

# Concordia Theological Monthly



F E B R U A R Y • 1 9 5 9

# HOMILETICS

## *Outlines on the Nitsch Epistles*

OCULI

JAMES 1:2-8

(Purpose of sermon: To give the hearers a "lift" in their daily struggles against the trials of life. When a person is "beaten down" the odds against him seem insurmountable. When he is directed to Heaven's resources he becomes invincible.)

In the ancient church the third Sunday in Lent was frequently devoted to a preliminary examination of the catechumens to see whether they were adequately equipped to proceed with their instructions. If they gave a good account of themselves, they were asked publicly to renounce "the devil and all his pomps, works, and ways." But this is not a "once and for all" triumph. It is a battle that must be fought daily, for the old Adam must by "daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die." Nor let anyone suppose that the whole world will cheer us on in our battle or congratulate us upon our noble decision to take up the good fight of faith. Obstacles will be thrown in our path, and trials will descend upon us, which, but for the grace of God, would destroy us. It is best for us to be aware of this so that we can be prepared to meet the trials successfully. Hence the consideration of our text:

### **Bearing Trials Victoriously**

#### *I. We must approach our trials with the proper attitude*

A. We must expect opposition. To renounce Satan is only to challenge his infernal powers. He will let us have no peace by day or by night within or without (1 Peter 5:8,9). Think of Job, and also of Paul's "messenger of Satan" (2 Cor. 12:7). These trials are "divers" (v. 2), multiform, multicolored. Due to the weakness of our flesh we shall be inclined to withdraw from the battle. But no victory was ever gained in this way.

B. Instead of fleeing from the battle we should "count it all joy" (v. 2). This does not suggest or countenance morbidity. We rejoice when we contemplate the glorious results which can follow upon such struggles (v. 3). This testing of our faith works patience — constancy, perseverance, the ability to endure, to "stand up and take it" without losing heart. Who would not rejoice over this end result? Just as gold comes out the purer as the result of the heat of refinement.

In this we have inspiring examples: Peter and the apostles departed from the Council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name (Acts 5:41). Paul's epistles reveal his unconquerable joy. Cf. Phil. 4:4. Christ, "who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross." (Heb. 12:2)

C. We should be ready and determined to "go all the way" (v. 4). "Let the process go on until the endurance is fully developed" (Philippians). No half-way measures; no halfhearted attempts. Who can be content to remain incomplete and immature?

## II. *We must go to the proper source for help*

A. We cannot bear our trials successfully alone or in our own strength. Too many "self-made" men try it and fail, though they do not always realize that they have failed. Of ourselves we do not have the wisdom properly to evaluate our trials. Cf. the author of the 73d Psalm; also Gideon: "If the Lord be with us, why, then, is all this befallen us?" (Judges 6:13)

B. We must go to God in prayer for the wisdom to evaluate the purpose of our trials as well as to understand the real source of help and strength. But it must be a prayer in faith (vv. 6-8). The man who doubts is like a wave of the sea, wind-driven, first up, then down. His spirit rises with enthusiasm one minute and drops with discouragement the next. Vacillating. He is double-minded; not always wanting all that he asks; he is like the child who prayed: "God make me good, but not too good" (v. 8). Such a person is unstable, not only in his prayer life but in all his spiritual life (v. 8). But such a person should not expect his prayer to be answered. (V. 7)

C. The encouragement (v. 5) which comes through the prayer of faith. We know that God will not upbraid us; He does not scold us for lack of wisdom, as though we should have known better. He promises to hear and to answer our prayers, and to do so liberally and generously. Our confidence in His promises comes as we look to Christ and see that His victory over sin, Satan, and hell is complete; that His victory becomes ours through faith, 1 John 5:4; that we by our sufferings are not supplementing His victory; that we are only being chastened for our own good. (Heb. 12:4-7)

We want nothing short of total victory. This is ours in Christ for the asking.

