

THIRTY-FOURTH EVENING LECTURE.

(September 11, 1885.)

Nowadays any one who insists that pure doctrine is a very important matter is at once suspected of not having the right Christian spirit. The very term “pure doctrine” has been proscribed and outlawed. Even such modern theologians as wish to be numbered with the confessionalists, as a rule, speak of pure doctrine only in derisive terms, treating it as the shibboleth of dead-letter theology. If any one goes to the extreme, as it is held to be, of even fighting for the pure doctrine and opposing every false doctrine, he is set down as a heartless and unloving fanatic. What may be the reason? Unquestionably this, that modern theologians know full well that they have not that doctrine which in all ages has been called, and verily is, the pure doctrine. Furthermore, they even think that pure doctrine does not exist (is a *non-ens*), except in a dream-world, in the realm of ideals, in the Republic of Plato.

The time in which we live is that to which the apostle refers when he says of errorists that they are “ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” 2 Tim. 3, 7. The spirit of our time is that of Pilate, to whom the Lord had testified that He was a King of Truth in a kingdom of

truth, and who sneeringly replied, “What is truth?” John 18, 38. This unhappy man was most likely thinking in his heart that, since the greatest minds for thousands of years had vainly tried to find the answer to the question, What is truth? this poor beggar, this contemptible Nazarene, Christ, made Himself simply ridiculous with His claim that He was the King of Truth and would establish a kingdom of incontrovertible and eternal truth.

Contempt of the pure doctrine is contempt of the truth; for the pure doctrine is simply nothing else, absolutely nothing else, than the pure Word of God. It is not, as some think, the doctrine adapted to the systems of dogmaticians that has been accepted by the Church. Accordingly, contempt of the pure doctrine is proof that we are living in an unspeakably lamentable era. For listen in what terms the Scriptures themselves speak of God’s Word and the pure doctrine. In the prophecies of Jeremiah we read, chap. 23, 28 “The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath My Word, let him speak My Word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord.” David addresses God Himself in these words of Ps. 94, 20: “Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with Thee, which frameth mischief by a law?” By the term “law” he refers, in general, to the Word of God. What says our dear Lord Christ Himself regarding this matter? In John 8, 31–32 He says: “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.” Over against this, German theologians are not ashamed to say: “Bah! We are seeking after truth, but only a conceited, self-satisfied person will claim to have achieved it.” Such talk shows to what depths we have sunk. Does not the Lord say distinctly: “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free?” Jude, the faithful apostle, writes in his epistle, v. 3 “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you that ye should *earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*” The apostle is referring, not to faith in a person’s heart, but to faith objectively viewed, that is, to the pure doctrine. John, the beloved disciple, the spokesman of love, writes, 2 Ep. 9–11 “Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed; for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds.” The

holy Apostle Paul writes to Titus concerning the qualities of a Christian pastor, chap. 1, 9–11 “Holding fast the faithful Word as he hath been taught that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision, whose mouth must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake.” In his First Epistle to Timothy, chap. 4, 16, he writes: “Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them.” Lastly, he writes to the Galatian congregation, after errorists had found their way into them, in chap. 5, 7–9 “Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” He means to say that a single false teaching vitiates the entire body of the Christian doctrine, even as a little poison dropped into pure water produces a deadly potion.

Let us picture to ourselves as vividly as we can the situation that would have been created in the early Church, when errorists like Arius, Nestorius, and Pelagius arose, if men like Athanasius, Cyril, and Augustine had not earnestly opposed them. As far back as in the fourth and fifth centuries the Church would have lost the primary article of the Christian faith; the foundation would have been removed from beneath it, and it would have had to collapse. That was, indeed, impossible in view of the eternal counsel of God concerning the Church; however, because of that very counsel, God had to raise up instruments such as those teachers were. True, while they lived, they were hated and persecuted as malicious disturbers of Christendom, but for more than a thousand years their names have been beacon-lights, as names of great witnesses to the saving truth, and in eternity they will shine as the brightness of the firmament and as the stars forever and ever. Dan. 12, 3. Let no one, then, be deterred from giving his testimony in behalf of the truth by the charge that he has a false spirit. That charge emanates only from unbelief.

