

"What Lutheran Sunday-School Teachers Should Know"
by Dr. P.E. Kretzmann 1935

Insert #12

Chapter II.

About the Bible.

It seems quite self-evident that a Lutheran Sunday-school teacher should be at home in the Bible. This does not merely include a general knowledge of the chief facts of salvation, such as the ordinary confirmed member of our Church must possess. The person who does teaching of any kind in a Lutheran church must have a wider background of information than he who is being taught. And the most wonderful book in the world, no matter from which angle one studies the question, is the Bible.

History.

A Christian teacher ought to be familiar with the chief facts concerning the history of the Bible as a book. The name Bible, from the Greek word biblion in the singular or biblia in the plural, is used for the collection of sixty-six books, thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New, written by more than forty authors and otherwise designated as Holy Writ, Scripture, or Scriptures. These books were written within the space of almost sixteen hundred years, beginning with Moses, about 1500 B.C., till the last years of John the Apostle, about 100 A.D. During this long period of time there were several gaps, during which no inspired books were produced, namely, between about 400 B.C. and 50 A.D., and between 70 A.D. and 90 A.D. The language in which the Bible was written in the Old Testament was Hebrew, with the Book of Daniel and certain parts of Ezra in the Aramaic. The New Testament was written in Greek, not in the earlier classical Greek nor in a Greek especially invented for that purpose, but in the language of the common people of the day, which was also influenced to some extent by the Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint. [pages 17-18]

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Insert #13

Origins

As to the origin of the Bible, every true Christian believes in its inspiration by God, the New Testament being a witness for the Old, 2 Tim. 3,14-17, and the inspiration of the New Testament being made certain on account of the extraordinary gift of the Holy Spirit in the apostles and their assistants, John 14,26; 2 Pet. 1,20; 1 Cor. 2,13. Verbal inspiration means that every word of the Bible was inspired by God; *plenary* inspiration means that the entire Bible, every word and every letter, was inspired by God. The content of the Bible therefore is the Word of God, both Law and Gospel being contained in both Testaments, but the great mystery of salvation being revealed more completely in the New Testament. The unity of the Bible is brought about by the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind, is the Sum and Substance of Scripture revelation. The books as written by the men of God were collected in the course of the centuries, as many passages throughout the Bible indicate. The Old Testament canon was completed about the end of the fifth century before Christ, or about 425; the canon of the New Testament was established between the end of the first and the fourth centuries. Most of the books of the Bible were written in the Holy Land or in the neighboring countries, although a few books of the New Testament were written in Europe, either in Rome or in some cities of Greece. [pages 18-19]

Translations and Versions

One of the most remarkable things about the Bible is the manner in which God preserved His Word by means of various *translations*, or *versions*. Of the ancient versions we are interested particularly in the Gothic translation of Ulfilas, which was made about the end of the fourth century and is the first Germanic translation of the Bible. The Vulgate, made by the old Church Father Jerome at the request of Pope Damasus, has remained the standard, or authentic, version of the Roman Catholic Church to this day, although it has been revised repeatedly, a commission being at work on it at the present time. The German translation of the Bible which has proved the most valuable is that of Luther, made between 1521 and 1534, his first translation of the New Testament being accomplished in about three months. The revision of Luther's Bible published in 1883 was not an improvement upon Luther's own text. [pages 19-20]

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Insert #14

The English Bible

The English Bible has a most interesting history. Sections of the Bible had appeared for centuries after the conversion of heathen England, with names like Caedmon and the Venerable Bede being most noteworthy at this time. We are also in possession of interlinear psalters, of poetical paraphrases, and of entire gospels in Anglo-Saxon. Wyclif, a forerunner of the Reformation, together with his friend Hereford, made a complete translation of the Bible from the Latin. This was before the invention of the printing-press. The first man in England to undertake a translation of the Bible from the original was Tyndale, whose English New Testament appeared in 1525. The complete Bible in English, largely based upon the work of Tyndale, appeared in 1535, the chief translator being Coverdale. Still later we have the Great Bible, then the Geneva Bible, and the Bishops' Bible. The Authorized Version of the Bible appeared in 1611. It is the great classic of the English language, produced during the golden age of English letters. The Revised Version of England and the Standard American Version are concessions, in a measure, to a more liberal attitude and must therefore be used with great care. [pages 20-21]

Reading the Bible

The longer a Sunday-school teacher studies his Bible, the better he will become acquainted with the various sections of the Bible, also in their *chronological sequence*. One good plan is to read the Bible through once a year, by reading three chapters every week-day and five chapters every Sunday. (Ps. 119 is divided into eight sections.) If one carefully marks important passages and notes the sequence of events, he will soon have a good working knowledge of the history of Bible times and of the Lord's message pertaining to the individual events and the redemption of mankind. [page 21]

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Insert #15

Bible Doctrines (part 1)

A Christian teacher must be very sure of the fundamental doctrines and facts of Scripture. Among these we many name the following as being essential for the background of teaching:

- Inspiration.

