

Concordia Theological Monthly

Continuing

LEHRE UND WEHRE

MAGAZIN FUER EV.-LUTH. HOMILETIK

THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY-THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY

Vol. XIII

October, 1942

No. 10

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Ein Prediger muss nicht allein weiden, also dass er die Schafe unterweise, wie sie rechte Christen sollen sein, sondern auch daneben den Wölfen wehren, dass sie die Schafe nicht angreifen und mit falscher Lehre verfuehren und Irrtum einfuehren.

Luther

Es ist kein Ding, das die Leute mehr bei der Kirche behaelt denn die gute Predigt. — Apologie, Art. 24

If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? — 1 Cor. 14:8

Published for the

Ev. Luth. Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States

CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE, St. Louis, Mo.



ARCHIVES

against sins as being matters of indifference because so regarded by men. God's Word alone decides what is sin and what an adiaphoron. 2. As to their implications. A. Negative: Do not judge or despise a Christian because he differs from you in his conduct in regard to adiaphora. B. Positive: Also in adiaphora we must live unto the Lord, in fulfilling His will, to the glory of His Name, in gratitude to His love, to the welfare of our brother. — *We Live Unto the Lord*. 1. What does this mean? Vv. 7, 8. 2. How is this manifested? Vv. 1-6. 3. Whence do we receive the power? V. 9. — *The Christian's Relation to Adiaphora*. He does not permit different opinions to disturb the peace of the congregation. Vv. 1-6. In these matters also he lives unto the Lord. Vv. 7-9. — *The Fruit of Christ's Lordship Over Dead and Over Living*. 1. We live and die unto the Lord. 2. We live in peace and harmony with our fellow Christians. — On vv. 7-9: *Jesus Is Our Lord!* To Him we live; to Him we die; His own we are in time and eternity. Or, *Jesus Is Our Lord!* Therefore we are His own in life and death; therefore let us live and die unto Him.

TH. LAETSCH

Outlines on the Wuerttemberg Epistle Selections

Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity

1 John 4:7-12

If anybody thinks the Bible is an old book with no message for our times he ought to study this text. How practical! how timely! how intimately related to everyday life and present problems! The Scriptures, of course, contain revelations about supernatural, heavenly things. Let us be supremely thankful for that feature! But they likewise bring us instruction pertaining to our conduct, our contact with our fellow Christians and people in general. Cf. the letters to the Romans, the Ephesians, and Colossians, which have in definite divisions a doctrinal and a practical part. The text treats a practical topic by speaking of the love we owe each other. The question is answered

Why Must Christians Have and Manifest Love?

1

God their heavenly Father is love. He does not merely manifest love; He is love. To paint Him, as Luther says, a person would have to paint love. He is eager to be closely united with us, to help and to bless us. Cf. our creation and preservation. That there is so much suffering in the world does not disprove the reality of God's love; it merely testifies to the power of sin.

We Christians are God's children in a special sense. We are "born of God." V. 7. He has regenerated us through His Holy Spirit. As His children we must follow His example. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." We must love each other and our fellow men in general.

The world is filled with hatred. Hatred is applauded. Our aim as Christians must be to love, to love even our enemies.

2

God manifested His love in a most vital way by sending His Son for our redemption. John points to the heart of the Christian religion by speaking of the highest manifestation of the love of God. He sent His Son to die that we might live, to pay for our sins that we might be cleansed of all guilt. V. 9. That was done in spite of our unworthiness. God's love existed before we ever loved Him. V. 10. We can never adequately extol this proof of God's love. It certainly demonstrates that His love is real, genuine, not mere words.

Our reaction must be that we gratefully base our hope on this manifestation of divine love, accepting Jesus as our Redeemer, and that we, furthermore, likewise show genuine, true love toward our fellow men. If sacrifices are required, let them be cheerfully rendered.