Again, suppose Luther, after learning the truth, had indeed borne testimony for it to his immediate associates, but had not entered into conflict with the Papacy because of the great abominations which it had introduced into the Church, what would have happened? Christianity would have to remain under the soul-tyranny of the Roman Antichrist, and we all should still be subjects of it.

There is no question, then, but that both, yes, both these efforts are necessary: to defend the truth and to oppose every doctrinal error. To qualify you for both tasks is one of the aims of these Friday evening lectures. May God bestow His blessing on the discussion of the subject that is before us tonight! —

At our last meeting we barely began to discuss the important contents of the twenty-first thesis, *viz.*, that Law and Gospel are not properly divided, the one from the other, when it is claimed that by the mere performance of the act of being baptized and going to Communion, salvation can be obtained. This is a most abominable way of confounding Law and Gospel.

The Gospel merely says: “Believe, and thou shalt be saved, while the Law issues the order: “Do this, and thou shalt live.” Now, if the mere act of being baptized and partaking of Holy Communion brings grace to a person, the Gospel manifestly has been turned into a law, because salvation then rests on a person’s works. Moreover, the Law has been turned into a gospel, because salvation is promised a person as a reward for his works.

One would indeed think it to be utterly impossible for a Christian minister to teach that the Sacraments produce salutary effects *ex opere operato*; still, that is what happens again and again. This awful error is taught by the very men who wish to pass for genuinely strict Lutherans, every time they discuss the Sacraments. When they have finished unfolding their doctrine of Baptism, every hearer has received the unmistakable impression that, in order to get to heaven, it is merely necessary to submit to the act of being baptized. When they have finished their presentation of the doctrine of the Lord’s Supper, the people are convinced that, to obtain the forgiveness of sins, all that a person has to do is to mount the altar steps and take Communion, because God has attached His grace to this external action.

A week ago I began to show you that this teaching is diametrically opposed to the doctrine of the Gospel. This is proved by all passages which testify that the Gospel requires nothing but faith and makes faith the one essential. That being the case, no one dare say that this or that work will benefit a person. If the Word that is preached will not benefit a person unless he believes it, neither will being baptized and taking Communion benefit any one without faith. Telling a person that he shall be saved by faith means nothing else than that he shall be saved by grace. Most people express the matter thus: “If you

wish to be saved, you must perform this task and that, but you must not omit to *believe*. That is what God requires of you.” Over against this notion remember the precious text in Rom. 4, 16: “Therefore it [righteousness] is *of faith* that it might be *by grace*.” Any teaching that is set up contrary to the doctrine that man is not saved by his works, his running, or any effort of his own, but by grace alone, is an error that subverts the foundation of the Christian doctrine. “You must believe” means: “You must accept what is offered you.” Our Father in heaven offers men forgiveness of sins, righteousness, life, and salvation. But of what benefit is a present that is not accepted? Accepting a present is not a work by which I earn the present, but it signifies laying hold of what is being offered. When I extend my hand, with a gift in it, to a beggar, I am not certain whether he is going to accept the gift, though I am in full earnest in offering it to him. If he lets my gift fall to the ground, he naturally gets nothing.

Let me offer you a few passages that treat, in particular, of the Sacraments. Mark 16, 16 the Lord says: “*He that BELIEVETH AND IS BAPTIZED shall be saved.*” He does not say: “He that is baptized and believeth,” but the reverse. Faith is the primary necessity; Baptism is something to which faith holds. Moreover, the Lord continues: “*But he that believeth not shall be damned.*” This shows that even if a person could not have Baptism administered to himself, he would be saved, as long as he believed.

Acts 8, 36–37 we read: “*And as they went on their way, they came into a certain water; and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, IF THOU BELIEVEST WITH ALL THINE HEART, THOU MAYEST. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*” The only thing that Philip required was faith, as if he had said to the eunuch: “If you do not believe, being baptized will not benefit you at all.” At our baptism it is not we that are performing a work, but God.

Gal. 3, 26–27 Paul writes: *For we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.* This text shows that Christ is put on in Baptism only if a person believes. The current interpretation is that any one that is baptized has put on Christ; however, that is not what the apostle says, but: “As many of you,” namely, of you who are “the children of God by faith.” Such people,

indeed, put on Christ in Baptism. An unbeliever who receives Baptism does not put on Christ, but keeps on the spotted garment of his sinful flesh.