1) What is meant by inspiration (not a dead, mechanical copying on the part of the inspired writers, but a writing by God's breathing in His Word into the authors of the various books as living instruments), 2 Tim. 3,15-17; 2 Pet. 1,21. 2) Every word and every letter inspired, 1 Cor. 2,13. 3) The divine truth of the Old Testament (fulfilment {sic} of prophecy, New Testament references). 4) The divine truth of the New Testament (Christ's guarantee, John 14 and 15; the testimony of the writers themselves).

- The Trinity.

1) The unity of God, Deut. 6,4. 2) The trinity of God in the Old Testament, Num. 6,24-26; Is. 61,1. 3) The of God in the New Testament, Matt. 28,19; 2 Cor. 13,14. 4) The Son of equal power and authority with the Father, John 1, 1-3; 5,23. 5) The Holy Spirit God together with Father and Son, Acts 5,3.4.

-- Creation.

1) The earth and all it contains created by God in six days, Gen. 1,1; Ps. 33,6; Ex. 20,11; Rev. 4,11. 2) This fact not a matter of human understanding, but an article of faith, Heb. 11,3. 3) The providence of God in the life and affairs of all men, Heb. 1,3; Acts 17,25. 4) Man not a product of evolution, but of God's creative power, Gen. 1,27; 2,7.

- The Atonement.

1) God made man pure and holy in the beginning, Gen. 1,31. 2) Man fell into sin by yielding to the temptation of Satan, Gen. 3; Rom. 5,12. 3) All men are under condemnation by nature, Rom. 5,14-16; Eph. 2,1-3. 4) Christ is the Substitute for all men and their Mediator, having atoned for the sins of all men, 1 Tim. 2, 5,6; Is. 53, 4-7; 2 Cor. 5,21. 5) Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, and His blood cleanses us from all sin, Gal. 4, 4,5; 1 John 1,7.

- Conversion.

1) Man can do nothing to work repentance and faith in his heart, Eph. 2,3; Jer. 31,18. 2) Regeneration is the work of God's mercy alone, 2 Tim. 1,9; Titus 3,4-6. 3) Conversion is a birth unto spiritual life, John 3,3-6; 1 Pet. 1,23; Col. 2,13. 4) Conversion bestows the sonship of God, John 1,12; Gal. 4,5.6.

- Justification.

1) Justification is a forensic act by which God imputes the righteousness of Christ to man, Rom. 3,22. 2) It is given by faith and is in no way the reward of works or of man's attitude, Acts 13,38.39; Eph. 2,8,9; Gal. 2,16. 3) It is given entirely on the basis of Christ's atoning work, Rom. 3,25; 5,18.19. 4) It changes the relation of God to all such as believe in Jesus Christ: He is their loving Father, and they are His beloved children, 2 Cor. 5,19; Gal. 4,5; Rom. 5,1

- The Sacraments.

1) The Sacrament of Holy Baptism consists of the application of water in the name of the Triune God to a person desiring it, the believer through the word of God which is in and with the water being regenerated and receiving the full blessings of Christ's salvation, Matt. 28,19; Eph. 5,26; 1 Pet. 3,21. 2) The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is the conveyance of the benefits of Christ's redemption to the believer, the true body and blood of Jesus being present in, with, and under the bread and wine, the unbeliever receiving Christ's body and blood unto his damnation, 1 Cor. 10,16; 11,23-26.29. [pages 28-30]



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Insert #16

Bible Doctrines (part 2)

With reference to the distinctive doctrines of the Lutheran Church, as they differ from those of the Catholic Church and of the various Reformed churches, the following information ought to be remembered by every teacher.

