

The Inspiration and Canon of the Scriptures

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A friend of mine was the preacher for a Reformation Service at St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church in Rapid City, South Dakota. He entered the pulpit carrying two Bibles. One Bible he placed on the pulpit. The other he opened up and read a verse. After reading the verse, he said, "I don't agree with that verse." He then proceeded to rip out that page from the Bible, crumpled up the page and threw it over his shoulder.

He read another verse, after which he said, "That doesn't make sense. I don't need that verse." He ripped out the page, crumpled it up and threw it over his shoulder.

He read another verse, after which he said, "That can't be true. Who could believe that?" He ripped out the page, crumpled it up and threw it over his shoulder.

He repeated this two or three more times, until he said, "I don't really have to believe in the Bible, or follow what it says. I can preach what I want and teach what I want." He then ripped up the remainder of the Bible and threw the pieces over his shoulder.

After that demonstration, which by the way, grabbed our attention, he proceeded to proclaim the doctrine of verbal inspiration of Holy Scripture. He declared the necessity of standing firm on all of God's Word. He encouraged us not to follow the false teachers of our world, who reject verbal inspiration and preach only what "itching ears" want to hear. It was a very powerful, as well as, memorable sermon.

The verbal inspiration of the Bible by the Holy Spirit and the canonicity of the Bible have been challenged countless times since the time John wrote the final "amen" in Revelation. Many learned books and essays have been written concerning the verbal inspiration and canon of the Bible. Even though a lengthy paper could be written concerning inspiration and the canon of the Bible, I will try to briefly summarize each.

From this time many of His disciples turned back and no longer followed Him. "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and now that You are the Holy One of God (John 6:66-69).

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have Life in His name (John 20:31).

Jesus is the only One Who has the words of eternal life. There is no other person who has the words of salvation. We have life through faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. No one else can and does give us eternal life. Our salvation depends on Jesus. By nature we are spiritually blind and doomed to an eternity of being separated from God's love in hell. We can't save ourselves. But God, in His grace, has given us His Son to be our Savior. We know the good news of our salvation only because God, in His grace, revealed it to us in His Holy Word. Our hope of salvation rests completely on God's grace, love and promises to us in the Bible. The Holy Scriptures were "written that (we) may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing (we) may have life in His name." We wouldn't know about Jesus if God had not given us His Word. Our hope of eternal life is based on the Bible. If our forgiveness of sins and our eternal life in heaven is based on the Bible, then the Bible better not be man-made, because anything man-made is not reliable and holy. The Bible better be the Word of God, or our souls would be doomed for all eternity.

The Inspiration of Holy Scripture

"All Scripture is God-breathed" (II Timothy 3:16). The Bible is God's inspired Word. God breathed into the writers of the Old and New Testaments the very thoughts and words He wanted them to use. Moses and the

Prophets wrote the 39 books of the Old Testament in Hebrew and Aramaic. The Gospel writers and the Apostles wrote the 27 books of the New Testament in the Greek language. There were many writers of the Bible, but there was ONLY ONE author. The author is God. The Holy Spirit told the writers of the Bible what to write.

For us the inspiration of Holy Scripture is an article of faith. “We make no attempt to prove” the verbal inspiration of the Bible “logically or scientifically.” “Skeptics may accuse us of a logical fallacy when we turn to the Bible to prove the inspiration of the Bible. That charge that we are guilty of a circular argument does not disturb us. How else does one know that an orange is sweet except by tasting the orange?”¹

Throughout the Bible the expression “Thus saith the Lord” is often written. That phrase or its equivalent is used over 2,000 times. The writers of the Bible spoke the Lord’s words. A passage that supports this is recorded in Zechariah 7:1,4,7,8,12:

In the fourth year of King Darius the word of the Lord came to Zechariah...Then the word of the Lord Almighty came to me...Are these not the words the Lord proclaimed through the earlier prophets...And the word of the Lord came again to Zechariah...Or to the words that the Lord Almighty had sent by His Spirit through the earlier prophets.

Jesus, our Lord and Savior, often referred to the Old Testament as God’s Word. In Matthew 22:31 we read, “But about the resurrection of the dead—have you not read what God said to you?”

The Holy Spirit led the writer of the Hebrews to write (1:1-2): “In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, Whom He appointed heir of all things, and through Whom He made the universe.” Here the writer mentions that the Old Testament was verbally inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The New Testament writers were also inspired by the Holy Spirit when Paul writes in I Thessalonians 2:13: “And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.”

