



With this issue of Table Talk we conclude the presentations of the 2015 annual Conference of the LMS. The theme of the conference was, *The Four Reformation Solas of the LMS*, and Rev. Donald Thorson's topic was, *Scripture Alone*.

The matter of Scripture was at the root of the various reasons for the formation of the LMS-USA back in 1995. It and it alone is to be our authority in all matters of doctrine, practice, faith, and life [The LMS-USA's **Indianapolis Statement concerning Scripture**]. This is true in so far as the church is concerned, and it should also be true in so far as its individual members (believers) are concerned. Thus, it is vitally important that we keep the issue of *Scripture Alone* at the forefront of our thinking, if we are to remain true to what we believe God has called the church to be here in this world.

## *The Logo of Our Lutheran Ministerium and Synod: Scripture Alone*

### *Chapter One: General Considerations of Scripture Alone*



#### 1.1 'Synod' and 'Ministerium'?

*This logo symbolizes and can enhance our 'synod' ('together-road': συννοδι,αἰ Luke 2.44), 'walking together' in faith, prayer, practice, and witness (as they did at Augsburg, 1530), and define our ministerium as serving Christ and His Body (the Church) in the Gospel (John 13, Ephesians 4.11: Ministers like Christ, willing to serve and as necessary, to suffer).*

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### 1.2 **Logo with Two Aspects and Refrain: 'Alone'**

*This logo has two aspects: One, Luther's Seal, which is super-imposed, which we will not consider at this time. The other aspect (base?), which is our concern, consists of **four themes**: Christ, Grace, Scripture, and Faith.*

*Each theme is described with the repeated introductory adjective: 'Alone' (literally 'all-one': Ephesians 4.3-6)? May I suggest that we take this adjective in the three-fold sense of 'focus', 'uniqueness', and 'worth'?*

*Might we say then that we have **four consecutive** and **harmonious 'solos'** in a **'concert'** of witnesses to **'Christ alone'**?*

### 1.3 **Order and Relationship of Four Themes?**

*Is there an order to the four themes? Should they be considered clock-wise? Left to right? Which first? Should we begin with **Christ** as the pinnacle? Then move around with Grace, Scripture, and Faith? Perhaps?*

*Seemingly the four themes intertwine, as in our theme of **Scripture Alone**: Our concern with Scripture focuses on the Words and Works of **Christ Alone** (Christocentric interpretation of the entire Bible). His motivation in giving the Scriptures is His **Grace Alone**. He justifies us by **Faith Alone**, but such faith also functions practically: 'It is **written**': we **believe** it.*

*What think you?*

## **Chapter Two: 'Scripture Alone' in Context of Our Logo**

### 2.1 **Definition of 'Alone' ('all one') as Focal, Unique, and Worthy?**

*'Alone' ('Sola') Four Times: Compare John 17.6-11 and Ephesians 4.1-6.  
Christ Alone as Focal, Unique, and Worthy? See [Table Talk](#), May, 2015  
Grace Alone as Focal, Unique, and Worthy? See [Table Talk](#), August, 2015  
**Scripture Alone** as Focal, Unique, and Worthy?  
"It is written" (280 times in Bible:  
148, Old Testament; 132, New Testament).*

*Faith Alone as Focal, Unique, and Worthy? See [Table Talk](#), Nov., 2015*

### 2.2 **'Scripture' as Written Word of God (Isa. 40.8, Lk.1.1-4, 10.26, Jn. 20.31)**

*Jesus responded to the tempter: "It is **written**, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4.4,7,10 ESV; Deuteronomy 8.3, 6.16, 6.13)*

*A scholar of Torah asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus queried the scholar,*

***Luke 10.26** "What is written in the Law [Torah = Genesis through Deuteronomy]? How do you read it?" 27 And he answered, "You shall love*

*the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind [Deuteronomy 6.5], and your neighbor as yourself [Leviticus 19.18]."* 28 And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." 29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my **neighbor**?" (ESV).