At the institution of the Holy Supper the Lord says: "Take, eat; this is My body, *which is given for you*. Do this in remembrance of Me. Take and drink ye all of it; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins." The Lord does not merely say: "This is My body," but He adds: "Which is given for you." He does not merely say: "This is My blood," but He adds: "Which is shed for you, for the remission of sins." It is plain that He means to say: "The point of chief importance is that you believe that this body was given *for you* and that this blood was shed for the remission of *your* sins. That is what you must believe if you wish to derive the real blessing from this heavenly feast." By the additional remarks: "Do this in, remembrance of Me," Christ means to say: "Do it in faith." Surely, He does not mean to say: "Think of Me when you partake of My body and blood. Do not forget Me altogether!" Whoever thinks that Christ merely admonished His disciples not to consign Him to oblivion does not know the Savior. The true remembrance of Christ consists in the *believing* reflection of the communicant: "This body was given for *me*; this blood was shed for the remission of *my* sins. That gives me confidence to approach the altar. To this truth I shall cling by faith and esteem my Savior's pledge very highly." For when God adds a visible pledge to His Word, who is there that dares to doubt that His Word is truth and His promise will certainly be fulfilled? Remember this for the good of your own soul and conscience. As often as you go to Communion, have these words shine before your eyes: "Given for you"; "Shed for you for the remission of sins." If you fail to do this; if you imagine that by going to Communion you have once more done your duty and that God will regard your performance, your going to Communion is a damnable act, that will land you in eternal perdition. To go to Communion and eat the body of Christ and drink His blood with such a mind is an impudent action; but it is no impudence to hold fast to the word of His promise.

Rom. 4, 11 we read: *He [Abraham] received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised.* Here we are told that Abraham believed before he was circumcised. Circumcision was intended to be merely a seal to him of the righteousness which he had by faith. It is an act of great kindness on the part of God, knowing how slow we are to believe even after we have become

believers, to add external signs to His Word and to attach His promise to them; for the Sacraments are connected with, and comprehended in, God's Word. The lustrous star that shines from out of the Sacraments is the Word.

Our Church is frequently charged with teaching that Baptism procures for us *ex opere operato* adoption as children of God and the Lord's Supper *ex opere operato* the forgiveness of sins. False teachers did this falsehood into people's ears, giving it out for Lutheran doctrine. If that were our doctrine, we should indeed not feel surprised if all true Christians were to shun us. It would be awful if we were to say first: "Man is not saved by works," and next: "However, by these two paltry works men are to obtain forgiveness of sins." True, many Lutherans determine by the almanac whether it is time for them to go to Communion again, because they imagine that going to Communion is a *work* which a Christian must perform and which he cannot afford to neglect. Thus they approach the altar and eat and drink death and damnation to themselves. What is to urge a person to go to Communion is the promise of grace which God has attached to the visible signs in the Sacrament. If a person approaches the altar with faith in that promise, he will leave the Table of the Lord with a blessing in his heart. It is a pity that many think and say: "I have been brought up to consider it my duty to go to Communion. If I perform this duty, then I am sure of my salvation."

True, the Lutheran Church speaks of the Sacraments in terms of such high esteem that fanatics become disgusted with it. The Lutheran Church holds to the word of the Lord: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." That is the reason why it condemns all false teachers which say that Baptism is merely a ceremony by which a person is received into the Church. According to Lutheran teaching, Baptism "works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe, as the words and promises of God declare." The Lutheran Church maintains that Baptism is the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost"; that the water in Baptism, as Peter says, "saves us"; and that those "who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." As regards the Lord's Supper, the Lutheran Church, resisting all attempts to mislead her into doubt, maintains the truth of the Lord's words when He says: "This is My body, which is given for you"; "This is My blood, which is shed for you." The Lutheran Church regards the

holy Sacraments as the most sacred, gracious, and precious treasure on earth and is firmly convinced that God is not a miserable master of ceremonies, who decrees what rites we are to observe when receiving a person into our communion. Christianity is not a Masonic society. When God commands a sacramental act, He commands something upon which our salvation depends.

