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Homiletics

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ARCHIVES

HOMILETICS

CHRISTMAS DAY, THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

Old Testament: Ezekiel 37:24-28

Epistle: Titus 3:4-8a

Gospel: John 1:1-14

"Glory Here and Now"

"Unto us a Child is born," exclaims the Introit, but the Child both fits and does not fit the job description written by Isaiah (9:6). Faith sees in the infant "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace," but other eyes turn elsewhere for signs of divinity. They seek a more powerful manifestation of deity than this and think the Child no match for the "boot of the trampling warrior" and no candidate for the role of that Davidic king whose government will never end (Is. 9:7; Ezek. 37:24-25). That is, there were and are many who deny that Jesus can lead to life.

Heedless of difficulty, the Introit goes right on with its imperative, "Sing unto the Lord a new song, for He has done marvellous things." (Ps. 98:1)

Has He? Has God really done anything so wonderful? Has He done what people want and what this world needs? The Epistle is all praise. Jesus is the epiphany of "the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior." Contrary to the religious standards of men, God acted in mercy, and He has begun the renovation of the world in Jesus.

It's all there in the Prolog of the Gospel according to Saint John: the fulfillment and the disenchantment, the acceptance and the spurning, the wonder and the lowliness, and through it all the undimmed promise of new life.

I

The Word and God

Vv. 1-2. "When time began, the Word was there" is the way James A. Kleist translated

it, taking careful note that the verb is ἦν, not ἐγένετο as in the following verses. The Word existed before all creatures and was there already at the beginning with God.

Rabbinic Judaism spoke of seven things existing before the foundation of the world: Torah, repentance, the Garden of Eden, Gehenna, the Throne of Glory, the Temple, the Name of the Messiah. Hellenistic Judaism pondered Wisdom which existed with God before there was an earth (Prov. 8:22-23; Sir. 24:9; Wis. 6:22). John is speaking doxologically of Jesus, ascribing to Him the highest honors in sight, and he is also scoring polemical points against other claimants for those same honors.

Note also how John outdoes the synoptists in the sweep and range of his imagination. Mark begins his Gospel with the word ἀρχή (see also Luke 1:2) and focuses on the fulfillment of prophecy in the Baptist. That Jesus was declared "Son" from the time of His baptism (Mark 1:1) may have seemed to John capable of adoptionistic misinterpretation. Matthew and Luke trace Jesus' divine sonship to His virginal conception (Matt. 1:23; 2:15 and especially Luke 1:32, 35). John never directly bears witness to the virgin birth, perhaps to avoid comparisons with pagan myths.

John says that the advent of Jesus was the incarnation of the Word who always existed. The Word is no less than God as He reveals Himself to the world. It is inadequate to translate the third clause of v. 1 as "The Word was a god" or "The Word was divine" (James Moffatt on the one hand and Jehovah's Witnesses on the other). When a predicate noun precedes the verb "to be," it lacks the definite article but should be translated as though the definite article were present in Greek (Colwell's law). Thus: "The Word was God."

The Word was God and was present with God in the beginning. If what John here says were not true, then the charge of blasphemy repeatedly leveled against Jesus in this Gospel by the leaders of the Jews would be sustained (5:18; 10:33; cf. 20:28). But that which emerges in Jesus is not only "of the earth, earthy." He is the Word who existed before all worlds. To meet and hear Jesus is to be confronted not just with a man, even a righteous man or a prophet, but with one's Creator.

The Gospel opens with the solemn ἐν ἀρχῇ and at the end is the cry concerning the τέλος (19:30). Between this beginning and that end is the career of the incarnate Word which constitutes the eschatological and hence critical moment in the world's history. The Fourth Gospel records the judgment and new creation here and now. Note how Genesis opens with ἐν ἀρχῇ, and the first creative week of days closes when God rested, having completed and brought to an end all His work (συνετέλεσεν ὁ θεός ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἕκτῃ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ ἃ ἐποίησεν, Gen. 2:2). The judgment and consummation of the world are no longer only future, but now.

The Creative Word

Vv. 3-4. The period between these verses probably belongs where RSV and TEV put it and not where NEB has it. ὁ γέγονεν is a perfect form used to denote a continuing effect and means "of the things created and now existing" (Blass-Debrunner-Funk, *A Greek Grammar*, 342.1). Hence the correctness of TEV: "Not one thing *in all creation* was made without him."