*Jesus replied, telling about the **Good Samaritan** and concluding, "Go and do likewise'.*

*Besides 'Scripture', there are other descriptions of God's self-revelation: 'God said', Word Incarnate, Bible, Word as God's Message, Gospel, Law and Gospel, Four Gospels, Means of Grace, memorized Scripture, Scripture read silently and aloud, privately and corporately; formal and material principles; probably more?*

*The composer of this logo chose '**Scripture**' here; possibly because of its prominence in the Bible (280 times) and Jesus' references to 'written' (Matthew, 10 times; Mark, 8; Luke, 17; Acts, 8; John, 15; et al).*

*In this regard we might also recall the Diet of Worms (1521 April 18) when Dr. Luther courageously refused to recant his writings, except on basis of **Scripture**:*

*"Unless I am refuted and convicted by testimonies of the **Scriptures** or by clear arguments (since I believe neither the Pope nor the Councils alone; it being evident that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am conquered by the **Holy Scriptures** quoted by me, and my conscience is bound in the word of God: I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is unsafe and dangerous to do any thing against the conscience."*

*Also Lutheran explanation (1577, 1580):*

*"We pledge ourselves to the **prophetic and apostolic writings** [bold mine] of the **Old and New Testaments** as the pure and clear fountain source of Israel, which is the only true norm according to which all teachers and **teachings** are to be judged and evaluated." Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Rule and Norm, 3.*

### *Chapter Three: Biblically Correct*

*The LORD commanded His Covenant-people to abhor, detest, and guard against the paganism of Egypt whence they came and the paganism of Canaan thither they were going (Leviticus 18.2). Likewise we hear much about being politically correct, (much pagan), which reminds us that as the people of Christ we are called to become Biblically correct and to proclaim it boldly. Agree?*

*Leviticus 18.2-6,22; Proverbs 14.34; Isaiah 5.20-21; Malachi 2.16; Matthew 5.19-20, 19.4-13, 22.21; Acts 4.18; 1 Corinthians 6.18; Galatians 5.19-25; Hebrews 13.4; 1 Peter 2.1, 3.17.*

What is termed politically correct, seems intent on driving out every form of intolerance (termed bigotry, especially what is Scripturally correct), even though its tolerance often champions immorality (sensuality, fornication, adultery, abortion, suicide, euthanasia, divorce, free love, homosexual activities, same sex-marriage).

Are we called by God through Scripture to become vocal, even bold advocates of what is Scripturally correct,? (Acts 4.19-20, 5.26 religious liberty in Jesus).

### *Epilogue* **Inerrancy of Scripture and LMS**

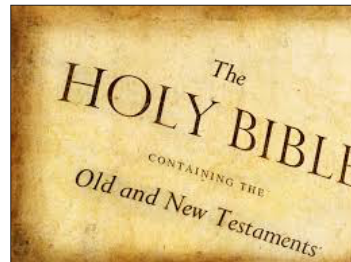
Thus we trace a continuing and necessary theme of **inerrancy of Scripture alone** from Moses (Deuteronomy 12.32; also Isaiah 40.8), through New Testament Scripture (Matthew 5.17, John 17.17, 2 Timothy 3.16, 1 Peter 1.25) and the Reformation, to the 'Valedictory' of U. V. Koren (1908), the Minneapolis Theses of 1925 (*first thesis*), through the American Lutheran Conference (1930) into the formation of The American Lutheran Church (1960), The American Association of Lutheran Churches (1987), and then the Lutheran Ministerium and Synod (1994).