However, at no time has the Lutheran Church asserted that men are saved by the mere external use of the Sacraments. That is a teaching against which it has always raised its voice, which it has always combated and condemned.

At this point modern theologians again reveal their papistic attitude, which is a strange thing to do for men who are more inclined to Rationalism. They declare that Baptism *is* regeneration, and from this false statement many form their wrong opinion of what the Lutheran Church teaches. Baptism, according to Lutheran teaching, *is not* regeneration, but *effects* it, *produces* it; it is a *means* of regeneration.

However, in order to make you see quite plainly that the Lutheran Church has nothing to do with the teaching of *ex opere operato* effects of the Sacraments, let me present a few testimonies from its Confessions.

In the *Small Catechism of Luther* we read (Mueller, p. 362; Trigl.Conc., p.551): “How can water do such great things? Answer: It is not the water indeed that does them, but the word of God which is in and with the water, and faith, which trusts such word of God in the water.” When Peter says, 1 Pt. 3, 21 that “the like figure whereunto,” namely, the water in Baptism typified by the water of the Flood, “also now saves us,” he speaks by way of synecdoche. It is to the sacramental act of Holy Baptism that God has attached a great and glorious promise of grace.

Again, we read in the Sixth Chief Part of the *Catechism* (Mueller, p. 365; *Trigl. Conc.*, p. 557): “How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things? Answer: It is not the eating and drinking indeed that does them, but the words which stand here, namely: ‘Given and shed for you for the remission of sins.’ Which words are, besides the bodily eating and drinking, *as the chief thing* in the Sacrament; and he that believes these words has what they say and express, namely, the forgiveness of sins.” Modern theologians, as a rule, interpret the phrase “the chief thing in the Sacrament” to refer to the word of God which is recited in connected with the Sacrament and which they term, in

dogmatic phraseology, *forma sacrae coenae* (that which gives the Lord's Supper its proper form). That is not at all what the Catechism means; it treats, in this place, of the *effect* of the Sacrament and declares that the chief thing, as regards the effect, is this, that "the words stand there 'Given for you,' 'Shed for you.' "

In the *Augsburg Confession*, Art. XIII (Mueller, p. 41, *Trigl. Conc.*, p. 49) we read: "Of the use of the Sacraments they teach that the Sacraments were ordained, not only to be marks of profession among men, but rather to be signs and testimonies of the will of God toward us, instituted *to awaken and confirm faith* in those who use them. *Wherefore we must so use the Sacraments that faith be added to believe the promises which are offered* and set forth through the Sacraments." Our faith is to be awakened and confirmed by the Sacraments. The mere preaching of the Word is to strengthen the Christian's faith. But when he is told that, in addition to the Word, God has instituted a special sacred act to which His promise has been attached, he must feel as if he were before the very gate of heaven. God wants to save us by His free grace. It is folly, therefore, to reason thus: "What? Am I to be saved by Baptism, by offering my head to have water poured on it? Is that to save me?" Indeed not; man is not to do anything to save himself. We are not to wonder that God prescribes for us something of which even man's reason must tell him: "That cannot possibly be the thing by which I am to merit salvation". Fanatics, however, persuaded the people that such is our doctrine and that it is a remnant of papistic teaching that has not been sloughed off by the Lutheran Church. The mere mechanical action of being baptized, if it is not accompanied by faith, will earn for man nothin but perdition. The truth of the matter is this: God is so kind that He not only has His mercy preached to men, but, in addition, tells them to come to the Sacrament, by which He seals to them the promise of grace, which they are only to believe. Likewise, a person who imagines that he obtains forgiveness of sins by the mere act of eating and drinking in the Lord's Supper is under a delusion. The body of Christ does not produce effects in a physical manner, as Modernists claim when they say that it implants in man the seed of immortality. That idea is nothing but a dream of speculative theology, of which not a word is said in Scripture.