The Word is the agent through whom God created all things. (See a similar assertion for Wisdom in Wis. 9:1-2; on Knowledge as agent of creation see the Dead Sea Scrolls, *Manual of Discipline*, xi.11). One basis for the universal claim of the

Word is here announced: all life has its source in the Word. Nothing in the world is autonomous or independent, nor can it declare its independence or autonomy without passing upon itself a sentence of death and consigning itself to darkness.

Furthermore there is and can be no division between Creator and Redeemer. Gnostics divided the two sharply and thought in terms of a matter-spirit dualism. They analyzed man's problem as consisting of the fact that he is in the body and is headed towards physical dissolution in death. For them the saving solution was ἀθανασία, the immortality of the disembodied soul, achieved through esoteric knowledge, γνῶσις. It is no accident that the nouns γνῶσις and ἀθανασία never occur in John. Eternal life, ζωὴ αἰώνιος, is the opposite of sin and is the gift of fellowship with God through Jesus even here in this material world and even now in the midst of ongoing history (17:3). Jews are offended because the eschatological hope is fulfilled also now, and Greeks are offended because deliverance is offered *in* the material world rather than *from* it. And who would deny that the faith espoused by many Christians today is frankly otherworldly and individualistic? Indeed, some make such professions their boast in utter contradiction of the Fourth Gospel. If the Redeemer is the Creator, then redemption is the lifting of the created order to its originally intended condition, its restoration and consummation rather than its repudiation. The "holy" presses in and eternal life is proffered precisely here and now where real people eat and sleep, work and play, suffer and hope and die.

Life and light are abiding qualities of the Word. Of Wisdom it was said that she is a reflection of the everlasting light of God (Wis. 7:26), that she lights up the path of men (Sir. 1:29), and darkness cannot overcome that light (Wis. 7:10, 26, 29-30).

Furthermore he who finds Wisdom finds life (Prov. 8:35) and those who cling to her will live (Bar. 4:1). And Torah was by others similarly praised.

V.5. What precisely is meant by the shining of the light, and to what action does the attempted snuffing out refer? Raymond Brown in his excellent and helpful commentary in the Anchor Bible series (New York: Doubleday. 2 vol., 1966—1970), follows a patristic interpretation which thinks the shining refers to the gift and presence of eternal life in Eden, while the extinguishing means the assault upon the tree in Genesis 3. So he takes the aorist κατέλαβεν of that one moment in past time and gives it punctiliar force. TEV is probably to be preferred: "The darkness has never put it out." That is, the light has always been shining and has always been suffering fresh attacks. In this interpretation the aorist is gnomic (see BDF 333) or complexive (BDF 332). There is further a difficulty here in the meaning of καταλαμβάνω. *Jerusalem Bible* offers as one possibility: "a light that darkness could not understand." Is it "overpower" and "snuff out" or "understand"? John loves ambiguity and words with multiple meanings. The English words "comprehend" and "master" might preserve the ambiguity.

The Word and the Baptist

Vv. 6-9 (and 15) turn from hymnic praise of the Word to history and John the Baptist, on whom the Evangelist will focus particularly beginning in verse 19. The Baptist's mission (he was "sent," 1:33; 3:28) is bound up with and subordinate to the Word. John is the first in a series of witnesses to take the stand in this Gospel and point to the Word. Others are the Samaritan woman, Jesus' own works, the Old Testament, the multitude, the Holy

Spirit, the apostles, the Father, the Evangelist himself.

John is not the light (as he is not the Christ, not Elijah, not the prophet, 1:25) but the voice bearing witness (1:23) to the one who is the genuine light.

When John came, the light was also at that time coming into the world. The light and life and Word which had always been present were erupting with fresh force into the world, and John bore testimony.

The genuine light was coming to throw light on every man (V.9). "Enlighten" (RSV) is too innocuous a word for this activity. In the Fourth Gospel "enlightening" has also a sinister aspect. Jesus is that eschatological light who makes the blind see and the seeing blind (9:39). This light burns down on every man and brings to light what he is, exposes him (3:19-21). When that light shines, some are attracted and warmed and they flourish, while others scurry away like bugs suddenly exposed by the lifting of a rock, so much do they abhor the light. Likewise ἀληθινός means more than "true." It means the genuine article and implies a contrast with all that is ersatz and phony.

