



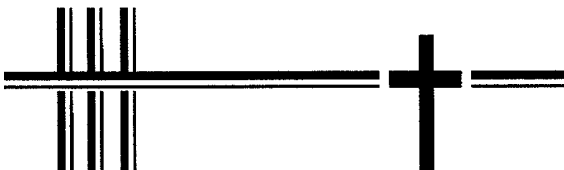
"The Scripture cannot be broken." John 10:35.

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

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"We have
a more sure
Word of prophecy"

— 2 Peter 1:19





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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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To our readers...

Due to circumstances well beyond our control, this issue of the ***Concordia Lutheran*** is appearing extremely late. Seriously debilitating illnesses and unusual conditions in local congregations simply prevented some of our writers from completing their assigned articles on time or, in some cases, at all. Rather than producing a combined issue of four months, we thought it better to maintain the bi-monthly format and send out the present issue late, intending to follow up with the March-April issue according to its nominal appearance schedule. We appreciate your kind forbearance (Ephesians 4:2) and earnestly beseech your prayers on behalf of our pastors, that they endure hardness as good soldiers of the Savior (II Timothy 2:3) and, by His grace (II Corinthians 12:9), labor unabated in their sacred calling, that the Word of the Lord may have free course and continue to be glorified among us (II Thessalonians 3:1).

—*The Editor*



The Purpose of Christ's Miracles In His Epiphany

“These [miracles] are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His Name.” — John 20:31

The word ***Epiphany*** means “appearing” or “manifestation;” and the holy ***Epiphany season*** on our church calendar marks the Lord Jesus’ manifestation of Himself to men here in this world as the Son of God, the long-promised Messiah and the Redeemer of mankind. *The Epiphany of Our*

Lord or *Epiphany Day* is a “fixed” festival in the church year, occurring on **January 6th** and commemorating specifically Jesus’ manifestation to the Wise Men from the East. “*We have seen **His star** in the east and are come to worship Him,*” they reported upon their arrival in Jerusalem (Matthew 2:2). This particular manifestation to the Gentiles by means of a special star and the identification of THAT star in a prophecy of Holy Scripture (Numbers 24:17), a prophecy to which the Wise Men quite evidently gave heed for their information, is sometimes referred to as “the Gentiles’ Christmas.” — a manifestation of special significance to us who are non-Jews.

The remainder of the Epiphany season is devoted to other “manifestations” of our Savior in His office as our **Divine Prophet**, manifestations in which “He revealed Himself by word and deed” (*Catechism* Q/A 132a), that is, by His preaching and by His miracles, to be the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world. And so, in the standard Gospel lessons during the Epiphany season (one to six Sundays *after* the Epiphany of our Lord, depending upon the date of Easter), Jesus is *manifested* to us especially in narratives that, for the most part, center upon His miracles — culminating in the account of His glorious *transfiguration* (Matthew 17:1-9; Mark 9:2-9; Luke 9:28-36) witnessed by Peter and James and John “*in the holy mount*” (II Peter 1:16-18). There the Father Himself manifested His Son to the disciples in a voice from heaven, “*which [they] heard*” (as earwitnesses), saying: “*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him.*” That transfiguration, as well as Jesus’ other miracles of which the apostles testified during the course of His public ministry among men, were not “*cunningly devised fables,*” but were the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth! The disciples saw what they saw as “*eyewitnesses of His majesty,*” and they heard what they heard as clear and certain manifestations of the Savior’s honor and glory as the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world (Luke 9:31).

We commonly define a *miracle* as a phenomenon which defies scientific explanation on the basis of natural law, a feat of which man is incapable without divine assistance or empowerment, or a work that only God Himself can do. [Because of his avowed enmity against God and his efforts to destroy God’s works, we do not regard as *true* miracles supernatural works done by Satan and at his wicked behest, such as those performed by false prophets (Matthew 7:22-23) and those claimed particularly by the Papacy (II Thessalonians 2:9).] Indeed, for the “*fool*” who denies the existence of God (Psalm 14:1), for the skeptic

who questions the validity of anything that cannot be empirically verified, and for the rationalist who subjects everything to the test of reason, there is no such thing as a *miracle*, only an occasional “unexplained” and “unsolved mystery.” In this “scientific” and “enlightened” age characterized by the worship of “self,” the arrogance of human intellect, the philosophy of “secular humanism,” and the denial of a personal God, every *miracle* from the creation of the world to the resurrection of Jesus Christ is either rejected out of hand or is reduced to the status of mere myth or legend.

And for the sectarian, who, contrary to his profession of Christian faith, truly accepts and believes John Calvin’s axiom that “the finite is not capable of the infinite” [*finitum non capax infiniti*], there is no *real* miracle either. The Reformed, therefore, categorically deny, for example, the *real presence* of Christ’s true body and blood in the Lord’s Supper, claiming that His body is locally enclosed in heaven and that His truly human, finite body is incapable of being really present “*at once in many places*” to be partaken of by countless communicants over twenty centuries. At the very same time, however, they show themselves to be grossly inconsistent by accepting as fact Jesus’ feeding of five thousand people out of a child’s lunch box containing a finite number of rolls and fishes and by acknowledging Jesus’ “*beginning of miracles*,” namely, the changing of over a hundred gallons of common wash water into high quality premium wine. “What difference does it make anyway whether Jesus *really* did such things?” some may ask. “Does the acknowledgment or denial of miracles constitute a ‘fundamental’ difference between Christians??”

The question itself reduces to the absurd the public ministry and prophetic office of Jesus Christ, as if His innumerable miracles (John 21:25) were meaningless, not only as to their effect upon those for whose immediate benefit they were performed, but also as to their salutary purpose *for US*, for whose benefit they were recorded (John 20:31). Was Jesus, in their view, the transparent side-show artist that King Herod Antipas regarded Him to be, who merely *entertained* people from time to time with “*some miracle*” (Luke 23:8)? Surely no one who holds such an opinion can be considered a Christian!

Moreover, those who either deny or minimize the importance of Jesus’ miracles seem to forget that Isaiah, over seven hundred years in advance, prophesied by inspiration of the Holy Ghost that the long-promised Messiah would be able to be positively identified by His

preaching and by the very specific *miracles* which He would perform. Concerning the latter, Isaiah wrote: *“Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing”* (Isaiah 35:5-6). Jesus pointed the disciples of John the Baptist to THIS POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION of **Himself** as the very Messiah of God, the Savior of the world, when He told them: *“Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me”* (Matthew 11:4-6). On another occasion, shortly after His temptation by the devil, in a Sabbath-day sermon in a synagogue of Nazareth, Jesus read Isaiah 61:1 and 2, in which **the Messiah Himself** speaks of His God-anointed prophetic office and says: *“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord....”* And, in His exposition of this text, Jesus stated for all to hear, to *“bear witness,”* and to *“wonder at,”* this identification of **Himself**: *“This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears”* (Luke 4:16ff.).

The Jews of Jesus’ day could not refute this prophetic evidence of His Messianic office, for Nicodemus, *“a man of the Pharisees...a ruler of the Jews”* admitted on behalf of his colleagues: *“Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him”* (John 3:1-2). Yet, in spite of this evidence, the Jews generally and especially their leaders rejected Him as the Messiah, rejecting also the word of the Gospel of which Peter reminded them in Acts 10:36ff, *“The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ –He is Lord of all; that word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him ... to Him give all the prophets witness, that through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.”* In fact, when the Jews challenged Jesus (John 10:24), *“How long dost Thou make us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly,”* Jesus Himself answered them: *“I told you, and ye believed not. The **works** that I do in My Father’s Name, they **bear witness** of*

*Me. ...If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do, though ye believe not **Me**, believe the **works**, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in Me and I in Him*" (v's 25, 37-38).