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### THE SCRIPTURES

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*The synods signatory to these Articles of Agreement accept without exception all the canonical books of the Old and the New Testaments as a whole, and in all their parts, as the divinely inspired, revealed, and inerrant Word of God, and submit to this as the only infallible authority in all matters of faith and life (Minneapolis, 1925).*



### Scriptural Inerrancy?

Thus, as I recall, in 1986 some of us saw ourselves as standing for Minneapolis Thesis number one as opposed to the historical-critical views creeping and then leaping into and overwhelming The ALC, a hermeneutic which was so prevalent in the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (starting with Seminex in 1969: those who protested the Biblical inerrancy of the Missouri Synod; those who initiated the steps to form the ELCA), and the Lutheran Church in America (which had led the way in Biblical criticism since the thirties: Refer to the extended discussions during the thirties between the United Lutheran Church and the old American Lutheran Church).

Those of us who came together in August of 1986 viewed the merger forming the ELCA as a further and unacceptable departure from Scriptural inerrancy, which prompted us to form The American Association of Lutheran Churches (1986).

How shocking and sad for us soon to find that Professors Lund and Hosch at our seminary, American Lutheran Theological Seminary (ALTS), held to Biblical-critical teachings. This (precipitated by unacceptable charismatic manifestations) led to the formation of the Lutheran Ministerium & Synod (1994) with the following confession concerning Scripture.

Indianapolis Statement concerning Scripture  
August 17, 1994

*We recognize and submit to the autographs (original texts derived inductively from the best extant manuscripts) of all the canonical books of the Old and the New Testaments as a whole, and in all their parts and words (verbal inspiration), as God's only written and authoritative Word, the divinely inspired, revealed, harmonious (without discrepancies or contradictions), and inerrant Word of God (historically accurate in all it reports, including the six days of creation, and prophetically reliable in all that it promises), and joyfully submit to this as the only infallible authority in all matters of doctrine, practice, faith, and life.*

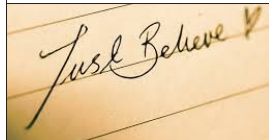
*Bold print indicates what has been added to the Minneapolis Thesis of 1925.*

We could state this briefly with our logo:

**Scripture alone and faith alone:**

It is written. We believe it.

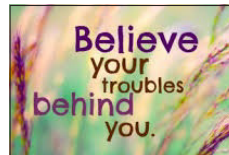
*"Believe" is the theme for the 2016 Annual  
LMS Conference and Convention*



Sat., June 18 & Sun., June 19  
Ministerial Meeting, Fri., June 17

We have all seen the signs and banners,

but from a biblical perspective, what does it mean to believe? What are we to believe? Can we know if our belief is genuine?



Presenters will address this issue from several perspectives and discussion by all is encouraged.



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## Some Fathers on Sola Scriptura

"The holy and inspired Scriptures are fully sufficient for the proclamation of the truth."  
St. Athanasius, *Against the Heathen*, I:3

"Regarding the things I say, I should supply even the proofs, so I will not seem to rely on my own opinions, but rather, prove them with Scripture, so that the matter will remain certain and steadfast."

St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 8 On Repentance and the Church*, p. 118, vol. 96 TFOTC

"Let the inspired Scriptures then be our umpire, and the vote of truth will be given to those whose dogmas are found to agree with the Divine words."  
St. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Holy Trinity*, NPNF, p. 327.

"We are not entitled to such license, I mean that of affirming what we please; we make the Holy Scriptures the rule and the measure of every tenet; we necessarily fix our eyes upon that, and approve that alone which may be made to harmonize with the intention of those writings." St. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Soul and the Resurrection* NPNF II, V:439

"What is the mark of a faithful soul? To be in these dispositions of full acceptance on the authority of the words of Scripture, not venturing to reject anything nor making additions.

For, if 'all that is not of faith is sin' as the Apostle says, and 'faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God,' everything outside Holy Scripture, not being of faith, is sin."  
Basil the Great, *The Morals*, p. 204, vol 9 TFOTC.