The Word in the World

Vv. 10-11. The Word came into the world to His own home (εἰς τὰ ἴδια; see 19:27), and His own people (οἱ ἱδιοὶ) did not welcome Him, just as Wisdom came to make her dwelling with men but found no place to stay (Enoch 42:2; see Matt. 8:20). It is impossible to tell whether the author means the created world or Judea by "his home." In any case the tragic rejection is the story which unfolds in chapters 2—12.

V.12. But some did receive Him, and, in Semitic circumlocution, "He gave them to become God's children." Divine begetting is here the point. Note that as many as re-

ceived Wisdom became "friends of God" (Wis. 7:27). Jesus alone is *υἱός*, but all who receive Him become *τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ* (cf. Is. 63:8; Wis. 16:21; *υἱοί* in Matt. 5:9; Gal. 3:26). Believers are God's children now (*τέκνα*), and their future is unimaginably great (1 John 3:2). The story of how some received Him and became His friends (15:13-15) and God's children is set forth in chapters 13—21.

John underscores the fact that becoming God's child is a matter of faith in His name—and faith as a present relationship. (*ἔδωκεν* could refer to a single past act, but *πιστεύουσιν* focuses on an existing and continuing reality.)

V. 13. People become God's children not "by natural means" (TEV; see the description of conception in Wis. 7:1-6). They are brought to new life by God Himself (3:3-8; 1 John 3:9; 4:7; 5:1-4, 18a).

The Jerusalem Bible translates as text what in other versions is a footnote, the famous variant reading which, by making the initial pronoun and the final verb of v.13 singular, becomes a testimony to the virgin birth. But the evangelist is most likely continuing his description of the begetting of children of God.

The Community Celebrates the Word

V. 14. The pronouns shift for the first time to the first person. The Christian community speaks now not of the past alone but of its own present conviction and experience (see 1 John 1:1-4).

"The Word became flesh." He did not just put it on like a coat. The Word *became* a human being, a particular historical man with man's mortality and weakness. Here is no escape from the material world but entrance into it and oneness with it. Wisdom descended from heaven to dwell with men (Prov. 8:31; Sir. 24:8; Bar. 3:37; Wis. 9:10; James 3:15), but Hellenistic

Judaism never says that Wisdom *became* a human being. The Prolog here parts company with all predecessors and parallels and bespeaks Christian experience.

He made His dwelling, tented or tabernacled (*ἐσκήνωσεν*, see Sir. 24:4-8 on Wisdom) among us. The presence of God is no longer invisible as at the tabernacle and the temple (Ex. 25:8; Num. 35:34).

Where is the stress in verse 14? Should the reader focus on the becoming flesh and read the verse as a declaration of the humbling of the Word, its *kenosis*, noting the scandal that the Revealer is none other than a man? Or should one emphasize the second half of the verse, "We have seen His glory," so that the verse bears witness to the exalted epiphany of the Word-made-flesh (cf. 1 Tim. 3:16)? Certainly it is true that John has nothing to do with statements that could be interpreted as saying that the man Jesus was at some time—baptism or transfiguration or resurrection—exalted to the status of Christ or Lord or Son of God (cf. Acts 2:22; 3:13; Rom. 1:4). Nor is John's outlook the same as that expressed in the old hymn in Philippians 2:5-11. John declares that the Word of God has described a parabola of triumphant descent and ascent, and the Gospel testifies to the visible, historical segment of that parabola which is *in toto* a victorious movement.

Isaac (Gen. 22:2, 12, 16; Heb. 11:17) and Wisdom (Wis. 7:22) are also described as *μονογενής*, unique, precious, choicest—synonymous with *ἀγαπητός* and *ἐκλελεγμένος*. To the incarnate Word belongs unique glory. To that word *glory* cling not only ideas of presence or manifestation, the brilliant effulgence surrounding the self-revelation of God, but that vocable is heavy with overtones of victory, eschatological and final victory in God's struggle for His world. That is what the eye of faith beholds in the Word made flesh. Others saw only out-

rageous presumption, and His career was to them the deserved downward way of the blasphemer going to his doom. But the evangelist and his community see the movement of Jesus from birth and baptism through ministry to the cross as an upward way, an ascent from glory to glory. In the peculiarly insightful vocabulary of the Fourth Gospel, the cross is the moment of Jesus' ascent to the Father, His exaltation and glorification, the hour of His δόξα, His final victory, the completion of His work. And it is not immortality or release from the world which is man's triumph over the world, but faith, the trusting relationship with God in Christ, is the victory which conquers the world (1 John 5:4; John 16:33).