This challenge of the Lord Jesus in His Epiphany to men, in His manifestation of Himself as the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world, is before us still today: "*Believe the works! They bear witness of Me!*" For in His miracles the Savior not only demonstrated His merciful kindness toward those for whose immediate benefit they were performed; He also "*manifested forth His glory,*" as He did at the wedding in Cana (John 2:11), for His disciples to behold, "*the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*" (John 1:14b). And those miracles had the desired, God-ordained effect, for "*His disciples believed on Him.*" The miracles are also recorded in the Scriptures for US, "*upon whom the ends of the world are come*" (I Corinthians 10:11). Jesus, of course, in His going about and doing good (Acts 10:38) during His public ministry, as a function of His prophetic office, did "*many other [miraculous] things*" than those written down in the Gospels, "*which,*" says John, "*if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written*" (John 21:25). That fact, in and of itself, is truly amazing! [Of bogus "saints," whom the Roman Antichrist "canonizes" as mediators between God and men in direct competition with and contradiction of Christ's High Priestly office, only **two** "documented" miracles— only **two** "*signs and lying wonders*"— are required by the "Holy Father" to take advantage of the "*strong delusion,*" created by God Himself in those who reject justification by grace alone, for Christ's sake alone, through faith alone, "*that they should believe a lie*"! (II Thessalonians 2:9-12).]

But the purpose of **CHRIST'S** miracles recorded in Holy Writ is clear and indisputable: "*These are written that ye might BELIEVE that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might HAVE LIFE through His Name*" (John 20:31), the most salutary purpose of all. For His miracles have, for OUR sakes, validated Jesus of Nazareth not only as "*the Mighty God*" but as "*the Prince of Peace,*" (Isaiah 9:6), "*the Holy One of Israel, [our] Savior*" (Isaiah 43:3). The record of His miracles has thus been made a functional part of the **Gospel** message, "*the power of God unto salvation,*" through which the Holy Spirit operates in our hearts to "*make [us] wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*" (II Timothy 3:15). May we therefore treasure the holy record of our Savior's miracles, value the manifestation of His

glory to us, cling to the validation of His office as our anointed Redeemer, and ever confide in the forgiveness of all our sins by virtue of His perfect vicarious atonement!

*Manifest at Jordan's stream,
Prophet, Priest, and King supreme,
and at Cana Wedding-Guest
in Thy Godhead manifest;
manifest in power divine,
changing water into wine,
anthems be to Thee addressed:
God in man made manifest!*

(TLH 134, 2)

— D. T. M.



Seminary update...



By the grace and with the neverfailing help of God, we recently completed the first semester of the current academic year — a bit later than we had anticipated according to our tentative calendar because of a variety of special circumstances which the Lord in love had permitted us to bear (and to share) as His dear children for our ultimate good and blessing (Hebrews 12:6ff.). Nevertheless, we chose to extend the term

rather than to take the easier alternative of devising shortcuts and making accommodations in course content. That would have been a sacrifice of *quality* that we are not willing to make.

This past semester, two full time students and one part time student pursued with diligence and Gospel-motivated enthusiasm the theological studies prescribed for them in our seminary curriculum — **Jason A. Mabe**, now of Oak Forest and a *part-time* student, taking three second year courses two evenings per week primarily with Pastor Robert Lietz as his professor, and **David J. Mensing** and **Daniel P. Mensing**, both *full-time* students, taking a full load of sixteen credit hours in the first year curriculum with the undersigned as their professor. Without exception, their academic work across the board was excellent, all of them earning a 4.0 average in their courses and making their instructors' efforts a joy in the Lord!

Our full-time students completed the first semester of **Dogmatics I** (the nature and concept of Theology almost through the doctrine of Holy Scripture) and of **New Testament Greek (I)**, **Introduction to the Holy Scriptures** (*New Testament Text and Canon*), **New Testament Isagogics** (a general survey of the content of the New Testament books, first half), **Theological Hermeneutics** (principles of Bible interpretation), and **Ecclesiastical Latin** (a second year course since they had passed German by proficiency). They also participated in a *practicum* or internship in the local congregation. Our second year part-time student completed **Dogmatics II** (the first part of Christology), **Old Testament Isagogics** (first half), and the **Ecclesiastical Latin** course.

In the second semester, the coursework for the first-year students will include the second semester of **Dogmatics I** (through Pneumatology), **New Testament Greek (II)**, **Introduction to the Scriptures** (*Old Testament Text and Canon*), **New Testament Isagogics** (to conclusion), **Exegesis** (interpretation of selections from Luke and I Peter), and **Ecclesiastical Latin**. The second year student will complete **Dogmatics II**, **Old Testament Isagogics**, and **Ecclesiastical Latin**. Moreover, all of the students will continue to gain practical experience in their ongoing internship.

As usual, all to the glory of God and enabled by His grace, our seminarians continue to do outstanding work in all of their subjects, as well as in the practical application of the doctrine which they have learned both in their own lives and in the local congregation. With praise to the Lord, each and every student continues to show himself to be “*a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth*” (II Timothy 2:15).

We have been joined this year by Mr. Jim Bielefeldt of St. Mark’s in Sauk Village, Illinois, as an auditor. While auditors usually just sit in and take notes, not being responsible for completing assignments or taking exams since they are not enrolled for *credit*, Brother Bielefeldt has been a “full participant” in all the first year courses, completed every assignment, and wrote every examination. We are keeping a record of his progress and of his performance in the event he officially matriculates into the program, in which case he can be granted credit for work satisfactorily completed. The addition of Mr. Bielefeldt to our assembled classes increases our broad based discussions and, of course, our mutual edification as we exhort one another with the Holy Scriptures.

May the Lord of the Church continue to bless abundantly our humble efforts to the praise of His grace to train well-prepared candidates of the Ministry for the future of our Conference and its congregations; and may it be His will to grant health and strength to both instructors and students as they carry out their arduous tasks to His glory, but above all steadfastness in His Word and faith in the face of trial, temptation, and Satan’s efforts in these latter days to destroy us, that still we may finally overcome and obtain the victory. For that IS His gracious and good will!

—**Professor David T. Mensing**

Chastisements Are a Privilege For Us Christians to Bear

*“For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth,
and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.”*

—Hebrews 12:6

The crosses of a Christian are inseparably linked to the cross of his dear Savior—in their **nature**, in their **purpose**, and in their **effect**—so that only a true believer in the Lord Jesus and in His vicarious atonement for the sins of the world has crosses laid upon him, recognizes their salutary purpose at the hand of his heavenly Father, and profits from them in accordance with His good and gracious will.

Dr. Luther spoke highly of the crosses under which we Christians are called upon to suffer here in this world, characterizing them as a sort of **badge** we wear, the “marks of Christ,” not merely “painted on the wall”—not merely an *external* identification which can be erased or covered over if and when convenient—but “branded in the flesh and blood of the Christians,” as St. Paul also describes them in Galatians 6:17. In fact, Luther’s personal seal, with which all of us surely are familiar, depicts the **blessedness** of Christian cross-bearing, with the heart of the believer resting on a bed of roses, even as it languishes beneath the cross. [“*Des Christen Herz auf Rosen geht, wenn’s mitten unterm Kreuze steht.*” — “The Christian’s heart rests on roses, e’en when it ‘neath the cross reposes.”]