## LAETARE

## 2 COR. 7:6-13

(*Special Accent.* — The task of exegesis has been defined as “getting out of the sacred text what God has put into it.” This passage presents some special difficulties for the preacher. St. Paul refers to a previous letter which he has written to the Corinthians (v. 8). The *International Critical Commentary* (Scribner’s, 1915, p. 220) does not think that this can possibly refer to 1 Corinthians. There are parts of this epistle, however, which seem sharp enough to fit Paul’s description of his previous letter. Cf. 1 Cor. 5:1-5. The preacher need not speculate recklessly and endlessly concerning a “lost letter” before he can interpret this text clearly and profitably for his people. St. Paul says enough to enable us to bring forth profound truths concerning Law and Gospel, sadness and joy, in the Christian heart and congregation. 2 Corinthians has special significance for the parish pastor. Here we see how words and situations bring about a rise and fall of feelings between pastor and people. Here is St. Paul the Apostle — no proud priest and prelate but a deeply concerned and humble spiritual father. He is alternately firm and tender, harsh and yielding, sad and joyful. Here we see the importance and the place of the “personal element” in the church. Paul is deeply thankful that his people have done the right thing at last. He rejoices in their renewed ties with him. The sermon on this text should be deeply spiritual, pastoral, personal.)

The Christian life is not all joy, strength, peace. We sometimes note in modern preaching an overemphasis on the bright and happy aspects of Christian life. Yet we have all experienced low spirits and dark days. Do sadness and joy both have their place?

## The Godly Grief

I. *The godly grief is a divine work of the Word of God (8,9)*

A. The Corinthians had been “made . . . sorry” by a previous letter of Paul. A harsh epistle had stated the Law in its fullness. Cf. 1 Cor. 5:1-5. This hurt the Corinthians, yet Paul would have been remiss in his duty if he had not warned them. It was necessary for them to feel a godly grief, “so that you suffered no loss through us.” The duty of a watchman. (Ezek. 33:7-9)

B. This was so difficult for Paul to do that he even regretted his action for a time. “. . . I did regret it.”

C. Yet God Himself, working through Paul’s words, accomplished much good. This was not barren grief, for they were “grieved into repenting.” This was a blessed, “godly grief.”

D. Are there parts and verses in the Bible which you prefer to skip? Are there sermons whose truths offend you? Do you ever turn away from applications of divine truths to your own life and circumstance?

E. Don't turn away from hearing the Law and truth of God. Godly grief is worked by God Himself through the Word. Such grief does not end on a note of sorrow.

II. *The godly grief produces repentance that leads to salvation (v.10)*

A. "Worldly grief produces death." Biblical examples: Cain—"My punishment is greater than I can bear" (Gen. 4:13). Saul—"Therefore Saul took a sword and fell upon it" (1 Sam. 31:4). Judas—he "repented." Yet he "went and hanged himself" (Matt. 27:3, 5). Worldly grief and pain bring no good.

B. Godly grief does not remain hopeless in sorrow and remorse. The Corinthian Christians are good examples of repentant sinners who trusted in Christ as Savior. (2 Cor. 1:5)

C. Biblical examples of godly grief: David confessed, "I have sinned against the Lord," yet he also believed Nathan's word of forgiveness (2 Sam. 12:13). Peter "went out and wept bitterly" (Matt. 26:75), yet he came back to Christ at His call. Paul knew that he was "chief of sinners," yet acknowledged Christ as Savior and Master. (1 Tim. 1:15). When the Law has done its work, the Gospel must follow.

D. There is only bitterness in sinful pleasure at the end (Prov. 5:3,4). One who hears and follows Christ's call will have no regrets. There is joy and abiding satisfaction only in believing discipleship. (2 Cor. 4:16-18)

E. Christians should recognize the blessings of godly sorrow. Law and Gospel. Sorrow before joy. When Christ is accepted by faith, there is real joy. "And ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." (John 16:22)

III. *The godly grief brings forth fruits in Christian life which produce harmony and joy (vv. 6,7; 11-13)*

A. The results of godly grief and faith start a chain reaction for good in the church. Paul was comforted by the coming of Titus, who in turn had been encouraged by the longing, mourning, and zeal of the Corinthians.

