

48. The Bible Must Be the Only Rule and Guide of Faith and Life.

Seek ye out of the Book of the Lord and read; no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate; for My mouth, it hath commanded, and His Spirit, it hath gathered them. *Is. 34, 16.*

Man is born in spiritual blindness, knowing not the way of salvation. To find the way everlasting, he must have a guide to lead him. This guide must be an unerring guide in whom he can put full confidence. The word of Scripture is the one and only true guide in the way of salvation.

Continuing in the Word, we cannot err in the way. Scripture cannot lead us a wrong way, for it is God's own Word. Being God's Word, the Bible is an unerring guide, the infallible light for our life. Nothing else occupies a secondary place next to the Bible, and by nothing else is the Bible to be interpreted. All appeals in matters of Christian doctrine must be made to the Bible, and the Bible, and it alone, decides such matters. Says the Church of Rome: "You must also accept the unwritten traditions of the Church," that is, the Roman Church. Others say: "Reason is our guide, science is our light." We answer: Traditions are sayings of the early Fathers; but these Fathers have often erred and at times contradict the Scriptures. Traditions, it is manifest, are a human element and therefore not a trustworthy guide in matters spiritual. And what are reason and science? Only the maid; Scripture is the mistress.

Woe unto the Church that is built on the quicksand of human opinions! Says Daniel Webster: "Without the Bible man would be in the midst of a sandy desert, surrounded on all sides by a dark, impenetrable horizon." Only then are we true sons and daughters of the Lutheran Church, the Church of the Reformation, when the Bible, and it alone, is the guide and rule of our faith. What rendered our fathers so strong and invincible as to enable them to stand their ground, although the world and a faint-hearted, unionistic Church continually predicted that they would have a speedy fall? It was because they placed themselves unconditionally upon the Word of God.

Prayer.

O Lord, we are prone to take things lightly; each one walks his own way, as it seems right to him. Stablish our hearts, so that we may walk upon no other path than the one that leads to Thee and to Thine imperishable glory. This path, however, is Thy Word, our only rule and guide. Let this Word strengthen us, so that we may place ourselves unconditionally upon it. O Lord, evil men and seducers wax worse and worse. The spiritual outlook is dark and gloomy. The night cometh when no man can work. Oh, lead us by the light of Thy Word on the way to heaven, to Thy glory, where we shall be with Thee forever. Amen.

A trusty weapon is Thy Word,
Thy Church's buckler, shield, and sword;
Lord, let us by this Word abide
That we may seek no other guide.

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