

# THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY.

10737

---

---

VOL. X.

JANUARY, 1906.

No. 1.

---

---

## FAITH.

Grace expresses the attitude and relation of God to a sinner. And grace justifies and saves the sinner. However, saving grace is not an irresistible fiat of the Almighty. Grace may fail of its aim and end. No sinner is justified and saved parforce. There must be a proper attitude and an adequate relation of the sinner who is being justified and saved to God who justifies and is saving him. Faith expresses this latter attitude and relation. "By grace are ye saved *through faith*," Eph. 2, 8. This means that salvation in individual instances, the saving of this or that particular sinner, requires the effectual operation of *two* forces. True, "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men," Tit. 2, 11, regardless of men's attitude toward it. The word of grace has been issued to all men prior to their knowledge and wish, Matt. 28, 19. There is a salvation, perfect and complete in itself, independent of the faith of the saved; comp. Acts 4, 12: "*Neither is there salvation in any other*," etc. Neither man's faith nor man's unbelief alter the fact of this salvation. The *Τετέλεσται* on Golgotha, John 19, 30, was spoken before unbelievers and scoffers. This cry has been ringing through the centuries. The "word of reconciliation" conjures up no mirage to pilgrims through this desert of sin, but points to the *fact* that "God was in Christ, *reconciling the world unto Himself*, not imputing their trespasses unto them," 2 Cor. 5, 19. This salvation "is finished." Whether its tidings are carried to the husbandman on his farm or to the trader

## BOOK REVIEW.

---

LICHT DES LEBENS. Ein Jahrgang von Evangelienpredigten aus dem Nachlass des seligen *Dr. Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther*, gesammelt von *C. J. Otto Hanser*. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 1905. II and 688 pp. Price, \$2.25.

This book contains 68 sermons of Dr. Walther. They were collected by Rev. Hanser of this city. The greater part of them was found in the original manuscript, some in copies made by pupils and friends of Walther, and one is a reprint from a former publication. All are genuine products of Dr. Walther. Their contents attest them as such, and the manuscripts submitted for this publication are vouched for to have been either written by Dr. Walther, or copied from his manuscript. The book contains sermons for every Sunday in the church-year, except Sunday after New Year, Sixth Sunday after Epiphany, Sixth Sunday after Easter and Twenty-seventh Sunday after Trinity. There are two sermons for the First Sunday in Advent, for Christmas (one for a Matin service), and for Good Friday. For festivals still observed in our church there are one sermon each for Epiphany, Purification of Mary, Ascension, St. John the Baptist's, Michaelmas, and Reformation Day. There is no sermon for Maundy Thursday. The text for every sermon is the conventional Gospel lesson for the day, except for the Matin Service on Christmas Day (Is. 9, 6. 7), Second Christmas Day (Epistle for St. Stephen's Day), Twenty-sixth Sunday after Trinity (Epistle I: 2 Pet. 3, 3—14), and Reformation Day (Ps. 77, 6—21). The texts for Good Friday are Luke 23, 44—48 and Mark 15, 42—47.

These sermons were preached on various occasions and at different places in America during 47 years of Dr. Walther's life, the earliest (No. 9, on the Gospel for the Sunday after Christmas) having been preached in 1839, and the latest (No. 31, on the Gospel for the Sunday after Easter) in 1886, a year before the Doctor's death. Four sermons (No. 8, Gospel for Second Christmas Day; No. 11, Gospel for Epiphany Day; No. 30, Gospel for Second Easter Day; No. 46, Gospel for Sixth Sunday after Trinity) are without date. More than half (forty) of these sermons were preached during the decade between 1839 and 1848; fifteen between 1849 and 1857, six between 1861 and 1867, and only three (not counting the four not dated) after 1867. Thus, the bulk of these sermons is from a period when Walther was still engaged in pastoral work.