B. Godly grief had produced marvelous qualities of heart and mind in the Corinthians. ". . . earnestness . . . eagerness to clear yourselves . . . indignation (at evil and the evildoers) . . . alarm . . . longing . . . zeal. . . ." These are real powers at the deeper levels

of the inner life which shape man's thoughts, words, and actions. A complete change for the better had come about.

C. How often we ask: "Why is life like that? Why is one so cruel and selfish? What can be done with such a person?" No tricks of psychology will bring about a real change. Increased knowledge and wealth is not the answer. Improvement in the outward circumstances will not suffice. Only a new heart will really change a person "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come." (2 Cor. 5:17 RSV)

D. Here, then, is the real test of repentance and faith: Do your words and actions give evidence of the new man within? We are, indeed, saved by grace through faith in Christ. We must remember, however, that we shall be judged by our works, as evidence of faith, on the last, great Day. (Matt. 25:31-46)

E. What about your thoughts, words, deeds? How about your conduct at home, work, church, school? Does the love of Christ control you? (2 Cor. 5:14, 15) Has the godly grief aroused by the Law led you to Him who alone saves from guilt and power of sin? Or is your religion only superficial and on the surface?

We are in the midst of the holy and penitential season of Lent. Don't miss out on the purpose and blessings of the Passiontide. Hear the Law in all its awful severity and condemnation. Consider and confess your own sinful and lost condition. Recall what sin and the Law did to Jesus Christ. "Turn not from His griefs away." Then Easter will bring its full joy. The Introit for Laetare will awaken a warm response in your own heart: "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her."

Chicago, Ill.

JAMES G. MANZ

## JUDICA

### 1 PETER 1:17-25

(Purpose: To impress on the hearer that our spiritual problem ordinarily is not that we do not know but that we do not depend and trust as we should and do not draw the intended and practical implication. We know Christ died for us, but we do not always trust in this fact nor realize the power it gives us to love others. Of special incidental interest is Peter's reiteration of what he learned in his great experience with Cornelius (Acts 10:34) — "without respect of persons.")

The problem in a proper and wholesome observance of Lent is not so much the capturing of a mood as the recognizing of two facts. The first is the dirtiness, the baseness, and the viciousness of sin and

all the havoc it can work in hearts where it is unrepressed (Judas) and even where it is opposed (Peter). The second is the greatness of God's love and majestic holiness which brought Jesus Christ to earth to die a criminal's death and to suffer the pains of the damned. Though Sundays are traditionally not considered part of Lent, we cannot get away from the spirit of Lent even then. Nor do we want to. We stand deep in Lent now. We tread the holy, well-worn paths once more and draw strength and new hope from the familiar sights along the way. But, in another sense, a Christian always stands deep in Lent. It is the perspective in which he views his whole life. In fact, his view is even more comprehensive, for he sees also Easter, Christmas, and Pentecost. For the two facts with which we are concerned and the historical incidents of tragedy and triumph involved are as familiar to him as the story of his own life. It is not that all this is new to him. It is rather that the meaning and implication of it all need to be refreshed and dwelt upon.

#### Ye Know

##### I. *That ye were not redeemed with corruptible things (vv.17-20)*

A. From eternity God had determined to do even this to save you. (V.20)

B. Your salvation is not cheap. How dare we trifle with it, risk it for a bauble, desert it in a frivolous search for pleasure. (Cf. Is. 52:3 ff.)

C. You are saved by the blood of Christ. (V.19, cf. Lev.3:7 ff.; 4:32 ff.; 1 John 1:7,29)

D. Put your trust only in Jesus. Nothing else will save you. God is no respecter of persons. (V.17; cf. Acts 10:34)

##### II. *That God raised Jesus from the dead and will raise you (v.21)*

A. You say you know God actually did this for you. You do not need to pretend to forget it just because it is Lent. It makes the meaning of Lent clearer.

B. Your faith in the suffering Savior is vindicated by His resurrection. (Cf. Rom.10:9,10)

C. The pitiful, bloody Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, is the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Judge of all, Ruler of heaven and earth.

