

237. The Holy Sacraments.

Ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. *1 Pet. 2, 3.*

God, knowing the hardness and fickleness of man's heart knowing better than we ourselves how prone it is to doubt and how it resists the gracious working of the Holy Spirit, has established and confirmed His covenant of grace in manifold ways: by promise, by pledge, by oath, by seal, and in other ways. The Word of His revelation is full of promises assuring us that He will be our loving Father and that we shall be His beloved children. Moreover, God gives us the earnest of the Spirit as a pledge of the promised inheritance; for the joy of the Spirit which the believers experience is a foretaste of that joy which is in store for the people of God in heaven. To His promises and pledges God has added an oath. He says, Is. 54, 9. 10: "As I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I will not be wroth with thee nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Now, when God adds an oath to something which He has promised His people, it is established.

As seals of His covenant, God has given the holy Sacraments. Of Abraham it is said: "He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised." Now, if the Sacraments of the Old Testament were seals of the covenant of promise, much more so are those of the New Testament. And, indeed, they are more than seals, as the Lord's Supper is also called a "testament," conveying the bequest of the Testator. All these things are connected like links of a chain to make assurance doubly and trebly sure. In this way God labors to kindle, to nourish, and to strengthen faith in our hearts that we should be settled, immovable, and always abounding in joy and hope.

The first Christians always regarded the Sacraments as priceless. And though they shamefully have been corrupted and neglected by the false churches, our dear Lutheran Church has ever held them in highest esteem.

Prayer.

O Thou holy and merciful God, we humbly acknowledge and confess that by nature, in our natural-born sinful condition, we are all children of wrath; but we heartily thank Thee that of Thy mercy Thou hast given us in Christ Jesus the adoption of sons, washed us with the blood of Christ, sanctified us, and hast imparted to us, and confirmed, all Thy grace by Holy Baptism and hast continually strengthened our faith in Holy Communion. We pray Thee, keep us steadfast therein. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, with us abide
For round us falls the eventide;
Nor let Thy Word, that heavenly light,
For us be ever veiled in night.

In these last days of sore distress
Grant us, dear Lord, true steadfastness
That pure we keep, till life is spent,
Thy holy Word and Sacrament.

This devotion is one of 318 taken from *Daily Bread* by F. E. Pasche, published by CPH in 1926, but now in the public domain. They have been copied and reformatted by Rev. Bruce G. Ley and made available for distribution by pastors and missionaries. You may contact Rev. Ley at: pastorley@leychalet.com.

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