

The Bible Church

By Arthur Brunn

Grandfather was talking very emphatically and in a tone of voice in a tone of voice which bespoke unchangeable conviction about the things which are beyond the grave. No, there is no such thing as heaven or hell! "Grandfather," queried little Johnnie, "Grandfather, have you ever been dead?" Well, if grandfather had never been dead, how did he know what was beyond the grave?

"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain," Phil. 1, 21. "Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ," Phil. 1, 23. "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." 2 Tim 1, 12. "I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angles, 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, 38-39. So speaks St. Paul. Very emphatic language, indeed. He speaks with the conviction of one who knows.

How did St. Paul know what grandfather according to the logic of little Johnnie could not know? Jesus had appeared unto St. Paul on the way to Damascus.

Can you know? Jesus did not appear to you, dear reader. But you are lacking nothing, for says St. Peter, speaking of visions and appearances, "We have also a MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place." 2 Pet 1, 19. And the reason why we can depend with utmost reliance upon the more sure word of prophecy is this: "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet. 1, 21. The holy men of God who have written the Word of God were the mouthpieces of God. Therefore, we can depend upon what they tell us as upon the Word of God.

Little Timothy had learnt this sure word of prophecy from his mother and his grandmother and that is what St. Paul said to him, "From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3, 15-17. Timothy can be certain that the way of salvation which he has learnt from Holy Scripture is absolutely correct, for ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD. As a musician breathes, blows into his wind instrument and so produces music at will, so God, as it were, used the holy writers, breathing into them, producing by them, making known through them His Word, teaching the only way that leads to salvation, the way of

Calvary. And lest you might say, that if God did all this and the holy penmen were only instruments in the hand of God, then all writings must be alike, remember that if a musician uses a wood instrument he will produce a far different sound from the one he will produce, if he uses a brass instrument, and yet both of them are only tools in the hands of the musician. The instruments do not lose their individuality. And it is a decided advantage that they do not lose their individuality. So the holy writers, though they were only instruments in the hands of God, did not lose their individuality. A soft and a hard and a medium needle on the Victrola show their individuality in the sound which they produce and yet they are only dead tools used in producing sound. If then dead matter preserves its individuality, surely you will not expect less from living souls such as the holy penmen were! So, then the BIBLE is GOD'S BOOK, every Page of it, every WORD of it.

Because the Bible is God's Book, because in the Bible God speaks to you just as Jesus once spoke to Paul, that is why you have the truth, if only you stand on the Bible. You can be cocksure of your faith, if "it is written" is stamped upon it. In the Bible is God's message to you for your salvation. You must not wait for any further revelation. You do not need it. Because Timothy as a CHILD had learnt Holy Scripture that is why YOU surely can learn it. It is plain enough for you to understand. Indeed, there are difficult texts, there are texts which may be difficult for you, because you lack certain historical, linguistic knowledge, but the Word of God is indeed a lamp unto your feet, if only you will follow the lead. "Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it," says Jesus, Luke 11, 28.

It was upon this Word of God that Luther built his faith. It was to this Word of God that Luther ever appealed to show that he was not introducing any novel and unheard of doctrine into the church. It was this Word of God that Luther quoted in all his controversies to show that he was spreading God's truth among men. Upon his own heart Luther had experienced the divine power of the Bible. After he had learnt to understand the words, "The just shall live by faith", Rom. 1, 17; Gal. 3. 11, Luther found that peace of heart and mind which he had sought so long in vain. Luther was so fully convinced of the truth of Scripture that he was ready to rest his case upon the verdict of the Bible. He was willing to retract everything he had written and be the first to burn his books, if it could be proved by Holy Writ that what he had written was wrong. Because Luther was convinced that God's Word is the divine truth, he translated it into the language of the common man. So that every Christian might be able to judge in the matter and convince himself that Luther was not introducing novel doctrines. Luther told those who would not abide by Scripture that they had a different spirit, a spirit so foreign to Luther.

And so it ever has been the stamp of the true followers of Luther to abide by Scripture, to believe what the Bible teaches, to swear by what is written. True Lutheranism to this day stands solidly upon the Bible. The Bible, nothing but the Bible, and everything in the Bible, is its slogan. Any other attitude towards the Bible is foreign to the spirit of Luther.

That is why the Lutheran Church is the Bible Church. Every Church ought indeed stand solidly upon the Bible. That is what the Master demands of His disciples. "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," Jesus says, John 8, 31-32. That is why our Lord so solemnly warns against false prophets who do not continue IN HIS WORD. That is why he commands His disciples to go out into all the world, teaching men to observe ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER HE HAS COMMANDED THEM. Matt. 28, 20. That Church then is doing the Master's bidding, which stands solidly upon the Bible and upon nothing but the Bible.

Because the Lutheran Church is the bible Church it has a message which YOU CANNOT IGNORE. The Lutheran church is not foisting upon you Luther, nor the opinion of any other man, but it is preaching unto you the Word of the Eternal God, showing you the only way that leads unto salvation, the way of which Jesus says, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." John 14, 6.

Because the Lutheran Church is the BIBLE CHURCH, Lutherans are so sure of their ground. They know that they have the truth, because they have the Bible on their side. They know that everybody who does not agree with this truth as they have leant it from the Bible, must of necessity be wrong, for Jesus says, that if we continue in HIS WORD, we shall know THE TRUTH. Grandfather may not know what he is talking about, but PAUL does, and TIMOTHY does, and LUTHER does, and EVERY LUTHERAN does, if he deserves the name, and YOU OUGHT TO.

What a pity that so many know not what they believe and know not what they ought to believe, when they might hear the truth of God as it is taught in the Bible preached from so many Lutheran pulpits every Lord's Day!

The LUTHERAN CHURCH is indeed the BIBLE CHURCH because it TEACHES the BIBLE DOCTRINE.