-- History of the Roman Catholic Church:

The Church of the early centuries and the present Roman Catholic Church not identical, only a historical connection and in outward form; the refusal of the church-leaders to accept the Reformation (1517-30); Rome a sect since Augsburg and especially since the Council of Trent with its canons and decrees (1545-63); acceptance of the Latin translation of the Bible (Vulgate) as authentic since 1592; the fixing of Roman Catholic worship (1570-1634); the order of Jesuits (since 1540). -- Chief Errors: Accepts Vulgate as authentic text, declares apocrypha and tradition to be sources of doctrine; states that Christ's redemption was for hereditary sins only; makes faith an assent to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, not the reliance upon Christ's atonement; declares that justification is not by faith alone, but also by deeds of man; addresses prayers to Mary and other saints; believes in transubstantiation in the Lord's Supper; makes Pope the head of the visible Church by divine right.

-- General History of the Reformed Denominations:

Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) and Oecolampadius and the Swiss reformation; Zwingli's successor, Bullinger (author of Swiss Confession); colloquy of Zwingli with Luther and his coworkers at Marburg (1529); John Calvin of Geneva in general agreement with views of Zwingli; the Consensus of Geneva (1551); Reformed movement in Germany and the Heidelberg Catechism; spread of movement in Scotland (John Knox of Edinburgh), later in the Netherlands (Arminianism); the canons of the Synod of Dordrecht (1618-19); Dutch Reformed Church in America since beginning of seventeenth century, German Reformed Church since 1720. Chief Reformed Bodies: Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Congregationalists, Disciples of Christ. -- False Doctrines Held Quite Generally: Prevalent disregard of verbal inspiration of the Bible; declare that Bible must be interpreted according to reason; Liberalism in wide circles; Fundamentalism not making much headway; hold that the Sacraments are mere symbols, not means of grace; usually state that Christ's presence is local since His ascension; Baptists and related sects teach that immersion is the only correct mode of baptism; the Presbyterians and related sects hold that Christ died for the elect only; social Christianity is making strong headway in practically all Reformed circles; Christ is represented quite generally as Teacher and Leader rather than as Redeemer or Savior. [pages 30-32]

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Insert #17

Bible Geography

Since it is almost impossible to do any teaching of Bible history without maps, it follows that the Christian teacher must have some background of training in Bible geography. We know very little about the world before the Flood, but for the early history of Israel the following points of geographical information ought to be noted:

The world after the Flood; Palestine and Syria about the time of Abraham; Chaldea and Mesopotamia and the journeys of the patriarchs; Egypt at the time of the Exodus; the wilderness journey of Israel, with some attention to the principal stopping-places; the Holy Land at the time of the conquest, with the approximate location of the various heathen tribes and nations. Beginning with the judges and ending with the Exile, the following geographical points should be remembered: the division of Canaan among the twelve tribes; the location of the remaining heathen nations; the extent of the Holy Land at the time of the Judges; the kingdom of Saul; the kingdom under David and Solomon; the division of the country into the kingdoms of Israel and Judah; the city of Jerusalem and its vicinity; the nations which bounded the Holy Land; later changes in the map of Canaan. It will also be very valuable for the teacher to be acquainted with the location and the extent of the ancient empires: the empire of Amraphel, or Hammurabi; the empire of Assyria; the Medo-Persian Empire; the Babylonian Empire, the restoration of Israel; the division of Alexander's empire; the Roman Empire between 63 B.C. and 325 A.D.

In New Testament geography the following points ought to be kept in mind: the kingdom of Herod the Great with all its divisions; Jerusalem at the time of Christ; Palestine at the time of Christ's ministry; changes in the geography of Palestine between 44 and 70 A.D.; the journeys of Jesus; the various journeys of Paul, especially the three great missionary journeys; probable later journeys of Paul; provinces named in the Acts and in the New Testament epistles; the seven churches of Asia Minor; the chief congregations in Europe. [pages 32-33]

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Insert #18

Lutheran Confessions and Usages

With regard to the *confessions and usages* of the Lutheran Church the Christian teacher ought to be informed at least on the following subjects:

The Confessions:

The Augsburg Confession (history: Diet proclaimed by Charles V in January, 1530, the Torgau Articles discussed in March, Luther's influence at Augsburg in spite of his absence, public reading of confession on June 25 (brief summary of contents);

the catechisms of Luther (meaning of word, Luther's work begun between 1518 and 1525, his visitations of schools, table- or chart-form published first, Large Catechism to appear in book form, 1529, praise of Small Catechism by prominent educators of last four centuries);

the other Lutheran Confessions (the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Formula of Concord).

-- The *Usages* of the Lutheran Church:

rising during reading of Scripture-lessons, folding hands, kneeling, the sign of the cross, the use of the gown, the use of bells, the symbolism of the Lutheran cultus, the symbolism of our church-buildings. [pages 33-34]

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