Lastly, we have in our Confessions a plain condemnation of the teaching that the Sacraments produce *ex-opere-operato* effects. In the *Apology* of the

Augsburg Confession, Art. XII (Mueller, p. 202 ff.; *Trigl. Conc.*, p. 309 ff.) we read: “If we call Sacraments, rites which have the command of God and to which the promise of grace has been added, it is easy to decide what are properly Sacraments. For rites instituted by men will not in this way be Sacraments properly so called. For it does not belong to human authority to promise grace. Therefore signs instituted without God’s command are not sure signs of grace, even though perhaps they instruct the rude children, or the uncultivated or admonish as to something, like a painted cross. Therefore Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and Absolution, which is the Sacrament of Repentance, are truly Sacraments. For these rites have God’s command and the promise of grace, which is peculiar to the New Testament. For when we are baptized, when we eat the Lord’s body, when we are absolved, our hearts must be firmly assured that God truly forgives us for Christ’s sake. And God, at the same time, by the Word and the rite, moves hearts to believe and conceive faith, just as Paul says, in Rom. 10, 17: ‘Faith cometh by hearing.’ But just as the Word enters the ear to strike our heart, so the rite itself strikes the eye in order to move the heart. The effect of the Word and the rite is the same, as it has been well said by Augustine that a Sacrament is. a visible word, because the rite is received by the eyes, and is, as it were, a picture of the Word, signifying the same thing as the Word. Therefore the effect of both is the same.”

Anything offered us under the name of a Sacrament, to which, however, a promise of grace has not been added, is not accepted by us as a Sacrament. Moreover, just as Scripture does not teach (as the simplest Christian knows) that the mere outward act of hearing the Word saves any one, just as little does it teach that the Sacraments save thus. The mere symbol, placed before men’s eyes, does not produce the salutary effect, but indicates what the Word proclaims. We baptize with water, which signifies that Baptism effects cleansing from sin, sanctification, regeneration, and renewal. What I am being told by means of preaching I behold in the external element of Baptism. The Word and the Sacrament produce the same effect in the heart.

Modernists picture the situation somewhat like this: For various ills God has ordained various remedies. They regard the Word, indeed, as a remedy, but they imagine that Baptism must be for a different purpose, namely, for the purpose of regenerating us. Again, the Lord’s Supper must be for still another

purpose, namely, of uniting us with the body of Christ. Now, all these are human imaginings, about which Scripture does not say a word. The Word produces faith, brings us forgiveness of sins, and gives us the grace of God and salvation. Baptism does the same; so does the Lord's Supper. Now, a seal is of no benefit by itself. If I were to give you ten sheets with my seal affixed to them, you could not do business with them. When the apostle calls circumcision a seal, it indicates that all Sacraments are seals. God puts His Word in writing, on paper, and by means of the Sacrament seals what is contained in His gracious promises. For this reason the Lord does not merely command us to baptize, but He says: "He that *believeth* and is baptized shall be saved." In the pulpit the Word is audible, in the Sacraments it is visible.

Further on the *Apology* says: "It is still more needful to understand *how the Sacraments are to be used*. Here we *condemn* the whole crowd of scholastic doctors, who teach that the Sacraments confer grace *ex opere operato*, without a good disposition on the part of the one using them, provided we do not place a hindrance in the way. This is absolutely a Jewish opinion, to hold that we are justified by a ceremony, without a good disposition of the heart, *i.e.*, without faith. And yet this impious and pernicious opinion is taught with great authority throughout the entire realm of the Pope. Paul contradicts this and denies, Rom. 4, 9, that Abraham was justified by circumcision, but asserts that circumcision was a sign presented for exercising faith. Thus we teach that *in the use of the Sacraments faith ought to be added*, which should believe these promises and receive the promised things there offered in the Sacrament. And the reason is plain and thoroughly grounded. [This is a certain and true use of the holy Sacrament, on which Christian hearts and consciences may risk their confidence.] The promise is useless unless it is received by faith. But the Sacraments are the signs and seals of the promises. Therefore, in the use of the Sacraments faith ought to be added, so that, if any one use the Lord's Supper, he use it thus. Because this is a Sacrament of the New Testament, as Christ clearly says, he ought for this very reason be confident that what is promised in the New Testament, namely, the free remission of sins, is offered him. And let him receive this by faith; let him comfort his alarmed conscience and know that these testimonies are not fallacious, but as sure as though, and still surer than if, God by a new miracle would declare from heaven that it was His will to grant forgiveness. But of what advantage would these miracles and promises be to an unbeliever? And here we speak of *special faith*, which believes the

present promise, not only that which in general believes that God exists, but which believes that the remission of sins is offered. This use of the Sacrament consoles godly and alarmed minds.