What then are the crosses that the Christian bears? As noted above, the cross of a Christian is inseparably linked to the cross of his Savior—not merely in the outward similarity of both being a source of pain and suffering, but in this, that the Lord Jesus willingly endured **HIS** cross, despising the shame, the pain, the anguish and the mockery heaped upon Him, all to purchase our release from the slavery of sin and bondage to the devil (Hebrews 12:2-3); therefore **we**, as the children of God by faith in Christ’s redemptive work, must be willing to bear **our** crosses—our “mini-crosses” in comparison to His—after Him (Matthew 10:38; Luke

14:27), as evidence of our faith and in demonstration of our thanksgiving for His sacrifice in our place. Thus it is only a **CHRISTIAN** who is said to bear “crosses;” for those crosses consist in the suffering that a believer is called upon to bear for **JESUS’** sake, for the sake of **HIS cross**, for the sake of **the Gospel** of “*Christ crucified*” (I Corinthians 1:23), for the sake of “*the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (Romans 8:39), whom He sent “*to be the propitiation for our sins*” (I John 4:9-10). They are **the fruit of our faith in Him**, whereby “*we are all the children of God*” (Galatians 3:26) and as such enjoy very particularly the reconciliation He purchased and won for us with His heavenly Father (Romans 5:10; II Corinthians 5:19).

The question then very naturally arises in man’s sin-blinded reason: If Christians, as the children of God, are at **peace** with Him (Romans 5:1) and dwell in His **love** (I John 3:1; 4:16), how is it that they must **suffer** for Christ’s sake (Romans 8:17), suffer so **manifold** and so **grievous** a load of trials and tribulations (I Peter 1:6-7)? How is it that they must suffer **at all**??

As the result of Christ’s redemptive work, because of the justification or forgiveness of the whole world by God on account of that work, and because of our personal enjoyment of peace with God through faith in that **Objective Justification** for Jesus’ sake, we Christians are indeed in a most **blessed state** of comfort and joy, of peace and hope. Nevertheless, the full glory that is ours *even now* as the inheritance of those who are God’s adopted children and heirs with Christ, that glory has not yet been revealed in us and delivered to us in **full measure**, but is anticipated, “*hoped for*” (Hebrews 11:1; I Peter 1:3-4), as definitely to be **expected in heaven**. For the Apostle John writes in his first Epistle, chapter 3: “*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.*”

In the meantime, God has ordained that our high dignity as His children and the glory in store for us should be **concealed**, and that our present existence should be characterized by a **lowliness** reminiscent of our **SAV-
IOR’S** lowliness in His State of Humiliation. Thus we are called upon to “*suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together*” (Romans 8:17). Moreover, “*the sufferings of this present time*” (Romans 8:18), often make it **LOOK** to **others** and, in our weakness, even to **us**, as if we were **NOT** the children of God because, to the simpleminded, sin-warped manner of human thinking and human judgment, it should be the **wicked** that

suffer, not the **righteous**; it should be the **devil's** children that should be tortured and tormented, not the children of **God**! (Job 21:7-15). Nevertheless, under the cross it goes just **the opposite**: The wicked prosper, while the righteous suffer want; the scoffer is revered, while the believer is smeared; the unbelievers are exonerated before the world, often "getting away with murder," as we commonly say, while Christ's "*disciples indeed*" are accused of "*all manner of evil...falsely for [His] sake*" (Matthew 5:11). And this seems to be a strange and puzzling phenomenon to those who do not understand the "*end*" of the wicked from God's own Word (Psalm 73) and who do not likewise appreciate "*the glory which shall be revealed in us*" (Romans 8:18).

But this matter of cross-bearing MUST be well understood, yea, *properly* understood, by every Christian, lest in time of trial and temptation he lose heart, despair of the love of God, despise the chastening of the Lord, and end up a "*bastard*" child (Hebrews 12:8), giving up his birth-right, his legitimate claim to the heavenly Father's inheritance. For such are they "*which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away*," Jesus tells us in the Parable of the Sower, Luke 8:13. "*From this preserve us, Heavenly Father!*" [Luther, 1st Petition].

The crosses that the Christian bears are, in and of themselves, manifestations of God's holy **Law** by which He "*chasteneth*" His children, that is, *whips* them, as does an earthly father when he spansks his own son or daughter (Hebrews 12:9-10). Indeed, His chastenings are often so "*grievous*" (v. 11a) that He characterizes them in the title-text of our article as "*scourges*" (v. 6). They are His "*rebuke*" and "*correction*" (vv. 5 and 9), which are functions of the Law. But these crosses are laid upon the Christians by their heavenly Father, not because He *hates* them, not because He desires their *hurt*, but because, in Christ Jesus, He dearly *loves* them and deals with them "*as with sons*" (v. 7). Contrary to one's initial, carnal reaction, there are no contradictions in these sacred truths, but rather a blessed and reassuring comfort "*unto them which are exercised thereby*" (v. 11). And yet the devil, the "*father of lies*" from the beginning (John 8:44), creeps up to us in the midst of tribulation and attacks us, saying: "*IF ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus* (Galatians 3:26), why does He cause you to suffer so?? *YEA, HATH GOD SAID, 'Whom the Lord LOVETH He chasteneth'?*" You, my naive Christian sufferer, have been had! You are indeed a first-class chump and sucker if you honestly believe that God *loves* you!! He surely has a strange way of showing it!!"

Indeed, the devil uses this very fact that the afflictions of the believers and of unbelievers are, outwardly at least, indistinguishable from one another, as a source of doubt, misgiving and even despair to the suffering Christian. Satan would thereby endeavor to convince him that, in spite of his justification by God's grace for Christ's sake through faith, God is **still angry** with him and holds his sins **against him**. Thus the devil not only tries to **weaken** the Christian's confidence in the love of God to poor sinners for Jesus' sake; but he wants to **destroy** the individual Christian's faith altogether and to convince him that God **hates** him rather than loves him, that God is **punishing** him instead of having forgiven him, that God is dealing with him according to His **justice** and has withdrawn from him His mercy!! Such lying, tempting and conniving on the part of Satan belongs to the Christian's cross, to that temptation which God permits the devil to visit upon him (as he did upon Job) to test and refine his faith. And it is certainly a chastening that "*for the present seemeth to be... GRIEVOUS*" (Hebrews 12:11a) and a source of FRUSTRATION to the Christian, as he seeks to determine what good purpose God could possibly intend thereby.