"We are not content simply because this is the tradition of the Fathers. What is important is that the Fathers followed the meaning of the Scripture."  
St. Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, Chapter 7, par. 16

"For concerning the divine and holy mysteries of the Faith, not even a casual statement must be delivered without the Holy Scriptures; nor must we be drawn aside by mere plausibility and artifices of speech. Even to me, who tell you these things, give not absolute credence, unless you receive the proof of the things which I announce from the Divine Scriptures. For this salvation which we believe depends not on ingenious reasoning, but on demonstration of the Holy Scriptures."  
St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures*, IV:17, in NPNF, Volume VII, p. 23.

"Neither dare one agree with catholic bishops if by chance they err in anything, but the result that their opinion is against the canonical Scriptures of God."  
St. Augustine (*De unitate ecclesiae*, chp. 10)



## *Sola Scriptura (Scripture alone); The Bible*

**The Bible is the Scripture we are dealing with, and which we say is to be our only authority in all matters of doctrine, practice, faith, and life. If this is to be the case, and to continue to be the case, then it is well to consider and to be reminded from time to time, just what the Bible, or what we as Christians refer to as "Scripture," really is.**

**What follows is what one might call a "Primer on the Bible." It is a chapter from an introductory Bible Course that was taught in one of the junior colleges of the former Evangelical Lutheran Church. The author was the former pastor, seminary professor, and in his retirement years, junior Bible College teacher, Jacob Tanner. The chapter is from the book, "Exploring God's Word," published by Augsburg Publishing House, copyright 1950 and used with permission of the publisher.**

# THE BIBLE

The word Bible means book. The Bible is the Book. It is divided into the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament is made up of 39 books that may be divided into three groups: (1) the historical books (Genesis to Esther), (2) the poetical books (Job to Song of Solomon), and (3) the prophetic books (the 4 great and the 12 small prophets). The New Testament consists of 27 books divided into three groups: (1) the historical books (Matthew to Acts), (2) the doctrinal books (the Epistles), and (3) the prophetic book (Revelation).

Read Numbers 21:14-15; Joshua 10:12-13; I Kings 11:41; II Chronicles 9:29; Luke 1:1-4.

### *Sources*

Much of the material the authors used was not original. The Book of the Wars of Jehovah (Num. 21:14-15), the Book of Jashar (Josh. 10:12-13), the book of the Acts of Solomon (I Kings 11:41), the History of

Nathan the prophet (II Chron. 9:29) are some of the sources the Bible itself refers to. This source material has been lost. Luke tells that he established the historic truth of His gospel by careful inquiries of those who had been eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus.

Read II Timothy 3:8; Jude 9.

### *Tradition*

The use of traditions we find in II Timothy 3:8 and Jude 9. Neither of these events is recorded in the Old Testament. The first eleven chapters of Genesis may be termed crystallized tradition. The God-given truth about creation and the events that followed down the centuries was told and retold in the families of those that feared God till it finally assumed the form preserved in these chapters. These chapters may even have been written down on clay tablets and by Abraham brought to Palestine as his religious heritage.



view of God's people in his time. Only in this way could God through His self-revelation come in such contact with the people that the saving truth could become a redeeming power in their thoughts and lives. For this reason we find in Isaiah a vision and perspective

Read Exodus 14:21 and 15:8; Acts 17:21; Joshua 10:12-13.

### *Hyperbole*

The Bible demonstrates that sacred poetry used words with the same freedom as poetry in general. The hyperbole is frequently employed, making the poetical description of an event quite different from the historic account (Compare Exodus 14:21 with Exodus 15:8). Acts 17:21 offers an illustration of hyperbole in prose. Joshua 10:12-14 seems to belong to this class. It is a quotation from the Book of Jashar. The daylight was prolonged in some extraordinary way, the exact nature of which is hidden under the poetic description.

### *Limited Revelation*

Since God's self-revelation in the Old Testament was incomplete, the truth was limited. So were the means of salvation and the work of the Holy Spirit. The books of the Old Testament were products of this limited revelation. They are therefore just as limited as the revelation they record.