3

Whoever is a Christian cannot but love because he has been born of God and God lives in him. Having been born of God (v. 7), the Christian possesses new life. God lives in Him. V. 12. The divine image is beginning to be renewed; since God is love, the Christian loves. That cannot be different. Fire is warm; it must be warm, that is its nature. As long as a person is a regenerate being He loves; that is his nature. If love is gone, the new spiritual life is gone, too. V. 8.

Do we see how essential love is in the life of the Christian? A present-day application: Let us not think that love for our enemies makes a person weak and feeble in his loyalty toward his country and his government! But neither let us think that the present war dispenses us from the obligation to love the enemies fighting us!

W. ARNDT

Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity

James 3:13-18

As a rule God does not take us to heaven as soon as we have become Christians. He leaves us here that we may let our light shine, etc., Matt. 5:16. By *word* and *life* we are to testify of all

that Jesus has done for us. Luke 8:39; 1 Pet. 3:1b. What we are to *tell* others about Jesus is written in many places in Holy Writ. Here in our text we are told *how we are to live* so that our life may be a testimony of the Savior's love and power.

The Life which Testifies of Jesus' Love and Power

1

Our text describes the *nature* of this life.

a) First of all our text tells us what must be avoided.

1. "Bitter envying." V. 14. Even unbelievers know that envy and jealousy are both shameful and foolish. Whoever is guilty of them shows that his heart is bare of true love for his neighbor. If he loves his neighbor as himself, he would rejoice just as much at another's success as at his own. How shameful the jealousy of Cain against Abel! Saul against David! and the Pharisees against Jesus!

But besides being shameful, envy is also foolish, because it keeps us from enjoying the gifts of God which He wishes us to enjoy. 1 Tim. 6:17. Instead of counting his own blessings, enjoying them and being thankful for them, the jealous person embitters his own mind and heart by dwelling upon his own disadvantages and the good fortune of others, e. g., Joseph's brothers, Gen. 37:4; Haman. Esther 5:13.

Sad to say, we notice this sin also among Christians. Matt. 20:20-28. —

2. Our text warns us to avoid also carnal glorying, v. 14, *bragging*. This sin even the heathen have condemned. Plautus ridiculed the bragging soldier, who spoke much of what he would do, but ran away as soon as he saw the foe. When Benhadad bragged of his power and of his great army, etc., the king of Israel told him: 1 Kings 20:11.

Followers of the lowly Jesus, who washed His disciples' feet, should avoid such pride. Rom. 12:3. When Peter, tempted by pride, asked the Lord Jesus, "What shall we have therefore?" Jesus warned him by a parable which ended: "Many that are first shall be last." Matt. 19:30. Cp. Prov. 27:1.

b) Instead of these vices the Christian should practice the virtues mentioned here in our text.

1. He should desire to be pure in heart, v. 17, that is, he ought to learn better and better his own sinfulness and pray: Ps. 51:1, 2.

2. Instead of insisting on his rights in every case, he should be "peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated," that is to say, if at all possible, the faithful Christian should live peaceably with other men, Rom. 12:18, e. g., Abraham toward Lot; David toward Saul; Stephen praying for his persecutors; Jesus on the cross.

If we rightly consider our own heart, we shall find much cause for repentance. We have reason to pray: Hymn 349, vv. 6, 7 (old Hymnal); 399, vv. 4, 5 (new Hymnal).

2

Our text speaks also of the *fruits* of this conduct.

a) It points to the shameful results produced by envy, selfish bragging, and contempt for others by telling us that

1. These sins come from the devil, v. 15, and out of a corrupt, wicked heart.

2. The text points out also that such sins will produce confusion and every evil work. V. 16.

By walking in the ways of God we avoid all this. 1 Pet. 3:10-13; Ps. 1.

b) The *merciful, gentle conduct* of a true Christian wins many friends. V. 18; Prov. 16:7. Among the first Christians there was such a love of one Christian for the other as to cause the heathen to say: "Look how those Christians love each other! They are ready to die for each other, whereas we heathen kill each other." Such godly, peaceful conduct produces happy homes, happy congregations, true joy in the Lord. Again and again we will notice the truth of the Lord's saying: "Godliness is profitable," etc. 1 Tim. 4:8.