That he is full of grace and truth is said in Col. 1:19 of the "exalted one" but here of the "incarnate one." χάρις and ἀλήθεια are Greek for חֶסֶד וְאֱמֻנָה, God's election grace and covenant loyalty. The incarnation of the Word arises from the faithfulness of God who is true to His promise.

Vv. 15-18 are not actually part of the lection, but should not be overlooked. V. 15 bears witness again to the absolute precedence of the Word over the Baptist.

V. 16. Christians have tasted the goodness of the Lord and speak what they know. From Him they have received "grace upon grace" (RSV), "overflowing divine grace" (R. H. Lightfoot), grace in "an endless progression and intensification" (J. Jeremias), grace which "pours forth in ever new streams" (Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich). The idea of "new grace replacing old grace," that is, a new covenant setting aside an older (Raymond Brown and others) is generous to the Old Testament but overlooks the Johannine polemic against Moses, who gave not "grace and truth" but "the Law" (v. 17).

V. 18. The polemic against Moses continues with a second antithesis: no one,

including even Moses, has ever seen God (cf. 1 John 4:12). Seeing and loving are closely related in 1 John 4:20 and 3 John 11, just as seeing God and being children of God are intimately connected in the beatitudes with the doing of the will of God (Matt. 5:6-9). There is no real seeing of God, insight into God, knowledge of God, apart from love, for of course "God is love" (1 John 4:16).

Rabbis taught that Torah lay in God's bosom while God sat on the throne of glory, and of Torah God said, "She is My daughter." John says, in Brown's translation, "It is God the only Son, ever at the Father's side, who has revealed Him." And with that the Prolog has come full circle from the presence and the oneness of the Son with the Father before the world's foundation (1:1) through the incarnation and the victory of the cross (1:14) to the place he held before in the bosom of the Father (1:18).

II

The angels sang of "Glory in the highest," but John seems determined to speak of glory in the lowest, the highest in the lowest, the victory in that which seems to be defeat. He sees glory erupting in the flesh of an infant, flesh that went up to hang on a tree in Jerusalem. And the crucifixion of that man was the fullest expression of God's glory, God's eschatological victory over His enemies, God's work of new creation. Jesus is that Word of God whose praises are sung in the Prolog, but it is a new song chanted by faith alone. This incarnate Word here called glorious seems to lack the power of the original creative "Let there be." And it is not so strong as the Logos of Wisdom (18:14-15), a stern warrior brandishing sharp sword and leaping down from heaven's royal throne to smite Egypt's Pharaoh. (That's in next Sunday's Introit!) Nor does the Christmas Child or Calvary's Man look like Revelation's hero on a white horse with

sword between His teeth whose name is the Word of God (Rev. 19:13).

And yet He is all that the Old Testament claimed for the *dabar Yahweh*, all that Judaism saw in Memra and Torah and Sophia, all that Gnostics found in Gnosis or Greeks in Logos—all and more. And finally no title is adequate to the task of proclaiming the victory of Jesus, and after the Prolog the title "Word" drops away and the evangelist turns to the story of Jesus—His words and works and suffering on the cross.

The Collect is eminently Johannine and suits the Prolog well. It speaks of "the new birth of thine only-begotten Son in the flesh," and fixes on the soteriological significance of that epiphany, asking that by it we may be set free. Freedom is not directly mentioned in the Prolog, but *δόξα* means God's eschatological throwing around of His weight on behalf of His people. That He has done, and we pray that we may see and believe and be His children enjoying His freedom.

Glory—in the Flesh

I. The ancient song (John 1:1-18) extols the greatness of Jesus in contrast to all rivals. And note that the rivals are not all forms of moral evil but counterclaims for that which in and of itself was good: Torah, Wisdom, Moses.

II. Modern rivals threaten to turn our heads—not so different from certain brands of ancient Judaism or Gnosticism. Siren and promissory voices offer 20th-century versions of other-worldliness and escapism (Gnosticism), while more robust, this-worldly and activist faiths tend to be doctrinaire and moralistic.