Not all God ever said and did is recorded in the Bible (John 21:25); nor have we in the Bible a complete revelation of God in the sense that all we would like to know of His judgments and purposes is made known to us (Romans 11:33-36). God has revealed to us only what we need to know about Him, therefore we “know only in part” (I Corinthians 13:9).²

The New Testament was not yet written when our Lord walked on this earth, but He informed the disciples that the Holy Spirit was going to make them remember what He said and did. He told them, “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:26).

When the Lord wanted the writers of the Scriptures to write, He moved them to do so. In II Peter 1:21 we read, “For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” The writers of the Bible probably spoke and wrote other things than just what is contained in the Bible, but when the Lord wanted them to write His Word, He moved them and “carried them along.”

The Holy Spirit not only “carried them along” and moved them to write, but He also suggested, inspired, and controlled what they wrote. “The thought content of the Bible, the facts recorded, the truth revealed, the doctrines taught, are in all parts and particulars what God wanted them to write, and in no instance did they write anything God did not want them to write. This is true not only of the things which pertain to our salvation, but also of historical events, of happenings in nature, of personal experiences, and the like.”³

¹ Wilbert Gawnsh, “How the Canonicity of the Bible Was Established,” *Our Great Heritage*, Vol. 1; Lyle W. Lange, General Editor, Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 1991, p. 105.

² Edward W. A. Koehler, D.D., *A Summary of Christian Doctrine*, St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1971, p. 4.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

God used human beings as His instruments to bring His Word to the world. God, in His wisdom, chose men from a variety of times, places, occupations and backgrounds. Moses, the writer of the Pentateuch, grew up in the house of the Pharaoh of Egypt, but he was chosen by God to lead the Children of Israel out of Egypt and to write while he was leading them through the wilderness. Paul had an interesting background. He was educated in the best schools and he was a Roman citizen. Amos was a farmer. Luke was a doctor. Matthew was a tax collector. Joshua was a military general. David was a shepherd boy turned king and Peter was a fisherman.

These men used their native languages and wrote in their own styles...When we study various books of Scripture, we can detect that each author kept his individual manner of writing. Compare, for example, St. Paul's letter to the Romans with St. Mark's Gospel. Paul's style is more polished and complicated, Mark's simpler and less fancy. Yet both Romans and the Gospel of Mark are God's inerrant Word.⁴

"All Scripture is God-breathed" (II Timothy 3:16). We learn from this passage that the Holy Spirit not only moved the writers of the Bible to write, but told them what to write. "All Scripture" was God-inspired, God-inbreathed.

Inspiration, therefore, had for its object not the writers themselves, who were only the instruments of the Holy Spirit and were soon to pass away, but the writings, the books, the Holy Scriptures, which were to continue in the Church until the end of time.⁵

Verbal inspiration covers not only the subject matter of the Bible, but it extends to the words. It extends to the very forms of the words that were used to express divine thoughts. The Holy Spirit moved these men how they were to write. Examples of this would include Jeremiah 30:2 and II Samuel 23:2. Paul informs us that the things he taught were expressed "not in words taught us by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words" (I Corinthians 2:13). The Holy Spirit not only moved the authors of the Bible what they were to write, but also how they were to write the words.

The Holy Spirit guided and governed the writers of the Bible, both in their preachings and in their writing. That there is no essential difference between the spoken and the written word of the apostles is evident from Paul's admonition in II Thessalonians 2:15: "So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed onto you, whether by word of mouth or by letter." All of Holy Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

We must insist on the verbal inspiration of Holy Scripture. Unless we accept "all Scripture" as given by inspiration, we have no foundation whatever for our faith. If men are to determine what in the Bible is inspired and what is not, we shall in the end have nothing left. Like my friend who preached for the Reformation Service, if someone doesn't agree with, believe in or care to proclaim it, they will rip the passage or page out of the Bible and discard it. It is either all or nothing. If the record of the creation is a myth, then there is no reason why the Gospel of our salvation is not likewise a myth.⁶

Dr. Koehler writes:

If only the mysteries of the faith, which are contained in the Sacred Scriptures, depend upon inspiration, and that all the rest, which may be known by the light of nature, depends merely upon divine direction, then the whole of Scripture is not inspired. Therefore not only the mysteries of faith, but also the remaining truths that may be known by the light of nature, which are contained in Scripture, are divinely suggested and inspired.⁷

⁴ Roland C. Ehlke, *Understanding The Bible*, Milwaukee: NPH, 1977, p. 6.

⁵ Koehler, op. cit., p. 5.

⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

The Canon of Holy Scripture

Remember when you were confirmed? You stood before the altar of God and with God-given faith in your heart you made a vow, a promise to the Lord. One of the questions put to you was, “Do you hold all the canonical books of the Bible to be the inspired Word of God...?” When those of us in the ministry were ordained, we were asked if we “believe the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired Word of God.” The term canonical simply refers to the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament that make up the Bible. When we answered one or both of those questions, we confessed and professed that we recognize those 66 books of the Bible as the inspired, inerrant, infallible, and authoritative word of our God.

The word “canon” (kanon) comes from a Greek word that means a “measuring stick,” “a straight edge,” “a standard of judgment,” “a norm,” “a rule.” “The canonical books are the straight edge against which all teaching and practice must be judged. That is, the Canon is God’s Word.”⁸

How was the Canon established? How can we be certain that all 66 of these books actually are the Word of God? Who decided that these 66 books make up the Word of God? Should we depend on the opinion of certain men or what church councils decide for the assurance that these 66 books are truly the Word of God? How can we know for sure what writings are canonical and which ones are not? Who decided which books are canonical? I will try to answer these questions.

Paul wrote in Galatians 6:16: “Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule (kanon), even to the Israel of God.” The “rule” here is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Those who “follow this rule” are those who believe in the good news of our salvation through Jesus Christ.

After Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians,

the church fathers came to speak of the whole corpus of Christian doctrine as ‘the rule of faith’ (kanon tes pisteos), or ‘the rule of truth’ (kanon tes aletheias). It was a natural development, then, when the church appropriated the term ‘canon’, to designate the collection of holy writings that constitute the standard, norm, and rule for Christian faith and life. Those books according to which all belief and behavior are to be judged were recognized as comprising the sacred canon. They were acknowledged as being authoritative.⁹

How did the church come to realize that authority? It was a matter of recognizing the authority of Jesus Christ. Jesus is our Savior. He delivered us from the fires of hell. Everlasting life is ours through His redemptive work. We follow in Peter’s footsteps and give the same answer he did, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (John 10:27).

Jesus’ authority establishes the canonicity of the Bible. His authority makes these 66 books of the canon authoritative for us. This point is basic in the whole questions of the canon. God, not man, has established the canon. What belongs to the canon has been determined by God, not by the church, not by any human authority.¹⁰

Therefore it is wrong for the Church of Rome to claim that it has the authority to decide what belongs in the Canon and what does not. The Council of Trent (1545-1563) adopted a “Decree concerning the Canonical Scriptures.” In this decree it listed the books of the Apocrypha together with the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments and then declared:

⁸ Ehlke, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁹ Gawrisch, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-101.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

If anyone does not accept as sacred and canonical the aforesaid books in their entirety and with all their parts, as they have been accustomed to be read in the Catholic Church and as they are contained in the Old Latin Vulgate Edition (translated by the church father Jerome around A.D. 400), and knowingly and deliberately rejects the aforesaid traditions, let him be anathema.¹¹

The Apocrypha should not be considered inspired by the Holy Spirit for three reasons.

1. Jesus, the Jews, the Apostles, and the early church did not accept them as canonical.
2. The Apocrypha make no claim to divine origin. There are no “Thus saith the Lord” in them.
3. They contain errors and anti-Scriptural teachings. (i.e. permitting suicide, and almsgiving atones for sin)

Martin Luther included them in his translation of the Bible but not as inspired books.¹²

The Roman Catholic Church pronounces a curse upon those who do not accept their canon. According to Rome, the Scriptures receive their authority from the church. The church decides what is canonical and what is not.

The canon is not a product of the church. The canon is a gift of God’s grace. It is His gift to the church. The church didn’t produce the canon; God did. The Scriptures produced the church. The church stands under the Scriptures, not over them.

Since Jesus is our final authority, His statements regarding the Old Testament settle the question of the Old Testament canon for us. Jesus admonished the Jews, “Search the Scriptures!” (John 5:39) “What a pointless admonition this would have been if there had been any uncertainty in the mind of Jesus or on the part of the Jews as to what those Scriptures were!”¹³

The Scriptures used at the time of Jesus are the same 39 books of the Old Testament that you and I use today. In Luke 24:44 Jesus says, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” Jesus is talking about the three major divisions of the Old Testament. The “Law of Moses” consisted of the 5 books written by Moses. The “Prophets” was divided into “the former prophets” (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings) and the “latter prophets” (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and a book containing the 12 minor prophets). The third section of the Old Testament was just known as the “Writings:” In this group there were three sections: The poetical books—Psalms, Proverbs, and Job; the five rolls—Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Esther and Ecclesiastes; and several historical books—Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles. Since Psalms is the first book of this section known as the “Writings”, it is often used to refer to the entire section.

