. We ask it in the Name and for the sake of our precious Savior, the Lamb of God, our only Mediator and Advocate at Thy Throne of Grace. Lord, have mercy upon us!

We also beseech Thee to strengthen **all** the pastors whom Thou hast placed over the congregations of our precious fellowship, that they may proclaim Thy Word with boldness and power to the salvation of many souls. Keep them in purity of doctrine and faithfulness in their practice, that they may truly fulfill Thy command and preach nothing contrary to or in compromise of the Holy Scriptures, so that all their sheep and lambs, being warned, instructed, nurtured, comforted and strengthened by Thy precious Word, may abide as living and fruitful branches in Thee, the True Vine, even unto the end.

And as Thou dost continue to manifest Thy grace and mercy to us through the ministry of reconciliation in our respective congregations, make us diligent and faithful hearers and always eager learners of Thy Word, strengthen our faith in Thee by the gracious working of Thy Holy Spirit through that Word, and help us always to keep in mind that in our Pastor's faithful preaching and teaching of that Word we are hearing Thy voice as the Good Shepherd of our souls. Fill our hearts with fervent love for Thee, for Thy mouthpiece in our midst, and for the message he brings us in Thy Name; and grant both him and all of us together eternal life for Thine infinite mercy's sake, to the glory of Thy grace. Hear us for our precious Savior's sake. Amen.

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58th Annual Convention
of the
Concordia Lutheran Conference

Friday, Saturday and Sunday
June 26th, 27th and 28th, 2009

at
Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church
Oak Park, Illinois

Motto:

“Redeeming the Time”

Ephesians 5:16

The Essay on the topic
**“Redeeming the Time with Respect to
the Training of Future Pastors”**
will be delivered by
Pastor Edward J. Worley

The Friday sermon will be preached by
President Edward J. Worley

The Sunday sermon on Matthew 9:36-38
will be preached by
Pastor David G. Redlin

**The Pastoral Conference on
June 23rd & 24th**
**Board of Directors meeting on
June 25th**