##### III. *That being born again you are to love one another (vv.22-25)*

A. You know this, too, but to some it does not seem to belong in the same category with the other truths. If you know the truths about

Jesus' suffering and resurrection, I challenge you to show it by love to others.

B. It must be such love as God has for you — with a pure heart, fervently. (V.22)

C. You are capable of identifiable, unremitting love of the brethren, not by temperament, indeed, or even by ambition, but by the power of God, which is in you since you were born again. (V.23)

D. Does this seem a trifling result to look for from what Jesus did? It is no trifling thought. Without Jesus you are not capable of such love.

You know what Jesus suffered, and you know how God raised Him to glory. Show that this gives you confidence and power — by loving as He did. Show it now, in flesh-and-blood actions.

Fairbanks, Alaska

OMAR STUENKEL

## PALM SUNDAY

HEB. 12:1-6

(The following outline presupposes that a class of catechumens will be received into communicant membership in the congregation by the rite of confirmation.)

In your solemn vow of confirmation you are setting for yourselves the goal of a life of faith and service to your Lord. You are setting this goal because you are the children of God and have learned about the way of salvation. The knowledge of what God in His grace has done for you has established you in your Christian faith. This goal will affect your outlook on life and your sense of values.

On this day of your confirmation I am going to speak to you about this goal, specifically about

### Traveling Toward the Goal Successfully

I. *Be assured of the great throng of fellow Christians that surround you*

A. The temptation that you will think you are alone will come to you as you travel toward your goal of Christian faith and service. Mass opinion would seem to be against you. You may want to be with the crowd.

B. But you are not alone. A great cloud of witnesses compass you about (v. 1 a). There are many who have borne witness to the truth-



fulness of your faith (ch. 11). Take courage from the many faithful Christians who are traveling with you toward the goal.

Do not give up the true faith for one that may be seemingly popular.—Take care that you keep with this throng of fellow Christians. The Lord wants us to be social individuals, but He also wants us to keep company with those who are traveling toward the same goal.

### II. *Lay aside every weight of sin that besets us*

A. The constant danger besetting us is the opinion that we can take part in the sins of the world and keep our own favorite sins and still reach the goal before us. Many a young man and woman who vowed to serve the Lord in faith and godliness never attained the goal because they kept the weight of sin about them.

B. Remember to lay aside every weight of sin (v. 1 b). We cannot carry the burden of sin and hope to win the race, even as the runner in the race cannot hope to win that race if he carries a heavy load. While it is true that as long as we are in this life, we shall be guilty of sins, yet we must put away our sins.

### III. *Look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith*

A. As you realize by this time, you will need help in traveling toward the goal. Of ourselves we cannot overcome the temptations and put aside the weight of sin about us.

B. We have help when we look to Jesus, who (1) by His life and by His death is the Author of our salvation and by His resurrection from the dead has given us a finished salvation (v. 2 a) and (2) is also an Example for us as we travel toward the goal. (V. 2 b)

C. We look to Jesus through a faithful use of the Word and Sacrament. Example: The wood of this lectern was once a part of a living tree and had the ability to heal itself, to grow and live. Separated from its roots and from the tree, that wood is dead, unable to heal the mars it suffers. This is a picture of one separated from Christ. To travel toward the goal successfully we must look to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

### IV. *Submit to the chastenings of the Lord*

A. You, the members of the confirmation class, are happy today. You are experiencing the joy of your faith. Because the Lord has given many promises regarding our physical welfare, you and I might expect that we shall have no troubles and sorrows but only happiness in the future. Experience does not agree with such an expectation.

Troubles do come, and with them many temptations to give up a life of faith and service.

B. As we resist sin "unto blood" (v. 4), remember that "whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth" (vv. 5, 6). When we receive chastening from the Lord, He is dealing with us, as His children, according to His love. Trouble and adversity are not a sign that God has forsaken His children but a proof that He is thinking of them in a special way. Example: Famous dog trainer was displaying his kennels. Some dogs were under strict discipline — these were the prize dogs. Others were free to run without discipline — these were to be sold as mongrels or to be given away.