c) The faithful Christian should ever remember that his Lord will not forget any good work, but that even a cup of cold water given in Jesus' name will be rewarded. He should humble himself under the mighty hand of God that God may exalt him in due time, 1 Pet. 5:6. He should take to heart 1 Pet. 4:15; Matt. 5:11, 12. He follows the example of the Good Samaritan, of the Lord Jesus Himself.

d) At times we may be troubled by the thought that a gentle, forgiving spirit is not appreciated; that the meek and mild are treated with injustice, without consideration, neglected and despised as weaklings; but who fared better: bragging Goliath or humble David, envious Saul or merciful David, the envious Pharisees or the Lord Jesus, who now has a name that is above every name? And even though Abel was martyred and Jesus was crucified and many meek and gentle Christians suffered under the cruelty of the proud and haughty, remember that there is a God in heaven whose Word has never failed, who will see to it that His humble Christians will be exalted in due time. 1 Pet. 5:6; Rom. 8:18.

Let us therefore now crucify our flesh, in which also live these sins of envy and pride, and let us ask God to strengthen us in humility, purity, and gentleness, so that our light may shine before men. Heb. 13:20, 21.

M. SOMMER

Twentieth Sunday after Trinity

2 Tim 2:1-6

Man can be a good citizen by his own natural powers. He is capable of civil righteousness. Many unbelievers are law-abiding, loyal, patriotic citizens. They would, however, be still better citizens if they were Christians. Christianity strengthens civil righteousness and produces the highest type of citizenship. "The fellow citizens with the saints" are at the same time the best citizens of their country. One of the reasons for this is that they pray.

Praying Christians Are Their Country's Most Valuable Asset

1. *They pray for all men*
2. *They pray for their government*

1

Christians are deeply interested in all the people of the globe. They do not single out any nation as incurably evil and unworthy of further existence. They hold all nations, races, and tongues in high regard. Why? Vv. 3-6. God is the Savior of all men. The man Christ Jesus mediated between the one God and all of them by giving Himself a Ransom for them all. God for the Redeemer's sake is gracious to them all, forgives them all their sins, and earnestly desires that all come to this knowledge, this faith, and thus be saved. What Christ purchased at so great a cost, at the price of His holy precious blood, should according to the gracious will of God come into the actual possession of everyone. Hence the Gospel must be preached to all everywhere that sinners may believe, rejoice, and take comfort in the righteousness and salvation merited for them by Christ.

This, then, is what Christians desire, that the testimony of Christ may spread from pole to pole for the enlightenment and salvation of all. 2 Cor. 5:14 ff. This is the main burden of all their supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks. Not as if they were perfect in this, but ever they repent of their selfishness and indolence and revert to fervent prayer for the salvation of mankind. And when they see how mission work progresses on earth, they rejoice and give thanks to God for hearing their prayers.

This attitude of prayerful concern for the salvation of all men makes them valuable citizens. It is very helpful in removing the causes of war and in maintaining, or attaining, a just and honorable peace for their country. It takes the strain out of international relations and makes for amity and friendship between nations. It opens the channels of intercourse and commerce. Devout citizens are the horsemen and chariots, the most effective arma-

ment and defense, the cause and source of the prosperity of their country. Though the world hate them, yet it owes everything to the Christians in its midst. Cf. Pieper, *Christl. Dogmatik*, III:99 f.

2

Christians pray also for the kings and all that are in authority. They pray for their government. They pay taxes, vote, abide by the laws, serve in various ways and capacities, but — best of all — they pray for the powers that be. The wisdom and efficiency of a government comes from above in answer to the prayers of Christians.