III. But the song goes on in the community of his people. There are those who accept John's claim that renewal, light, and life are in Jesus and do not spurn Him as superfluous, impossible, or blasphemous.

Where the incarnate Word is enthroned upon the praises of his people, there he shares with His own the fruits of His victory: sonship and freedom.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Old Testament: Isaiah 63:7-9

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1: (18-20) 21-25

Gospel: Luke 2:25-38

"Some King! Some Power!"

The two Introits and the Gradual have one verse in common: Psalm 93:1. *The Psalms for Modern Man* renders it this way: "The Lord is King! He is clothed with majesty, and covered with strength." Some king! Some strength! The Epistle is Paul's classic expression of the hiddenness and hence the scandal of the deed of God in Jesus. With His lowliness Jesus looks like the very incarnation of folly and ineffectiveness. But the Spirit of God provokes a man to shout: "He is the power of God and the wisdom of God!" (1 Cor. 1:18-25; 12:3). The Gospel focuses on God's chosen consolation and its contradiction.

I

V. 25. The new age begins in continuity with the old in the heart of the ancient capital, in the temple itself, in the midst of the most devout of people. Like Zechariah and Elizabeth (1:6), Simeon is "a righteous and devout man." Luke has no accolades higher than *δίκαιος καὶ εὐλαβής* (see Luke 23:47; Acts 2:5; 8:2; 22:12). Nothing is said of how old Simeon was, but the tone of his canticle and the parallels with Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Anna suggest that it is an old man who beholds the infant Redeemer.

Simeon (his name means "He [God] has heard") was looking for the *παράκλησιν τοῦ Ἰσραήλ*, that is, the Messiah and the time when God would indeed comfort His people (Is. 40:1-2; 49:13; 61:2). This entire peric-

ope is bracketed by "the consolation of Israel" (v. 25) on the one hand and "the redemption of Jerusalem" (v. 38) on the other. Simeon (v. 25) and Anna (v. 38) represent pious Israel, continuity with the best of the old, bearing witness (Deut. 19:15) to the advent of their old hope in the new birth of this Child. And the pericope is not only a declaration that Jesus is the fulfiller but is also a polemic against a military-political definition of Israel's hope. In that respect this pericope is paired with the Emmaus story (24:13-35) where the resurrected Jesus speaks with Cleopas and his companion, who did not believe that a crucified person could possibly "redeem Israel" (24:21, cf. 23:51).

The Holy Spirit, long quiet and remote, was active again: a sign that these are indeed the last times. And the Spirit gave Simeon prophetic power to read the signs of the time. He and Anna bear no official titles (Anna is called "a prophetess") and are members of no human hierarchy or establishment. They are members of what A. Plummer called a "spontaneous priesthood" which the Spirit Himself sometimes raises up.

V. 26. Simeon had been promised that he would live until he saw "the Lord's Anointed," a paraphrase for the "consolation of Israel."

V. 27. The Spirit led Simeon into the temple and directed him to Jesus and His parents, who had come to observe the requirements of the Law.

V. 28. Only the Spirit could open the mind and heart of Simeon to behold in this week-old infant the fulfillment of ancient promise (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18-25; 12:3), and he "blessed" (εὐλόγησεν) or praised God in the words of the Nunc Dimittis, which "in its suppressed rapture and vivid intensity equals the most beautiful of the Psalms" (A. Plummer).

V. 29. "Now," began Simeon, for "now" is the end of the old age of waiting and the

dawn of the new age of prophecy fulfilled (see "today" in 2:11; 4:21; 5:26; 19:9; 23:43). Simeon calls himself a δοῦλος or slave of God, here styled δέσποτα (cf. Acts 4:24), and declares, "Now you are permitting me to take my departure in peace" (the translation of F. W. Danker, whose commentary on Luke, *Jesus and the New Age*, is a treasury of sane and cogent instruction on the third Gospel). Simeon is at peace for he has now experienced the wholeness long awaited (it is "according to his word" of promise), greeted by Zechariah (Luke 1:69-79), and destined to be missed by many in Israel who would seek peace in armed revolt (Luke 19:41-44) rather than in this Jesus. Where is our peace? In contrast to popular messianic hope, Luke points ever to Jesus (2:14; 19:38) and His way

V. 30. In Him and in Him alone (Acts 4:12) is salvation, and then, turning from what the Child means to him to the significance of the Infant for the entire world, Simeon declares (v. 31) that the messianic consolation is for all flesh (cf. 3:6).