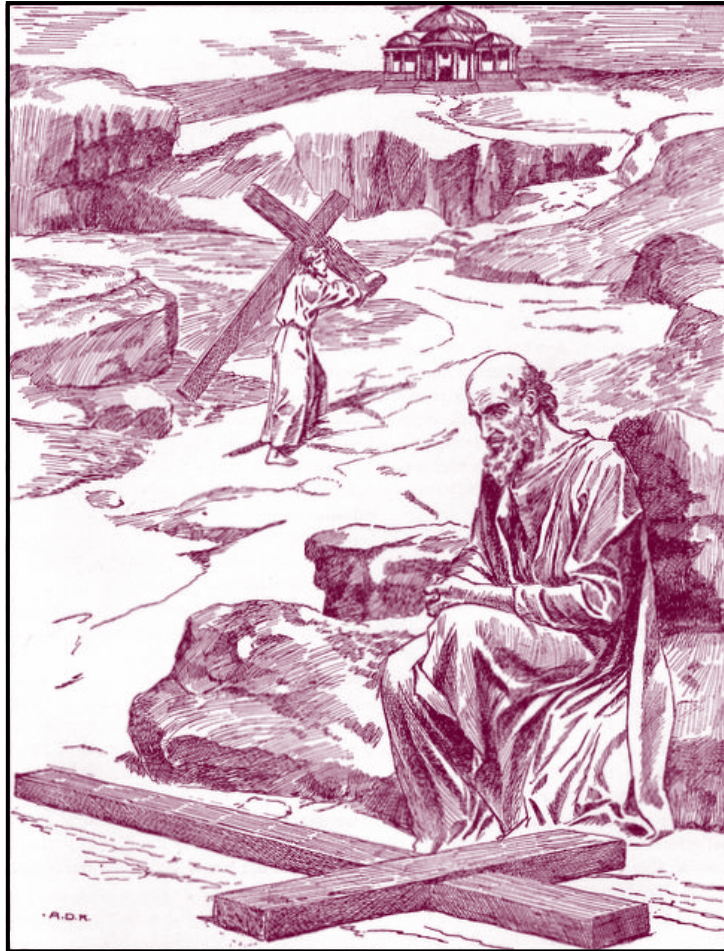
Nay, the crosses, trials, tribulations and chastisements which God lays upon us must have an altogether different purpose, a purpose not flowing from divine wrath (which has been removed from us in justification), but from the heavenly Father's *loving* intention to discipline us, as any responsible and loving Christian father would discipline his legitimate child. For in Hebrews 12:7, the verse immediately following the title-text of our present article, the holy writer says: "*If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with SONS; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?*" Thus our heavenly Father "*chastens*" us, disciplines us with **His Law**, in order to bring about in us, as the end result of this process, "*the peaceable fruit of RIGHTEOUSNESS unto them which are exercised thereby*" (v. 11).

Here a word is in order concerning the proper distinction between the Law and the Gospel in the matter of God's chastisements. As we confess in the exposition of the *Small Catechism*, "the Law curbs to some extent the coarse outbursts of sin," also for the Christian in his flesh, "shows us our sins" and our need for a Savior, and "teaches us Christians what works we must do to lead a God-pleasing life" (Q/A 90). Consequently, within the scope of the **LAW**, we find God's "*rebuke,*" "*correction,*" "*chastening*" and "*instruction*" as He disciplines us, as well as all those visitations which are "*grievous*" instead of "*joyous,*" namely, "*chastenings,*" "*afflictions,*" "*trials,*"

“tribulations,” “infirmities,” and “temptations.” But the Law can work in us nothing good whatever. Works motivated by the **Law** are not God-pleasing, since they flow not from faith but from fear; and so the **Law**, as well as the vicissitudes of life, do not in themselves *work* sanctification. Instead, it is the **Gospel**, for which our hearts have been prepared by the Law, which confirms to us the blessed fact that “*we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*” (Galatians 3:26) “...and, if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (Galatians 4:7). It is the **Gospel** which points the suffering Christian to the “silver lining” of his chastisements, saying: “*Behold, what manner of LOVE the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!*” (I John 3:1). It is the **Gospel** which takes the grievous chastenings and afflictions and trials and rebukes of the Law and turns them to our **benefit**, yielding “*the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby*” (Hebrews 12:11).

How, then, should we Christians regard the crosses laid upon us, and how we are to muster the strength necessary to bear them after our Lord Jesus? If we Christians, since our regeneration, were completely rid of the Old Adam of sin, chastisements would not be necessary at all; for we would be perfect in every respect and in need of no improvement whatsoever. But we must confess in all humility with the Apostle Paul: “*I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing*” (Romans 7:18). It is our flesh that NEEDS the cross to convict it, rebuke it, curb it and chastise it; yet it is our flesh that RESISTS the cross, chafing under its weight, and would have us despise it, escape it, and, if forced to bear it, murmur against it. Therefore, Solomon writes in the Proverbs, chapter three, verse eleven: “*My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of His correction*” (Cf. Hebrews 12:5).

Moreover, that same flesh, when faced with chastisements, rears up within us like a horse refusing bit and bridle, and tries to ESCAPE the cross, to run away like Jonah of old, like the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, like many in our own day and time who would sacrifice the truth of God’s Word rather than suffer any inconvenience, endure any trial, bear any persecution, or make any sacrifice for the sake of the Gospel! They would rather be “bastards” than “sons,” the writer to the Hebrews tells us in verse 8 of chapter 12! To them the Lord Jesus speaks an urgent warning concerning the magnitude of the **consequences** of their evasion: “*Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after Me, cannot be my disciple*” (Luke 14:27). **Escape** the cross?? At what **COST??!**



*“If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself,
and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.” —Luke 9:23*

Yet, even with such warnings in great abundance in the Holy Scriptures, the flesh continues to *“lust against the spirit”* (Galatians 5:17). If not permitted by our New Man of faith to **despise** chastenings, if not allowed to slough them off and **escape** them, our flesh then WHINES AND COMPLAINS “beneath the chastening rod,” murmuring against the Lord like the Children of Israel in the wilderness, concerning whom the Apostle warns **us** in I Corinthians 10:10, *“Neither **murmur** ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the Destroyer!”*

Let us note yet one particularly **vicious** ploy of Satan which he uses to drive troubled Christians to hopelessness and despair: Sometimes a child of God is hounded by the idea that God somehow **overestimated** his strength as a Christian, **underestimated** the burden that the weight of a certain cross would be for him, and **laid upon his back** a chastisement **much GREATER than he could bear**. The devil perpetuates this myth by keeping the suffering Christian's eyes **away** from the Holy Scriptures; for he knows full well that the believer can find no comfort apart from the Gospel. Fortunately for us, we have by God's rich grace in His Holy Word a most wonderful **assurance**, of which the Apostle Paul writes, I Corinthians 10:13, "*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.*" Here the Lord links this gracious assurance with His ultimate purpose in sending the Christian crosses: If the heavenly Father did not truly love us in Christ Jesus our Savior, He would simply "hang us out to dry," as it were, and forget about us altogether! Instead He does just the **opposite!** He assures us **ahead of time** that He and He alone determines and measures the severity of our trials, tailor-makes them to fit our needs for our ultimate benefit, and provides an "end" or termination for them. What a gracious and loving Father we have by faith in Christ Jesus, our Savior!

Though the flesh is weak, "*the spirit indeed is willing*" (Matthew 26:41). What the Old Adam in us, in the service of Satan, abhors, despises and rejects, the **New Man** of faith is **ready, willing**, yea, **eager** to do, prompted by the Holy Spirit by means of the Gospel. Thus, the Christian's **NEW Man** says with the Psalmist: "*It is good for me that I have been afflicted*" (Psalm 119:71), an acknowledgment worked in him by the testimony of the Spirit of God that he is indeed a child of God, his heavenly Father, by faith in Christ Jesus, and that he earnestly desires to be dealt with as such, as a "*son*," as a legitimate heir of God through Christ (Romans 8:17).