C. Therefore with a firm trust in His promises and in His love submit to the chastening of the Lord.

Joseph in the Old Testament is a good example in these ways as he traveled toward the goal successfully. Amen.

Springfield, Ill.

LEWIS C. NIEMOELLER

#### MAUNDY THURSDAY

1 COR. 10:16, 17

An old farmer had seven sons who often quarreled with one another. When he was lying on his deathbed, he called them to his side and handed each one a stick with the request that they break it. This they did easily. Then the father tied seven other sticks together and handed them to each son with the request that he try to break the entire bundle. Each tried his muscles, but all their efforts failed. Then the father said, "My sons, I want you to remember this lesson after I am gone. As it is with these sticks, so it is with you. If you stick together, living in peace and harmony, you will be strong. If you permit strife to divide you, you will be like the individual broken sticks lying before you." When our Lord Jesus gathered with His disciples in the Upper Room for the last time, He was mindful of their strife with one another over who would be greatest in the kingdom of God. He was mindful of the strife which would come among His followers in the church which He came to establish. He was mindful of the strife between men and God before and after His time on earth. Therefore He prayed for unity between God and believers and for unity among the believers (John 17:20, 21). Then He did something more to maintain this unity by instituting Holy Communion as a powerful force tying true believers to Himself and to one another. He directed His followers of all time to use this sacrament frequently, that He might be at work to create and continue:

### The Powerful Union in Communion

There are three aspects to this union:

#### I. *The first is the mysterious union of Christ Himself with the elements of bread and wine (v.10)*

A. The word "communion" has various meanings—a closely knit fellowship between two people or things, an intimate association of two forces, a sharing of two things in each other, a joint participation in an inseparable union.

B. Two contradictory things cannot be fused—oil and water, holy and unholy. See 2 Cor. 6:14.

C. The text speaks of intimate joining of bread and body, of wine and blood.

D. Let the mystery of this union stand as it reads. We cannot completely understand "in, with, and under," but we can firmly believe in the real presence.

E. Our fathers called this "the visible Gospel." You see bread and wine. The body and blood are invisible, but just as really present as the elements you see. "This is My body." "This is the New Testament in My blood."

F. It is thrilling to think of the Communion celebrations all over the world this day, with Christ mysteriously at work to place His body and blood into the elements of bread and wine.

#### II. *Christ also unites Himself to us through Holy Communion*

A. Some have called this "the edible Gospel." He feeds us with His body and blood. We receive His promises not only through ears and eyes but through the mouth.

B. What a powerful assurance of the forgiveness of sins! What a reinforcement of the promises in His Word! We can almost hear Him say, "Once I died for you."

C. This union is possible only on a spiritual plane. We become part of Him. He dwells in us, and we in Him.

D. By Baptism we "put on" Christ. In Holy Communion we take His body and blood into ourselves.

E. His promises mean something. "Lo, I am with you alway." "He that abideth in Me and I in Him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." "Christ liveth in me."

III. *There is also a union between each of us and all fellow believers*  
(v. 17)

A. I am not alone. Christ here unites me in intimate fellowship with those who believe. Phillips: "The very fact that we all share one bread makes us all one body."

B. Christ is the Head. We are the members of the body. (Eph. 4:15-16; 1 Cor. 12:18)

C. The unity of believers is a very real thing in Communion. As you see others go to the altar, you can say, "That person and I are one, for the same Christ has entered into each of us."

D. We are interrelated and interdependent. Through frequent Communion, Christ unites us as a congregation. There is no place for petty jealousies, anger, or other separating influences at the Communion table.

E. He also unites us with other congregations and other believers throughout the world. What a powerful and extensive force for unity!

One word of warning must be sounded (1 Cor. 11:29). It is possible to receive Communion to one's detriment when a spiritual condition exists which is harmful (unbelief, lack of repentance, lack of knowledge, unwillingness to amend, etc.). Sugar is a gift of God. To a diabetic it is detrimental. There is nothing wrong with the sugar, only man's condition. If we allow a spiritual condition to remain in us that thwarts the unifying power of God, we have only ourselves to blame. He invites us: Come with true faith. Come with heartfelt repentance. Come with full knowledge of God's power. Come with firm resolve to amend. Come for the blessing of the powerful union in Communion.