A perusal of them soon convinces the reader that a minister of the Gospel, a pastor, is talking in these sermons to average Christians on phases of the Christian life, such as a faithful pastor at all times finds it incumbent on him and timely to expound to the mixed gatherings in his church and their ever-changing and always recurring spiritual needs. The mercy of God is set forth on the Tenth Sunday after Trinity. ("Although many die the eternal death, God is not willing that the sinner should die. 1. Is God really not willing that the sinner should die? 2. How, then, is it possible that so many die the eternal death?") The love of Christ for sinners is treated with conquering earnestness on the Third Sunday after Trinity. ("The loving concern of Christ for a person does not cease, but only increases, in proportion as that person strays further from Him. 1. The blessed content of this truth; 2. its proper application.") The work of Christ, particularly the vicarious atonement, finds frequent and copious treatment. (Quinquagesima: "Requisites for pondering and applying the sufferings of Christ in a salutary manner: 1. attentive inquiry; 2. believing prayer; 3. faithfully following Christ." Fourth Sunday in Lent: "Christ Jesus an altogether different Savior than the one which the world foolishly desires. 1. What kind of a savior does the world desire? 2. What kind of Savior is Christ in reality?" Fifth Sunday in Lent: "The humility of Christ an object for all men's admiration and emulation. 1. Why His humility is admirable; 2. how earnestly His humility urges us to emulate it." Sixth Sunday in Lent: "The revelation of the divine majesty of Christ on the threshold of His suffering. 1. The revelation of His omniscience; 2. the revelation of His omnipotence." Good Friday (I): "The incomparable glory of the death of Jesus Christ, as we observe same 1. from the remarkable phenomena of nature by which God Himself has celebrated this death; 2. from the majesty of the person which suffered this death; 3. from the blessed effects and causes of this death." II: "The importance of the fact that Christ was buried, not by His enemies, but by His friends. This shows, 1. that Christ had died, really and truly; 2. that, if we wish to be true Christians, we must prepare a grave for Christ in our hearts." Easter: "The believers' well-grounded song of triumph at the empty tomb of Christ: Death is swallowed up in victory! 1. What good ground there is for this song of triumph; 2. why only believers can chant this song of triumph." Ascension: "Our faith affected, in a very important manner, by the ascension of Christ: for same 1. shows the necessity of faith; 2. confirms the basis of our faith; 3. ever furnishes fresh nourishment to our faith." Seventh Sunday after Trinity: "In what respect has Christ revealed Himself at the

feeding of the four thousand? 1. As the almighty Son of the living God; 2. as the merciful and kind Savior of all who suffer." Last, not least, Walther's glorious Christmas sermon must be mentioned: "The birth of Jesus Christ the basis for constant joy to all men. 1. It verily is that; 2. what must a person do, in order that this joy which has entered the world may enter his own heart?") The plan and way of salvation is plainly stated, not only in every sermon, but there are special sermons on the call (First Sunday in Advent: "The appeal of the Savior to us this day upon His entering among us through His Word of grace. 1. His appeal to those who already are His disciples and have been following Him; 2. His appeal to those who are not yet His disciples and have not been following Him." Third Sunday in Lent: "The verdict of Christ upon all those who have not wholly decided in favor of Him and His kingdom, to-wit, that they, too, are His enemies: for He states: 1. He that is not with me is against me. 2. He that gathereth not with me scattereth." Fourth Sunday after Easter: "Unbelief the capital sin: 1. because from it all other sins flow; 2. because for this only sin man is damned." Pentecost: "The heart of man a place where God wishes to make His abode. 1. What God is doing in order to make the heart of man His dwelling place; 2. what man must do in order that God may enter his heart and dwell therein." First Sunday after Trinity: "The two ways and their end: 1. the broad way leading to hell; 2. the narrow way leading to heaven." Second Sunday after Trinity: "The vain and foolish pretexts which serve as an excuse to those who will not wholly come to Christ. 1. Which are the conventional excuses of these persons? 2. That these excuses are merely vain and foolish pretexts." Sixth Sunday after Trinity: "People who are seeking and yet fail to enter the kingdom of heaven: they are those, who seek to enter 1. by their civil righteousness; 2. by the righteousness of the Law; 3. by the righteousness of church ordinances." Ninth Sunday after Trinity: "Taking no thought in time for eternity—the greatest folly: 1. because man is but a steward here and must give strict account to God in eternity of his stewardship in time; 2. because his brief span of life is granted man to the end that he may seek and find his salvation." Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity: "The custom of regarding the duty to seek the kingdom of God as a trivial affair. 1. That this custom is a universally prevailing one; 2. that it is a very fatal custom." Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity: "The raising of the young man at Nain an instructive object lesson of the spiritual resurrection which Christ wishes to effect in all men. 1. It is necessary for all men to experience a spiritual resurrection during their earthly life; 2. no man can raise