“Moreover, no one can express in words what abuses in the Church *this fanatical opinion concerning the opus operatum, without a good disposition on the part of the one using the Sacraments*, has produced. Hence the infinite profanation of the Masses; but of this we shall speak below. Neither can a single letter be produced from the old writers which in this matter favors the Scholastics. Yea, Augustine says the contrary, that faith in the Sacrament, and not the Sacrament, justifies.”

When the attention of would be strict Lutherans is called to the foregoing statement, they regard it as Calvinistic. They claim that Baptism is regeneration and that the Lord’s Supper produces mysterious, but altogether gracious effects in us. Of course, those who know this declaration of the Apology do not say, but they think, that it is Calvinistic. *Kahnis* knew the doctrine of the Lutheran Church well enough. When I was on a visit to Germany, he made me a present of his book *The Doctrine of the Lord’s Supper*. In this book he says: “Upon the whole, the concept of a Sacrament has not been fully developed in the Lutheran Church. The fundamental concepts of the Word and faith have been attached to it in too immediate a fashion.” He means to say that there is, indeed, a certain connection between the Word and faith, on the one hand, and the Sacraments, on the other. But it is wrong for the Lutheran Church to connect them so closely, because the Sacraments operate immediately, without the Word and without faith. “To the Apology a Sacrament is merely a qualified Word, *‘Verbum visibile, quasi pictura Verbi seu sigillum’* [a visible Word, or, as it were, a picture of the Word, or a seat], which, like the Word, has the power to forgive sins only by faith. In the presence of the Word the *specific blessing of salvation* of each Sacrament is obscured, just as its *specific saving effect* is obscured by faith.” Understand, *Kahnis*, the Lutheran, is rebuking our dear Lutheran Church because it really regards Sacraments as identical with the Word, the only difference being that the Sacraments have a visible element added to them. He declares the faith of the Lutheran Church worthless, *viz.*, that on the part of God nothing but the Word and on the part of man nothing but faith is necessary for salvation. He insists on a

difference between the Word and each Sacrament as regards specific salvational blessings and specific salvational operations. “A baptized person is regenerated and remains so till he dies. ... The end and aim of the Lord’s Supper can be gathered only from its essence. In the Lord’s Supper we partake of the glorified body of Christ and therein and therewith of the Spirit and the life of Christ.”

This false doctrine of the Modernists is held also by Delitzsch, who formerly occupied an excellent position as regards Lutheran teaching. In his treatise *Four Books Concerning the Church* (1847) he writes on page 33: “Any one who is baptized and partakes of the Lord’s Supper is a member of the body of Christ. The body of Christ is the sum total of those who ‘by one Spirit are all baptized into one body ... and have been made all to drink into one Spirit,’ 1 Cor. 12, 13. Whether it is Hengstenberg” [who passed for, and until shortly before his death really was, the prototype of orthodox teachers] “or Wisticenus” [a freethinker], “by virtue of the act of God, which faith does not produce nor unbelief can frustrate, they are both members of one and the same body. Whether a person is an Evangelical or a Romanist, a Socinian or a Unitarian, by virtue of their baptism they are all one in Christ.” Delitzsch, then, numbers even Unitarians with the visible Christian Church. — On page 42 he says, speaking of unbelieving and wicked persons who had been baptized in infancy: “They may be parts, even organs, of the visible Church, but they are no members of the Church, which is the body of Christ.” Delitzsch, here quoting correctly, but in disagreement with the teaching of the Lutheran Church, proceeds: “We cannot admit that this distinction is justified. A person once baptized is unalterably a member of Christ’s body.” If the body of Christ contains the ungodly as dead members through whom His life-blood does not circulate, then the body of Christ is partially a corpse. When a person has fallen from his faith and baptismal grace, we do not tell him to construct a new ship for himself in which to continue his voyage to heaven, but to return to his faith in Baptism, which is a covenant that remains unshaken, because God does not cancel the word of promise which He has pledged to the baptized. The renegade, who has come to the knowledge of his fall and is penitent has nothing else to do than to cling to God’s promise given him at his baptism, and to rest assured that, since by Baptism he was made a child of God and has now been quickened out of mortal sins, he can rest assured that he will not perish.