The Jews at the time of Jesus also referred to the Old Testament books as “Moses and the Prophets,” or “the Law and the Prophets.” So when Jesus told the story of the rich man and poor Lazarus, “They have Moses and the Prophets” (Luke 16:29) or when He preached the sermon on the mount and said, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets” (Matthew 5:17), the people who were listening to Him knew that He was speaking about the 39 books of the Old Testament canon.

Jesus often quoted from the Old Testament canon. He used the Old Testament Scriptures to overcome temptations. He read from it in the synagogue. From the cross He quoted a verse from Psalm 22. The New Testament writers refer to all but four of the Old Testament books: Ruth, Ezra, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. Just because the Gospel writers and the apostles didn’t quote from them doesn’t mean that they were not inspired books. They were definitely a part of the Scriptures in Christ’s day. Some references of Old Testament books are not direct quotes, so, of course, it is not easy to determine exactly how many times the New Testament refers to the Old Testament. One is safe in saying that it is well over 500 times!¹⁴

¹¹ Schroeder, H.J. *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*. Original Text with English Translation (1941), p. 18.

¹² Ehlke, op. cit., p. 18.

¹³ Gawrisch, op. cit., p. 105.

¹⁴ Ehlke, op. cit., p. 18.

We accept the books of the Old Testament as canonical because of the clear testimony of Jesus that they were given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Certainly the canonicity of the 39 books we have in the Old Testament is beyond question.

It is easier to defend the canon of the Old Testament because we have Jesus and the Apostles quoting from the Old Testament canon. We might believe that defending the 27 books of the New Testament canon would be more difficult, because they were all written after Jesus ascended into heaven. Let us once again turn to the absolute authority of Jesus and with the principle that the New Testament books have divine authority and belong with the 39 books of the Old Testament, which together were given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Jesus never wrote any books of the Bible. From the beginning of His ministry, He chose 12 disciples who would sit at His feet and hear the words of salvation and who would see His miracles first-hand. He would send them out into the world with His message of salvation. After His resurrection Jesus told His disciples, “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21).

It was our Lord’s plan from the very beginning that His apostles should speak in His name. He authorized them to speak as His representatives. He guided and directed them. He motivated them. Just before His death, Jesus prayed His high priestly prayer in which He prayed not only for His apostles, but for those who would believe in Him “through their message” (John 17:20). Jesus had promised His disciples that He would send the Spirit of truth, Who lived in the disciples (John 14:16-17). In the 26th verse of that 14th chapter of St. John, Jesus tells His disciples that the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, would teach the disciples all things and will remind them of “everything” Jesus had said to them. Jesus told the disciples that the Holy Spirit would come from the heavenly Father and testify of Jesus and that the disciples would testify because they had been with Him from the beginning (John 15:26-27). The Holy Spirit would equip them for their work as the Savior’s witnesses (John 16:7, 13-15).

The Spirit guided and governed them (the Gospel writers and Apostles), both in their preaching and in their writing. That there is no essential difference between the spoken and the written word of the apostles is evident from Paul’s admonition in II Thessalonians 2:15: “So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.”¹⁵

Paul and the other New Testament writers knew that what they were writing was Holy Scripture, on a level with the Old Testament Scriptures. Paul told Timothy that “all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God.” That “all” is not restricted to the Old Testament, but includes the New Testament as well.

The apostle John adds a noteworthy reminder to his Gospel: “This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true” (John 21:24). Because he is writing as an apostle of Jesus Christ, John’s words bear the impress of the authority of Christ Himself. For that reason they are to be believed.¹⁶

“These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:31).

In II Peter 3:1-2, Peter writes:

Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

Peter knew that what he was writing was inspired by the Holy Spirit.

¹⁵ Gawrisch, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

In I John, John insists that he is transmitting a message which he has received from Jesus Christ (I John 1:1-5). The book of Revelation was written as the express command of Jesus (Rev. 1:12; cf. 1:11,19). John wrote a message from the Holy Spirit to the seven churches (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). At the end of the book, John once again states that the book was from the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev. 22:6-8). He also pronounces God's curse to anyone who would add or subtract from the words of prophecy of His book (Rev. 22:18-19). The apostles, like the prophets, spoke and wrote by divine inspiration. For that reason the church is said to be "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone" (Ephesians 2:20). Having been given by inspiration of God, the writings of the apostles and prophets are canonical.