Baltimore, Md.

GEORGE H. SOMMERMEYER

GOOD FRIDAY

2 COR. 5:12-21

What are the days we call good? Days of happiness, days when all goes well and our path is a soft carpet of roses, days when it's just plain great to be alive. Day when Jesus died is called Good Friday. Why the "good"? Nothing in that day but cruelty, suffering, and death! Yet—

It Was a Good Friday

I. *Because One died for all* (v. 14)

Wages that Master Sin pays for all our willing and unwilling loyalty and service to him is death—the death of hell's God-forsakeness and

horror. That's the check we earn for our service to the "boss," to sin. Someone had to pick up and cash that check of death. That someone was Jesus, who "died for all," who tasted death for us (Heb. 2:9). This is what Good Friday was all about. Jesus was picking up and cashing the check of death, the death of hell, for us.

II. *Because all of us died on that day* (v. 14)

A. Do you know that you were dead before you were born? You died in Jesus. It is as if God had taken all humanity, had wrapped it in a big bundle, and had crammed it into Christ. What's the result? Whatever Jesus was and did, we were and did! Was He perfect? Then so were we—in Him! (Cf. v. 21: "the righteousness of God *in Him!*") Did He down and defeat the devil at every turn? Then did we—in Him! Did He die the death of hell with all its fiery agony? Then did we—in Him! By your Baptism, as on a "magic carpet," says Paul (Rom. 6), God whisked you back through the centuries and then put you in the dead Jesus on the cross. Yes, you died before you were born. You died in Jesus.

B. Although you actually and really died when He expired, He alone—and not you—suffered the hellish agony that went with that death as the punishment for your sins.

C. God doesn't punish twice. You can't execute a criminal twice for his crimes. You were already executed in Christ for your sins. Can't be executed again—neither at your death nor on the Day of Judgment. Therefore why be afraid of either?

III. *Because His death was the necessary step to His resurrection* (v. 15: "and rose again"; cf. 1 Cor. 15:35-44)

A. Does the farmer harvest a crop in the fall without first sowing the seeds in the spring? No sowing, no new plant. Therefore, no sowing of body in soil of grave, no new plant; no resurrected and glorified body! Burial just sowing of dormant seed; absolutely as necessary as planting seed in the soil. No sowing, no new plant! No burial, no new body!

B. It worked that way with Christ. Good Friday was "spring sowing," so to speak. Easter was "fall harvest." New plant of Christ's resurrected body sprang from ground of His grave ready to be harvested into heaven.

C. It will work that way with us. Our death day, our Good Friday, just "spring sowing," just putting dormant seed of our body into grave.

As it was with Jesus, so it will be with us. We, too, shall have our Easter when the new plant of our revived and glorified body will shoot up from our tomb.

IV. *Because His death brings us life* (v. 15)

Remember how the Passover lamb's death brought life to the Israelites? So Jesus, God's New Testament Lamb, brings us life by His death. For by His dying the angel of eternal death is forced to pass over us. Can't come down to devour us.

V. *Because this death brings you and God together again* (vv. 18, 19)

A. The apartness of sin! God drove our first parents from Paradise and set the angel with fiery, revolving sword to guard the door. A symbol for the separation of sin!

B. The reconciling death! When life went away from Jesus on the cross, when He and life became separated in death, God and we came together again. When Jesus and life came together again on Easter, we became forever separated from our sins and are now united with God in life and death.

VI. *Because God made Christ our badness* (v. 21)

Please notice: Paul doesn't say, "God made Christ a *sinner!*" No; he says, "God made Christ *sin!*" Didn't just make Jesus one sinner, but all the sins of all men rolled into one person. How God hates sin! How God curses sin—with His wrath that abandons the sinner in hell's fiery forsakenness. That hate and curse were Christ's on Golgotha—for us!