V. 32. This salvation is a light for the Gentiles and is the crowning glory of Israel. "The utterance harmonizes with Luke's own conception of the Christian religion as bringing to the Greeks for the first time the 'sure word' of truth for which they were waiting (1:4), while at the same time it provides the final verification of Israel's ancient faith" (W. Manson, *The Gospel of Luke*, p. 21). In the Book of Acts Paul defends his own mission to the Gentiles by saying he fulfills — at Jesus' command — the prophecy regarding taking a light to the Gentiles (Acts 13:47; cf. 20:21; 26:23; Is. 42:6; 49:6, 9). The consolation or redemption of Israel does not occur at the expense of the Gentiles.

V. 33. Mary and Joseph (quite simply called "His parents," cf. 2:41) marveled, and well they might. The salvation of God in Jesus is

God's doing, and it is marvelous, causing wonder. This is peace which passes human understanding.

V. 34. The prophet then blesses "Mary His mother." Joseph was thought to be the child's father (3:23; 4:22), but apparently this inspired figure knew better.

"This child," reads TEV, "is chosen by God (κεῖται) for the destruction and the salvation of many in Israel." RSV has the more literal "fall and rising" for πτώσιν καὶ ἀνάστασιν, echoing more clearly the putting down of the mighty from their thrones and the lifting up of those of low degree (1:52). The deed of God does not fulfill the smug hope of victory for Israel against all foreign comers. There will be a profound transvaluation of values. In Israel herself many will fall; for they will speak against and contradict the sign provided by God. He will be subject to ridicule, for many see in Him only madness and impotence.

V. 35. And so He will be a light which exposes, to say it in Johannine idiom. Or in the phrases of Isaiah 8:14-15 and Psalm 118:22, He will be a rock on which some build while others only stumble (Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11). Times of testing lie ahead when the genuineness of each man's religion will be tried. He will "bring out the secret aims of many a heart" (James Moffatt's translation).

Ominous sounds accompany the dawning of the new age, and not even the child who ushers it in will be exempt from suffering. Indeed Luke later records the word, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

V. 36. The prophet exits, and a prophetess enters, namely, Anna ("Grace") of the insignificant tribe of Asher. She comes forward to act as the second of the mandatory number of witnesses (Deut. 19:15) in the temple.

V. 37. Anna resembles fabled Judith both

in longevity and in piety (see Fred Danker's comments), and together Simeon and Anna are very much like Zechariah and Elizabeth. They represent "the poor in spirit," Israel in all her meekness and devotion, unexceptional in status but unexcelled in spiritual insight and trust. Fasting was a way of strengthening one's prayer and concentrating all one's spiritual energy on it (Luke 5:33-35; Acts 9:19; 13:2).

V. 38. Anna publicly confessed her praise of God (ἀνθωμολογεῖτο) and began to speak about Jesus to all who were awaiting the deliverance of Jerusalem (see on v. 25).

II

"Thy almighty Word" has descended (Introit), but the Pharaohs it now slays are different from the ancient hereditary rulers of upper and lower Egypt. The Collect focuses on the heart of each Christian person and asks that whatever keeps us from acting in accord with God's pleasure might be slain in us, so that in the name of His beloved Son we might "be made to abound in good works."

And yet is that the victory we seek? Is that the light and the glory we really want? Don't we have a different list, another set of urgent priorities? The warning and the promise of the Gospel for this Sunday are still timely. The inspired utterances of Simeon and Anna point us away from all false solutions and misleading hopes and hold before us the one anointed and given by God to be our salvation, our redemption, our peace.

"Some King! Some Power!"

I. Persons in every age watch and wait for consolation and deliverance. "Hope springs eternal." And there are prophets both secular and religious calling on people to put their trust in and pin their hopes to all sorts of figures.

II. God sent Jesus as our salvation, and peo-

ple part company in their reactions to Him, heaping upon Him praise or blame. Offense at Jesus and His lowliness is nothing new. Nor is it ever very far from any one of us. That can easily be documented.

III. Those who receive Him and trust Him really do live in peace and know salvation.

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