During the lifetime of the Apostles, collections were being made of their writings. We know that Paul's letters were being collected because Peter spoke of "all" of Paul's writings (II Peter 3:16). Even Paul encouraged this in Colossians 4:16: "After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea."

As time went on, more and more books were collected in various areas. Before the year 200 almost every church came to possess the four Gospels, Acts, 13 letters of Paul, I Peter and I John. The other seven books did not become widely used so quickly. It was not until A.D. 367 that all 27 books were mentioned together. This was in a listing by the great church father Athanasius.¹⁷

All of the books were recognized as authentic and were used in many places as soon as they were written. We need to take note that the early Christian church really didn't have a central place of worship as the Old Testament people had in the city of Jerusalem. We need to remember that the books of the New Testament were sent initially throughout Palestine, Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome. Considering how widespread the early church was, it is really a miracle of a gracious God that we have the 27 books of the New Testament canon. When one takes a look at the New Testament canon we can only stand in awe of God's grace. There were lots of literature written in the ancient churches. There were several dozen "gospels," "epistles," and "revelations."¹⁸

Some of these books were written by church leaders who knew the New Testament writers. Some literature was merely romantic fiction using the Apostles as the main characters.¹⁹ Of course, false teachers were writing and declaring that what they wrote was written by an Apostle. There was a book supposedly written by John insinuating that Jesus was not true man.

The Apostles had to contend with false teachers who wrote in the name of an Apostle. The Thessalonian congregation had received such a false book. Paul corrected the misguided Thessalonians and told them "not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come" (II Thessalonians 2:2). To prove the authenticity of his letter, Paul affixed his own signature at the end of the letter (II Thessalonians 3:17).

The books of the Bible authenticate themselves. They say they are God's Word. They themselves make that claim through their unity, inerrancy, authority, clarity, and power. God, in a quiet way, in an almighty way, has brought the canon of the Word of God to us. God has established the canon for us. Mankind did not establish the canon. In 1959, the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod adopted its "Statement On Scripture":

Scripture being the Word of God, it carries its own authority in itself and does not receive it by the approbation of the Church. The Canon, that is, that collection of books which is the authority of the Church, is not the creation of the Church. Rather, the Canon has, by a quiet historical

¹⁷ Ehlke, op. cit., p. 20.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 20.

process which took place in the worship life of the Church, imposed itself upon the Church by virtue of its own divine authority.²⁰

God's Word is a dynamic power. Used by the Holy Spirit it can change an unbeliever into a believer, an enemy of God into a child of God. The Scriptures are not dead. They are alive and life-giving. Hebrews 4:12 declares: "The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." In his essay, entitled "How The Canonicity Of The Bible Was Established", Professor Gawrisch writes these concluding thoughts:

Similarly, through the centuries the canonical Scriptures have demonstrated their inherent power. Jesus urges us to cling to His word. "To the Jews who had believed Him, Jesus said, 'If you hold to My teachings, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free'" (John 8:31-32). That word is not some nebulous, elusive, unknown quantity. Jesus did not bid us to continue in it and hold fast to it and then leave us in the dark as to what it is and where we can find it. He has given it to us in the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Through those Scriptures, despairing and dying sinners have come to know the blessed truth of their redemption and justification, and through that truth they have been made free, eternally free from the cruel bondage of sin and Satan.

The saving truth revealed in the Scriptures has brought righteousness, peace, and joy to you and me. We have now been entrusted with its preservation and propagation. "Let the one who has My word speak it faithfully" was the Lord's solemn charge to His people through the prophet Jeremiah (23:28). Now we have His Word, and with it we have a twofold responsibility—the responsibility, first of all, to speak that word, but the responsibility also to speak it faithfully.²¹

Much more could be written concerning the inspiration and the canon of Holy Scripture. My friend ripped pages from a Bible to make a point—that the false teachers of this world have rejected the truth of Holy Scripture and have inspired their own bible. A lost and condemned sinner will not find the comfort of the certainty of forgiveness and salvation in the false teachers' bible. There is only one place for us to go for the comforting certainty of the salvation of our souls and that is in the holy, inspired Word of God. In the 66 books of the Bible we learn that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, our only Savior. "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68).

Soli Deo Gloria

²⁰ *Proceedings of the Thirty-Fifth Convention, the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States*, 1959, p. 199.

²¹ Gawrisch, op. cit., p. 123.

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