The author of Genesis could not write from the point of view of Paul. He had to write from the point of

quite different from that in Judges.

Read Genesis 16:1-3; Psalms 69:22-28; Psalms 109:6-15; Romans 3:25-26.

### *Inferior Morality*

The inferior morality of the Old Testament people was a result of this limited revelation.

Abraham was a man of God, but he could not have become a member of our congregations. On Sarah's advice he took her slave girl as a concubine so that Sarah by her might have a child that she could legally claim as her own according to Babylonian law. Abraham did not see anything wrong in this arrangement; nor did anyone else. Jacob had four wives, and neither Jacob nor anyone else saw anything wrong in it. Polygamy was an established practice that no one living at that time considered morally wrong. The so-called imprecatory Psalms offer prayers that no Christian could pray.

This inferior morality is a testimony to the realism and veracity of the Bible.

An incomplete revelation could not produce a complete morality. Limited means of grace could not generate the highest type of faith and life. God had to deal with the people



of Moses and David as they were then, not as they would be 1000 or 1500 years later. They were still immature children spiritually as well as morally.

Paul's words in Romans 3:25-26 point to this limited revelation in the Old Testament and the limited redemptive power that was the result.

### *God's Word*

At this point we should answer the question, What do we mean when we say that the Bible is God's Word? We do not mean that God has spoken every word in the Bible. Satan's words quoted in Genesis 3:4 were not uttered by God. They were the devil's lie. What we mean is that everything is in the Bible by the direction and will of the Holy Spirit.

If the Bible was to present the complete record of God's dealings with man unto salvation, it had to include the story of Satan, of sin, of fallen man and his life, of God's plan of redemption, of the conflict between rebellious man and God's saving love, and of the Savior and His work and the results. The material used by the writers of the Bible therefore had to be drawn from all phases of human life. In the Bible God included history, poetry, geography, and chronology, as well as the story of sin and grace, because they were a part of the life of the people unto whom God's self-revelation came for a saving purpose. So the whole content of the Bible is God's message to man. That is what we mean when we say that the Bible is God's Word.

### *Revelation*

To avoid confusion we must make a clear distinction between

revelation and inspiration. The fundamental source of our knowledge of God is God's supernatural revelation of Himself. Revelation is that work of God by which He makes Himself known to man. It presents to man such knowledge of God and of His work of redemption as man otherwise would be unable to acquire. Knowledge that can be secured by investigation and from other sources is not an object of revelation.

### *Inspiration*

Inspiration is that work of the Holy Spirit which enables men correctly to understand and to convey to others the knowledge acquired by revelation or investigation. The Holy Spirit enabled the authors to select the right material for their purposes and out of their vocabulary to choose the words that correctly conveyed the meaning.

On the basis of the God-given revelation men who were in tune with God also learned about God through study of nature, of history and of their experiences. History and nature do not mean the same to the man who knows God, and to the one who does not know Him.

The Bible is Christ-centered. The Old Testament prepares for His coming and points forward to Him. The New Testament tells of His coming, how He lived, what He did and the salvation He provided.

*No greater mischief can happen to a Christian people than to have God's Word taken from them or falsified, so that they no longer have it pure and clear. God grant we and our descendants be not witness of such a calamity.*

Luther's Table Talk

## The Bible and the Printing Press

Johann Gutenberg's Bible, is the first real book to be printed using the technique of printing which Gutenberg invented in the 1450s.

The Gutenberg Bible (also known as the *42-line Bible*, the *Mazarin Bible* or the *B42*) was the first major book printed using mass-produced movable type. It marked the start of the "Gutenberg Revolution" and the age of the printed book in the West. Widely praised for its high aesthetic and artistic qualities, the book has an iconic status. Written in Latin, the Catholic Gutenberg Bible is an edition of the Vulgate in Mainz, in present-day Germany in the 1450s.