himself, but Christ must raise him through His Word and by His Spirit; 3. having become raised, it is a person's duty to walk in a new life"); on conversion and regeneration (Second Sunday after Epiphany: "What must a person do, in order that the glory of Christ may be revealed to him? 1. He must become conscious of his misery and of his need of Christ; 2. he must believe in Christ with his whole heart." Trinity Sunday: "Regeneration: 1. In order to be saved, every man must be born again; 2. how this blessed work is accomplished in man"); on faith (Second Christmas Day: "The glorious and wonderful faith in the Christ who has come into the world. 1. Faith cheerfully professes Christ before men and would shed his blood rather than deny Christ; 2. faith already here below sees the heavens open and the Savior standing at the right hand of God; 3. faith conquers all terrors of death and transforms death into his triumphant entry into his Savior's kingdom of glory." Third Sunday after Epiphany: "Why faith, in particular, is exalted and praised above all else in God's Word: 1. because salvation is a gift of grace which only faith grasps; 2. because it is just this faith that renews the heart of man and equips him for doing good works"). Faith in trials and afflictions is treated on the day of the Purification of Mary and on the Fifth Sunday after Trinity, "the beginning of faith" on the Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity; and that the doctrine of the blessed virtue of faith is a trophy and a cherished bequest of the Reformation is shown from the Gospel for the Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity. Justification is treated twice *ex professo*: on the eleventh Sunday after Trinity and on the First Sunday after Easter; Absolution on the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity, Election on Septuagesima Sunday, and the doctrine of Assurance on the Second Sunday in Lent.

While turning the pages of this book, the remark of Luther came to mind, viz., that there are a great many "good Easter preachers" who are not "good Pentecost preachers." Walther is not of this class. As clear, forcible, eloquent as he is in proclaiming the facts of Scripture relating to the acquisition of salvation, just as direct, convincing, and urgent he is in declaring the facts relating to the application of salvation, from the first to the last hour of the believer's new life in the state of grace. Walther endeavors not only to quicken a heart dead to God into life, but he nurses that life wherever it has appeared. His sermons on truths of sanctification are in no way behind those on truths of justification. Nearly one-fourth of the sermons in this volume have for their subject matter the daily renewal of believers. On the First Sunday in Advent he formulates holy resolves for his hearers tending to their improvement (second

part); on the First Sunday after Epiphany the younger part of his congregation is specially remembered in a sermon on "youthful piety," both humbling and elevating (1. demanded by God; 2. possible; 3. easy of accomplishment, and lovely). The believer's temptations (First Sunday in Lent), the believer's godly sorrow (Third Sunday after Easter), uncharitably judging a fellowman (Fourth Sunday after Trinity), "love of our fellowman — a fruit of faith" (Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity), creating offense (St. Michael's), the true celebration of the Sabbath (Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity), mutual forbearance and the forgiving spirit (Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity), prayer (Fifth Sunday after Easter) — all these subjects are presented as fervently as any of the great basic truths of redemption.

With Walther, saving a sinner means not only enabling him to go to heaven, but also to enter the Church of Christ here on earth. Church and ministry are divine institutions with Walther. Accordingly, he does not neglect to inform his hearers of the nature of the Church, its characteristics, growth, dangers, fate in this world, its treasures, authority, influence on a person's life and the blessed communion of its members. He explains the requirements for being a good pastor and a good church-member. He shows the nature, necessity, and efficacy of the means of grace; he describes the effects of preaching among men, baptismal grace, etc. Lastly, Walther depicts the Day of Judgment (Second Sunday in Advent and Twenty-sixth Sunday after Trinity), the social joys of saints in heaven (Second Easter Day), and the perilous character of the last times (Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity).

Thus this volume is rich in spiritual material for thoroughly furnishing the man of God unto all good works. We have not the space to discuss the style of Walther and his method of evolving the leading thought of his discourse from his text. Walther's preaching is doctrinal rather than interpretative, and he has been acknowledged a master of the doctrinal sermon, so difficult both as regards elaboration and presentation. — No work of equal importance to the church has left the press of our Publishing House during 1905. The work so far bestowed on this volume has been love's labor to all who were engaged in its preparation. We have no fear that it will prove love's labor lost. We confidently expect that a greater labor, enlisting many hearts, will now begin upon this volume in the homes of our Christians and in the studies of our pastors. To those who engage in this labor we can promise a rich reward; for this volume has been fitly named "Light of Life," not only to indicate its origin or to designate its contents, but also to predict its blessed effects, under God's grace, in the hearts of its believing readers and students. D.