Our **New Man rejoices** in the cross, knowing both its divine Source and gracious purpose, as Job declares: "*Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth,*" but then also adds a word of admonition because of the flesh and its melancholy under the cross: "*Therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty!*" (5:17). Thus it was the **New Man** in the Apostle Paul who said: "*I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake*" (II Corinthians 12:10). And yet Paul was not without the same flesh that constantly

plagues you and me; for he readily admits: *“The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not that I do... for I **delight** in the Law of God after the **inward** man, but I see **another** law in my members warring **against** the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.”* That constant battle between the spirit and the flesh makes **us too** cry out in utter frustration: *“O wretched man that I am!! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death??”* (Romans 7:19-24). Fortunately for Paul (and for us as well), this cry of anguish is not without its answer, the answer of **God’s grace**, proclaimed to us in the Gospel to which our crosses drive us: *“I thank GOD, through Jesus Christ our Lord!”* (v. 25a). God, our dear heavenly Father for Jesus’ sake has already delivered us from **eternal** death and from the sting of **temporal** death as well; and He will surely deliver us at length also from the wretchedness of this battle with the flesh when He calls us to His heavenly home. Then we shall forever be rid of the Old Adam, the corrupt and plaguing “albatross” which we now still must carry about with us, and yet, at the same time, mortify by daily contrition and repentance.

In the meantime, however, we must **endure chastenings** *“now for a season”* as God sees fit in His perfect wisdom and according to His loving purpose, being *“in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of [our] faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ”* (I Peter 1:6-7). The purpose is **good**, because it flows from God’s **love** for us as His children; and it is that **good** and **salutary purpose** upon which we must keep our eyes of faith focused so that, though they be clouded over at times by tears of weakness, according to our **New Man** we may be *“always rejoicing”* (II Corinthians 6:10).

This is a “tall order” indeed, and an impossibility for us without the comfort and assurance of the Gospel. Therefore we go to our dear heavenly Father in prayer and ask Him (as dear children here in this world ask their dear father) with all boldness and confidence: *“Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief!”* (Mark 9:24). *“Give me, according to Thy great love and mercy to me in Christ my Savior, a rich measure of **Thy grace**, which is sufficient for me; ‘for [Thy] strength is made perfect in [my] weakness’”* (II Corinthians 12:9).

And has He not already heard our plea, before we even called upon Him and before we were done speaking (Isaiah 65:24), all for the sake of His fatherly love for us in Christ Jesus?? Has He not already assured

us: *“Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine! When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior!”* (Isaiah 43:1-3a)??

Indeed, *“whom the Lord LOVETH, He chasteneth.”* And that great, yea, immeasurable and unfathomable love for us in Christ Jesus moves Him to pour out abundantly of His enabling grace, that we, **by Him**, can bear the crosses that He in **love** has laid upon us! *“Hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?”* (Numbers 23:19). Thus, when we in faith confidently assume the cross to mortify the Old Adam, to be disciplined, exercised and instructed by the heavenly Father for our ultimate good and blessing, our New Man boldly declares with Paul: *“I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me”* (Philippians 4:13); *“for it is God which worketh in [me] both to will and to do of His good pleasure”* (2:13).

Let this then be our **comfort**, our **joy**, our **hope**, our **confidence**, and our never-failing source of **strength** to bear the crosses He has laid upon us, the crosses which are evidence of His fatherly LOVE to us, His dear children in Christ our Savior:

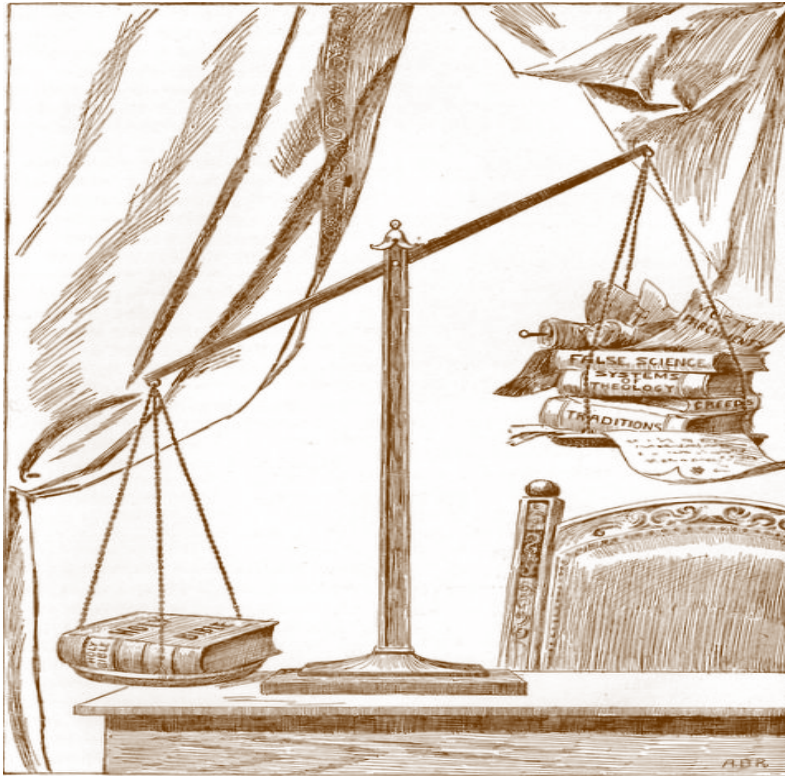
“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, ‘For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’ Nay, in all these things we are MORE THAN CONQUERORS 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 8:35-39

— D. T. M.



“We Have Also a More Sure Word of Prophecy...”

— II Peter 1:19



We should never be upset, offended, or “turned off” when we are reminded of truths from God’s Word which we have repeatedly **heard** in our lifetime and which we need to **hear again**, nor should we ever be reluctant, hesitant, or negligent to **speak** the Word of God which we have repeatedly spoken in the past and which we need to **speak again**. The Apostle Peter declared: *“Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance....*

Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance” (II Peter 1:12-13, 15).

Then the apostle related how he, James and John (Matthew 17:1; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28) were “*eyewitnesses of [Jesus’] majesty*” (II Peter 1:16b) at His transfiguration, when they heard a “*voice which came from heaven*” (v. 18a), saying: “*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*” (v. 17b). The “*voice*” of the heavenly Father “*out of the cloud*” (Matthew 17:5) spoke words which were true, sure and certain. However, in comparison to the disciples’ eye- and earwitness testimony of what was said, the apostle announces: “*We have a **more sure** Word of prophecy*” (II Peter 1:19a). The **written-down** prophetic words, the Holy Scriptures, give us increased sureness and certainty. What a profound and priceless blessing that our gracious God, who did once speak sure and certain words from heaven, has now given us His sure and certain words *in writing*, in the Holy Scriptures, which give us the added blessing of having His words of truth in “black-and-white.” And those Scriptures are “*given [to us; What a wonderful gift!] by inspiration of God*” (II Timothy 3:16a). “*By inspiration of God*” expresses the truth that God the Holy Ghost “*moved*” (II Peter 1:21) the holy men to write, and put into their minds the very thoughts which they expressed and the very “*words*” (I Corinthians 2:13) which they wrote down. This is verbal, word-for-word, inspiration! Oh, let us never stop thanking, praising, and blessing our merciful God that we have and, by His grace, keep on having the verbally-inspired Scriptures!