VII. *Therefore*

A. You are dedicated (v. 15). Dedicated to the One who died and rose for you. Even as baptismal font is dedicated—set aside only for use of baptisms and not washing of clothes or dishes so you are set aside only for use of your Savior-Lord to do His will.

B. You are different (v. 17). You're new! (1) Before, hell-bound; now, heaven-bound; (2) before, goal was to get, grab, and hold; now goal is to give of self, time, and goods for others; (3) before, self-glorification; now self-mortification.

Now do you see why the Friday on which Christ died is called Good?

Richmond Heights, Mo.

HERBERT E. HOHENSTEIN

## EASTER SUNDAY

1 COR. 15:12-20

What a difference a day makes! Can you conceive of a world without the resurrection or of a church without the resurrection? Think of the disciples before and after. Think of your own sins, your own fears, your own griefs, your own death — without Easter. This is what Paul was thinking of when he penned this chapter and text to underscore the Easter angel's message:

Now Is Christ Risen!

*I. Now is Christ risen! This is the foundation of our faith*

A. The Christian faith is sealed by the resurrection of Jesus. Our faith is fixed to a living Christ, none less than the Son of God (Rom. 1:4). The resurrection asserts that faith is not misplaced when it is placed in Him. Without this resurrection all the great texts of Scripture are empty and void. See 1 Tim. 1:15; John 1:29; 2 Cor. 5:21; Is. 53; 1 John 1:7. His whole redeeming mission is a failure (v.17).

B. The Christian Church is built on the foundation of a living Christ. Could you picture the church without Easter — a downcast, thoroughly routed band of disciples; dejected, sorrowful women; a church cowering and fearful, locked behind closed doors? Could the Book of Acts have been written without Easter? Can the church today, too often apologetic, too often relaxed, too often fearful, justify her fears, inertia, and cowardice in the face of the fact of the resurrection?

C. Our Christian Gospel rests on the foundation of a living Christ (vv. 14, 15). We have no Gospel without it. We are speechless in the face of calamity, comfortless in the hour of death, of all men most miserable under the weight of sin's chain — except there be the Gospel of the resurrection. We preach Christ Crucified — and risen again — else we have no excuse for preaching. This is the good news of our Gospel.

*II. Now is Christ risen! This is the foundation of our hope*

A. Our resurrected Lord is the world's justification. We are no longer in sin (v.17). The empty tomb proclaims to all the world, "Thy sins are forgiven thee" (objective justification). At Calvary Christ paid for all. We cannot conceive of the weight and woe of a world's iniquity, but this massive burden could not contain Him in the tomb. The world's sin was not sufficient to bury Him there forever. He paid the price. He conquered all. He rolled the stone away — for you! (Romans 4:25)

B. His resurrection is the promise of our own! (John 11:25; John 17:24; John 14:1-6, 19) The universal enemy, death, is met and defeated by the universal Savior, Jesus. His Gospel today must be in words that sound the tread of the Conqueror. There is no more death, for He has abolished death and brought life to light. This is our hope—when we peer into the dark, foreboding grave of a loved one; when we confront the enemy ourselves. (Vv. 18, 19)

C. His resurrection is the purpose of human life. The Christian life is joy-filled, purposeful, determined, hopeful, optimistic, even when scanning world headlines (v. 19). This is true, for

III. *Now is Christ risen—this is the foundation of our love*

A. We are risen with Him—crucified with Christ, nevertheless alive; yet not we, but Christ who lives in us. As He was raised up from the dead, even so we also should walk in newness of life, in love for Him and for all His redeemed.

B. We are working for Him. Our love is especially concerned with heralding this resurrection Gospel! We want you through the Spirit in this Gospel to possess the faith of the living Lord, the hope of the resurrection, the peace of forgiveness, and love for the lost. We want all the world to possess it. Love calls us to action. Come, see the place where they laid Him; He is not here! He is risen! Go! Tell!

What a difference this day makes. Has it made a difference in you? Faith, hope, and love find firm foundation in Christ, for now is Christ risen!

St. Louis, Mo.

A. F. WEDEL