Forty-nine copies, or substantial portions of copies, survive, and they are considered to be among the most valuable books in the world, even though no complete copy has been sold since 1978. The *36-line Bible*, believed to be the second printed version of the Bible, is also sometimes referred to as a *Gutenberg Bible*, but is likely the work of another printer.

Copies left the Gutenberg workshop unbound, without decoration, and for the most part without rubrication. [Rubrication was one of several steps in the medieval process of manuscript making. Practitioners of rubrication, so-called rubricators, were specialized scribes who received text from the manuscript's original scribe and supplemented it with additional text in red ink for emphasis. The term rubrication comes from the Latin *rubrico*, "to color red"].

Initially the rubrics "the headings before each book of the Bible" were printed, but this experiment was quickly abandoned, and gaps were left for rubrication to be added by hand. A guide of the text to be added to each page, printed for use by rubricators, survives. The spacious margin allowed illuminated decoration to be added by hand. The amount of decoration presumably depended on how much each buyer could or would pay. Some copies were never decorated.

The Bible was not Gutenberg's first work. Preparation of it probably began soon after 1450, and the first finished copies were available in 1454 or 1455. It is not known exactly how long the Bible took to print. The first precisely datable printing is the Gutenberg's 31-line *Indulgence* which is known to already exist on 22 October 1454.

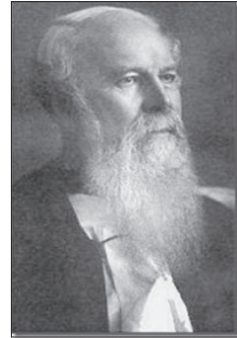
The above was gleaned from *Wikipedia*

## *Two 19th Century Bible Commentators on Scripture*

J. C. Ryle (1816-1900) on John 5:39

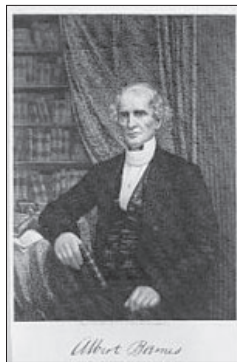
[Ryle's Expository Thoughts on the Gospels].

"Let us note... what a plain duty it is to read the Scriptures. Men have no right to expect spiritual light if they neglect the great treasury of all light. If even of the Old Testament our Lord said, 'Search,' 'it testifies of Me,' how much more is it a duty to search the whole Bible! An idle neglect of the Bible is one secret of the ignorant formal Christianity which is so widely prevalent in these latter days. God's blessing on a diligent study of the Scriptures is strikingly illustrated in the case of the Bereans (Acts 17:11).



Albert Barnes (1798-1870): *Barnes Notes*, on John 5:47

*...since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?*



"If you do not credit what he (Moses) has written which you profess to believe, it is not to be expected that you will believe my (Jesus') declarations." And from this we may learn, 1st. That many men who *profess* to believe the Bible have really no regard for it when it crosses their own views and inclinations. 2nd. It is our duty to study the Bible, that we may be established in the belief that Jesus is the Messiah. 3rd. The prophecies of the Old Testament are conclusive proofs of the truth of the Christian religion. 4th. He that rejects one part of the Bible, will, for the same reason, reject all. 5th. The Savior acknowledged the truth of the writings of Moses, built his religion upon them, appealed to them to prove that he was the Messiah, and commanded men to search them. We have the testimony of Jesus, therefore, that the Old Testament is a revelation from God. He that rejects his testimony on this subject must reject his authority altogether; and it is vain for any man to believe in the New Testament, or in the Lord Jesus, without also acknowledging the authority of the Old Testament and of Moses.

Table Talk  
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The LMS-USA is Lutheran Church body describing itself as *Biblical, Confessional, Evangelical, Liturgical and Congregational*. It is a 'Forum' in which there is an on going discussion of theological issues and concerns among clergy and lay alike. The LMS-USA meets annually for a Theological Conference and this publication, besides carrying news of the Ministerium and Synod, functions also as a vehicle for this continuing dialogue.

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