And what ought we to do with God’s “*more sure Word of prophecy*,” His prophetic, written words, His Holy Scriptures? In II Peter 1:19b, we have the answer: “*Whereunto ye do well that ye take heed.*” We are to keep on and never stop doing what is good and right by continuing to hold on to, believe, give heed to, follow, and adhere to God’s “*more sure Word of prophecy*,” His prophetic, written words, His Holy Scriptures! There is never a time when we are not to hold on to, not to believe, not to give heed to, not to follow, and not to adhere to God’s “*more sure Word of prophecy*,” His prophetic, written words, His Holy Scriptures. The written-down words of II Timothy 3 are so timely: “*Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*” (vv. 14-16). We

are to keep on holding to the things which we have learned from the Holy Scriptures, those Scriptures which are well-equipped to bring us to know, to accept, and to believe in Christ Jesus for the salvation of our souls from what we deserve for our sins, which is everlasting punishment and torment in the prison of hell (Romans 6:23). These Scriptures are so spiritually profitable and beneficial because they give us, first of all, the doctrines, the teachings of our God, that are *necessary for salvation*, especially the two *chief* doctrines — God’s Holy **Law**, which brings us to “*the knowledge of sin*” (Romans 3:20b), to conviction of our *guilt* in His sight (Romans 3:19), and to true *contrition* for our sins (Psalm 51:17); and God’s saving **Gospel**, which shows us our Savior, Christ Jesus, who “*came into the world to save sinners*” (I Timothy 1:15), who by His redemptive work became “*the Propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world*” (I John 2:2), that “*whosoever believeth in Him should not perish [in hell], but have everlasting life*” (John 3:16b). Furthermore, these Scriptures are also spiritually profitable in educating us, the sheep and lambs of Christ (Psalm 119:105), for the reproofing and rebuking of sin (Luke 17:3), and for instructing us in what is right, correct, and God-pleasing in the sight of our Triune God (II Timothy 3:16), all to show our love for Him who “*first loved us*” (I John 4:19) by “*abhor[ring] that which is evil [and] cleav[ing] to that which is good*” (Romans 12:9).

We have this warning in II Peter 1: “*No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation*” (v. 20). Scripture interprets Scripture; we are never privately, on our own, in our own way, to interpret the Holy Scriptures to make them say and teach what they do not say and teach or to strip them of their normative authority in what they do say and teach. The instruction of our God is unmistakably clear: “*He that hath My Word, let him speak My Word faithfully*” (Jeremiah 23:28b). Faithful use of God’s Word includes not adding to His written revelation and not subtracting from that same revelation. In the closing chapter of the Scriptures, we have the stern warning: “*I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book: If any man shall **add** unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book, and if any man shall **take away** from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book*” (Revelation 22:18-19).

Rather, we are to remember the wonderful truth that the “*more sure Word of prophecy*,” God’s prophetic, written words, the Holy Scrip-

tures are like *“a light that shineth in a dark place ”* (II Peter 1:19c). God’s written-down words in the Scriptures are as a light which keeps on shining on us, like a big, powerful floodlight which never goes out, revealing everything that we and all mankind need to know for our faith unto salvation and for a God-pleasing life here in this world to His glory (II Timothy 3:16).

The *“more sure Word of prophecy,”* the Holy Scriptures, the Holy Writings keep shining in this dark world, for the Lord God is *“not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”* (II Peter 3:9). The message of the Scriptures to all in this wicked and sinful world, including to each of us, is set forth by the Savior Himself in Mark 1: *“Repent ye [of your sins], and believe the Gospel [for the full and free forgiveness of your sins]”* (v. 15b). It is this one and only Savior for the world of sinners who declared: *“I am the Light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life”* (John 8:12).

This *“more sure Word of prophecy,”* the Scriptures, will continue to shine in this dark world, even if only *“few”* (I Peter 3:20c) give heed to it as *“in the days of Noah”* (I Peter 3:20b). We should not expect it to be any different in these latter days than it was in Noah’s day, when his preaching for one-hundred twenty years netted no hearer outside of his own family. Nevertheless it must continue to be our light and lamp *“until the day dawn and the Day Star arise in [our] hearts”* (II Peter 1:19d), until the Last Day arrives like the rising of the sun, that day when the Day Star, *“the Bright and Morning Star”* (Revelation 22:16b), *“the Sun of Righteousness”* (Malachi 4:2a), *“the Son of Man”* (Matthew 25:31a), Christ Jesus will show that He is in the *“hearts”* (and lives) of all of His *“branches”* (John 15:5a), those attached to Him by saving faith in His *“righteousness”* (Romans 5:18b). On that final day of this world, Jesus will judge all people on the basis of His written Word alone (John 12:48b), the Holy Scriptures, His *“more sure Word of prophecy.”* To those *“on His right hand”* (Matthew 25:34a), to His dear sheep and lambs clad in His righteousness by faith in His merits (Matthew 22:11ff.; Isaiah 61:10) and in the justification He purchased for all mankind (I Peter 1:18-19; I John 2:2), to them the Savior will say: *“Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”* (Matthew 25:34b). But to those on His *“left hand”* (v. 41a), to those who in unbelief rejected both the rebuke and indictment of His holy Law and the ministration of His saving grace in the Gospel, to them the

Savior will say: *“Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels”* (v. 41b). Here we see the justice of God showing itself toward sinners who by their own fault are without Christ and without faith in His redeeming work for them, who arrogantly insist upon being judged according to their works (Galatians 5:4), and His grace in judging believers according to His justice *satisfied by Christ*, who by His perfect life earned the righteousness that the Law demands (Romans 10:4) and by His suffering and death paid the penalty that the Law prescribes (Galatians 3:13). Jesus’ words in John 14 will most certainly be confirmed on the Last Day for this world: *“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me”* (v. 6).

What *“is written”* (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10) in the Scriptures, the *“more sure Word of prophecy,”* is particularly vital for us to remember during this season of Lent, when we see all that our Savior *“hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh”* (I Peter 3:18), *“even the death of the cross”* (Philippians 2:8d) *“for all”* (II Corinthians 5:15a). This is all written down in the Scriptures for us to read for our joy, to ponder for our comfort, to cling to for our hope, and to receive as instruction for our lives, *“that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and Godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar [special] people, zealous of good works”* (Titus 2:12-14).

In the precious words of His *“more sure Word of prophecy,”* which includes also the Psalms, an excellent prayer book for God’s people, let us pray often the first seven verses of one of those priceless psalms: *“Unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in Thee; let me not be ashamed; let not mine enemies triumph over me. Yea, let none that wait on Thee be ashamed; let them be ashamed which transgress without cause. Show me Thy ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths; lead me in Thy Truth, and teach me; for Thou art the God of my salvation; on Thee do I wait all the day. Remember, O Lord, Thy tender mercies and Thy lovingkindnesses, for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to Thy mercy remember Thou me for Thy goodness’ sake, O Lord”* (Psalm 25).

— R. J. L.

Interim Report of the Committee on Missions

The ever-timely and always-pertinent message of Galatians 5 is for each of us: *“Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another”* (v. 13). In our mutual work and service in God’s kingdom of grace, how vitally important for us, as His dear children through faith in Christ (3:26), to remember that we are here on this earth *“not henceforth [to] live unto [ourselves], but [to live] unto Him which died for [us] and rose again”* (II Corinthians 5:15). *“Beloved, if God so loved us [by sending “His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” - I John 4:10b], we ought also to love one another”* (I John 4:11). Since our Conference’s 2009 Convention, the Committee on Missions has had the privilege to work with and also, in several instances, share with some in our fellowship, motivated and moved by the marvelous truth that Christ, in eternity (Revelation 13:8b), perfectly worked out our redemption and salvation *“that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar [special] people, zealous of good works”* (Titus 2:14b).

Here’s the interim report on our dear brethren at

— **St. Mark’s, Sauk Village, Illinois:** In January of this year, the Voters’ Assembly addressed the undersigned as the chairman of the Committee on Missions, asking whether the Conference might be able to assist their small congregation in defraying pressing financial needs. Thereafter, by invitation from St. Mark’s, Pastor Mensing, as President of our Conference and, therefore, an *ex officio* [advisory] member of all committees, and yours truly met on January 28 at St. Mark’s with the voters and Pastor Bloedel to evaluate the situation. (Since all the other members of the Committee on Missions are members of our far west congregations, Pastor Mensing was asked to participate in this St. Mark’s meeting.)

After this very brotherly meeting, the Committee on Missions recommended to the Board of Directors that emergency relief aid from the Conference’s General Fund be given immediately to St. Mark’s congregation. This recommendation was unanimously approved and supported by our Board of Directors, motivated by the love of our loving Savior according to the apostle’s exhortation in I John 3, verses 16-18: *“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us and we ought to*

lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good and seeth his brother have need and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

—**The Orthodox Lutheran Church of Ekaterinburg, Russia:** During the end of 2009 and the beginning of 2010 (a period of about two months), Pastor Schurganoff was very sick with the flu. Since he does not have any medical insurance, he had to pay out-of-pocket for whatever treatment he received during this period. In his communications with us, he has to use a friend's computer because his own computer has been "broken down" for many months. However, before his computer became inoperable, he did some of the beginning lessons on the Rosetta Stone "Learning the English Language Course." This is an excellent, very methodical, and highly-recommended course for speaking, reading, and understanding the English language.

Our God has marvelously provided us with a man in one of our congregations who can speak, read, understand, and write Russian and English. His name is Mr. Alex Popoff. He recently was received as a member of St. John's, Lebanon, Oregon. His knowledge of Russian and English has made him a valuable asset in our work with and service to our sister congregation in Russia. He has in recent months translated into Russian the tract, *The Scriptural Principles of Christian Giving*, and the 2008 Pastoral Conference paper by Pastor Bloedel on *The Full Support of the Ministry*. These translations will be proofed and then printed for the continued spiritual instruction and training of our Russian brethren. Mr. Popoff asked whether it would be possible for us to bring Pastor Schurganoff to our June Convention, since he (Mr. Popoff) would gladly serve as a faithful translator for us and thereby overcome the language barrier. Possibilities in this regard are presently being explored.

—**The Seven Nigerian Congregations:** On January 2, Pastor and Mrs. Onesimus Ekele were blessed by their gracious God with a healthy child via c-section. We rejoice with them over this precious gift. "*O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, because His mercy endureth forever*" (Psalm 118:1). (Their first child died last year before they got to the second hospital after the doctor at the first hospital had sent them away because they did not have sufficient funds.)

On January 22, Pastor Fyneyface wrote: "The military boys [the Nigerian army - RJL] will soon leave [Abonnema - RJL] for the barracks. The

militants are happy, but we, the citizens, are not. However, the Naval Officers have requested for an area for their permanent operational base in Abonnema. The chiefs yesterday gave them a good site by the water-side. It seems very soon they will start to install their materials and equipments. This will save us greatly from the madness of the militants.”

Pastor Fyneface continues to be afflicted with pain and discomfort due to a chronic medical condition, and sometimes even his speech is affected. He tried a round of new medication, but that did not help him. We are investigating ways to help him from this end. For example, we are hoping, in the next weeks, to get a doctor from the University of Chicago (who has offered his services at no cost) to open up an e-mail communication with Pastor Fyneface to assess his condition and determine possible ways to eliminate, the Lord-willing, this on-going and vexing problem. We had even thought of bringing him to our country if good and necessary medical care cannot be provided for him in his own country. In the meantime we commit him to the Lord’s grace (II Corinthians 12:9).

In a February 18 e-mail, Pastor Fyneface communicated to us that he and his wife were having some additional urgent medical problems, the cost of which had to be borne out-of-pocket. At the Committee’s request, Pastor Fyneface detailed the cost for us; and, having this information, the Board of Directors unanimously approved the necessary brotherly relief from the Conference’s General Fund. At the same time these funds were sent, Mr. Robert Bloedel, our Conference Treasurer, included a gift of \$550.00 from St. John’s, Lebanon, for the general needs of all the Nigerian brethren.

The words of Galatians 6, verse 10, are such a clear light and lamp for us: *“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”* And why ought we to keep on looking at such opportunities as great, blessed, and wonderful privileges? The answers for the believing children of God are always the same: Because *“the Lord hath done great things for us”* (Psalm 126:3a), because He has *“called [us] out of darkness into His marvelous light; which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God; which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy”* (I Peter 2:9c-10), and because He has justified us *“freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”* (Romans 3:24), so that now, *“being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Romans 5:1).

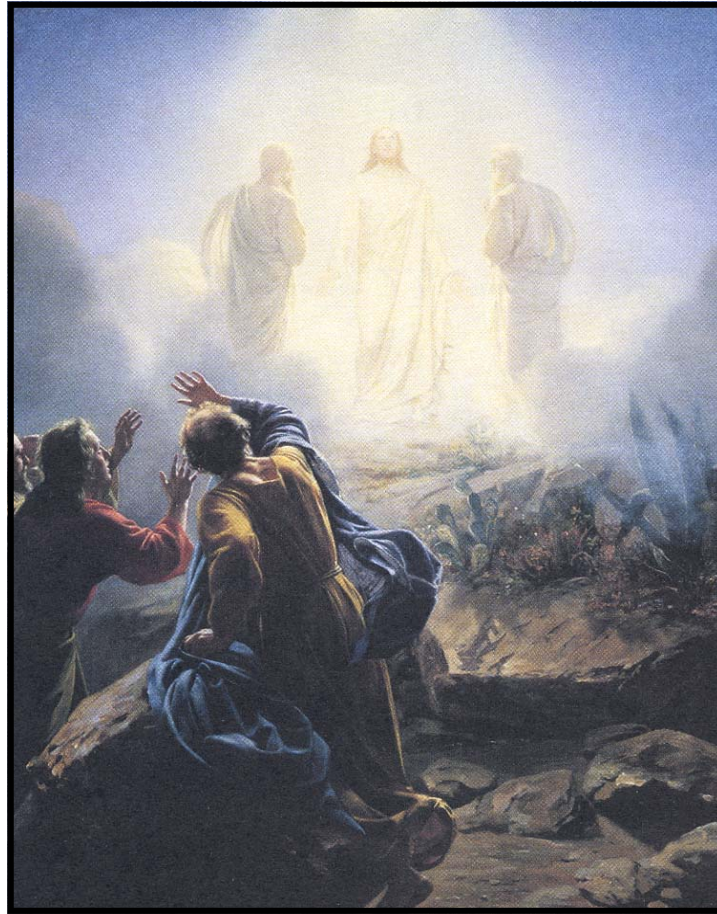
— **Pastor Robert J. Lietz**, Chairman Committee on Missions

*How lovely shines the Morning Star!
The nations see and hail afar
The light in Judah shining.
Thou David's Son of Jacob's race,
My Bridegroom and my King of Grace,
For Thee my heart is pining.
Lowly, Holy,
Great and glorious, Thou victorious
Prince of graces,
Filling all the heavenly places.*

*O highest joy by mortals won,
True Son of God and Mary's Son,
Thou high-born King of ages!
Thou art my heart's most beauteous flower,
And Thy blest Gospel's saving power
My raptured soul engages.
Thou mine, I Thine;
Sing hosanna! Heavenly manna
Tasting, eating,
Whilst Thy love in songs repeating.*

*Oh, joy to know that Thou, my Friend,
Art Lord, Beginning without end,
The First and Last, Eternal!
And Thou at length--O glorious grace!--
Wilt take me to that holy place,
The home of joys supernal.
Amen, Amen!
Come and meet me! Quickly greet me!
With deep yearning,
Lord, I look for Thy returning!*

—TCH 343, 1-2, 7



“[Jesus] was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him. ... [and] behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.’ And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, ‘Arise, and be not afraid.’ And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.”

—Matthew 17:1-8

Churches in Fellowship with the Concordia Lutheran Conference

ORTHODOX LUTHERAN CHURCH OF EKATERINBURG

Ekaterinburg, Russia

The Rev. Roman G. Schurganoff, Pastor

P. O. Box 62

620088 Ekaterinburg, RUSSIA

E-mail: lutheran@r66.ru



CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Olu-Ama (Kula), Nigeria

The Rev. Onengiye C. Wariboko, Pastor

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Abule Egba, Lagos, Nigeria

The Rev. Onesimus Ekele, Pastor

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Idama, Nigeria

The Rev. Robinson Dodo, Pastor

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Idama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

Abalama, Nigeria

The Rev. Elison B. Agborubere, Pastor

Thompson Compound Abalama

Abalama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

ST. CLEMENT'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Elem-Sangama, Nigeria

The Rev. Luckyn Kaladokubo, Pastor

St. Clement Lutheran Church,

Elem-Sangama Arch-Deaconry

Elem-Sangama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

ST. MATTHEW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Port Harcourt, Nigeria

The Rev. Allenson Karibi Asawo, Pastor

76 Abba Street, Mile 1 Diobu

Port Harcourt, Rivers State, NIGERIA

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Kula, Nigeria

The Rev. Onengiye C. Wariboko, Pastor

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Kula, Rivers State, NIGERIA

ST. PAUL'S NYEMONI LUTHERAN CATHEDRAL

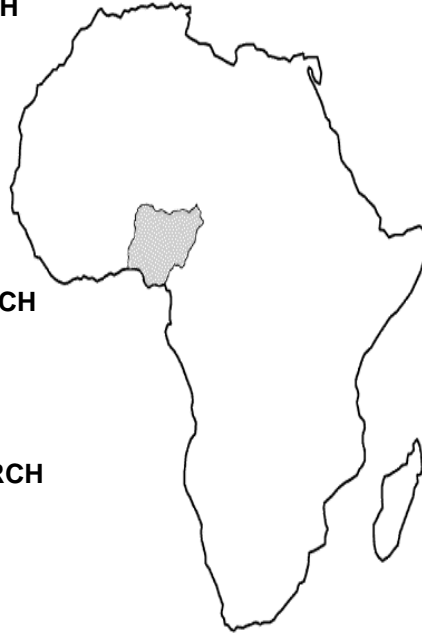
Abonnema, Nigeria

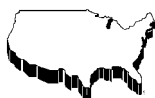
The Rev. Nimi B. Fyeface and

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

P. O. Box 123

Abonnema, Akulga, Rivers State, NIGERIA





Directory of Member Congregations

www.concordialutheranconf.com

GOOD SHEPHERD EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

4050 South Melpomene Way, Tucson, AZ 85730

Telephone (520) 721-7618

Worship Service 9:30 a.m.

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

The Rev. DAVID G. REDLIN, Pastor

4050 South Melpomene Way, Tucson, AZ 85730

(520) 721-7618

E-mail: david.redlin@q.com

PEACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Central Avenue at 171st Place, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913

Telephone: (708) 532-4288

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

Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

The Rev. DAVID T. MENSING, Pastor

17151 South Central Avenue, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913

(708) 532-9035

E-mail: pastormensing@yahoo.com

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sixth and Tangent Streets, Lebanon, OR 97355

Telephone: (541) 258-2941

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

Worship Service 11:00 a.m.

The Rev. M. L. NATTERER, Pastor

483 Tangent Street, Lebanon, OR 97355

(541) 258-2941

E-mail: m.l.natterer@comcast.net

ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

5350 South Fountain Street, Seattle, WA 98178

Telephone: (206) 723-1078

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

Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

The Rev. EDWARD J. WORLEY, Pastor

9658 – 54th Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98118

(206) 723-7418

E-mail: revworley@comcast.net

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

Worship Service 7:00 p.m.

Adult Bible Class 4:30 p.m.

Adult Catechism Class 8:30 p.m.

ST. MARK'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

22012 Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, IL 60411

Telephone: (708) 757-6859

Sunday School & Bible Class 8:45 a.m.

Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

The Rev. PAUL E. BLOEDEL, Pastor

22012 Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, IL 60411

(708) 757-6859

E-mail: revbloedel@gmail.com

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

300 North Ridgeland Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302

Telephone: (708) 386-6773

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

Worship Service 10:15 a.m.

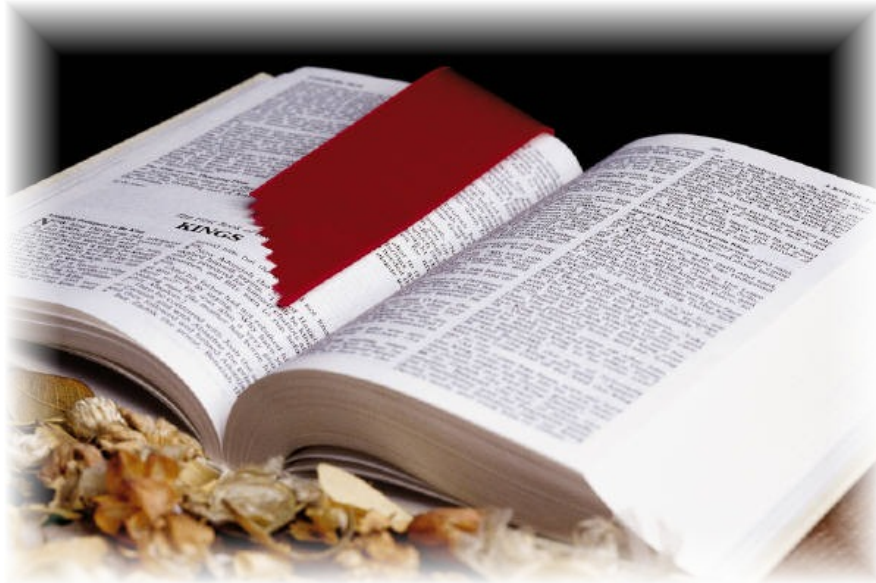
The Rev. ROBERT J. LIETZ, Pastor

233 North Cuyler Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302

(708) 386-4145

E-mail: robertjlietz@yahoo.com

“We have a more sure Word of prophecy”



... what ought we to do with God’s “*more sure Word of prophecy*,” His prophetic, written words, His Holy Scriptures? In II Peter 1:19b, we have the answer: “*Whereunto ye do well that ye take heed.*” We are to keep on and never stop doing what is good and right by continuing to hold on to, believe, give heed to, follow, and adhere to God’s “*more sure Word of prophecy*,” His prophetic, written words, His Holy Scriptures! There is never a time when we are not to hold on to, not to believe, not to give heed to, not to follow, and not to adhere to God’s “*more sure Word of prophecy*,” His prophetic, written words, His Holy Scriptures. The written-down words of II Timothy 3 are so timely: “*Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of.*”

(See p. 21)