For what shall we Christians pray? V. 2. A government which makes such a life possible is a good government, regardless of its form. A good government allows the church to assemble, administer the means of grace, disseminate the Word, and protects the church in its rights. A good government discharges its own proper functions. Rom. 13:3, 4; 1 Pet. 2:14. It safeguards the rights of its subjects to life, property, and the pursuit of happiness.

Such a government we have; let our daily prayers be that we may retain it. It is no secret that our form of government is menaced by enemies from within and from without. What can we do to preserve it? We can bear witness against subversive forces, can cast our ballots against them, but without prayer this will be of little avail. Unless we intercede in behalf of our free institutions, we shall awake one of these fine days and see them all gone. But if we conscientiously pray for the welfare of our government, Jer. 29:7, we shall by the grace of God continue to lead a quiet, peaceable, godly, and free life.

The Apostle admonishes also to thanksgiving. Oh, how thank-worthy the blessings of good government are! Especially we have every reason to give thanks to God for our government of, for, and by the people. We are still enjoying the priceless heritage of religious liberty. No church is preferred, none hindered. Church and State are separate.

May we continue steadfast in the true Christian faith as stated vv. 3-6. Among the very first and most precious fruits of this faith is the making of supplications, etc. Vv. 1, 2. Thus shall we be good, loyal, patriotic citizens, a real asset to our country.

PAUL G. BIRKMANN

Twenty-First Sunday after Trinity

1 Cor. 15:35-50

From time immemorial people have denied the resurrection of the dead — the heathen of ancient days, the Sadducees at the time of Christ. In our days whole denominations deny that

Christ will raise up the bodies of the dead on the Last Day. To forsake this fundamental teaching of the Christian religion leaves comfortless, helpless in the face of death and at the grave of their loved ones. This is particularly true in these days of war. Surely in times like this, when death strikes so quickly and suddenly, strikes perhaps when our loved ones are far away, it is wonderful to hear

The Glorious Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection

It presents

1. *The fact of the resurrection*
2. *The form of the bodily resurrection*

1

(A) Within the congregation at Corinth there were some who denied a possibility of the bodily resurrection. For this reason Paul in 1 Cor. 15 speaks of the "glorious resurrection" of all believers. Vv. 12-34 Paul proves the possibility of the resurrection by the certain fact of the resurrection of Christ. He shows how futile our whole Christianity would be if Christ had not been raised from the dead. 1 Cor. 15:14, 18, 19. "But Christ was raised from the dead," as St. Paul says, 1 Cor. 15:20, "and so we can also hope for our own resurrection."

(B) Apparently some among the Corinthians still were not satisfied, V. 35. A double question they raise: first, How are the dead raised up? and second, With what body do they come? St. Paul answers both questions, demonstrating from nature the fact of the resurrection. He indicates, v. 36, that people who doubt the fact of the resurrection are foolish, because they close their eyes to the miracle of nature. The seed that is placed into the ground must first corrupt, must waste away, must practically be consumed before it will quicken and spring up. Everyone that has planted a few beans in the back yard has had opportunity to observe the truth of Paul's argument. All nature proclaims the fact of the resurrection.

(C) Why should anyone be so foolish as to imagine that a man whose body has gone down into the grave, whose body has been consumed by the forces of destruction, that a man once dead cannot be made to live again? God, by the same almighty power that He used, and still uses every year, can take the dust of man's body and bring forth a body more wonderful, more glorious than the body that existed before. Why question the Divine Power to raise the dead, when we see it in every day quickening and reviving things that are dead? Job, Daniel, Jesus believed in the resurrection of the body. Cp. Job 19:25; Dan. 12:2;

John 5:25; 6:40; 11:25. All who wish to accept the Bible as the truth of God must also accept the fact of the resurrection.

But though many people believe in the resurrection of the body, they still have their scruples and doubts and wonder about the mode of the resurrection. They wonder just how Jesus can take a mortal body and make out of it an immortal body. It is this question that Paul takes up in the second section of our text.

2

A) In answer to the question v. 35b St. Paul again refers to nature. Vv. 37, 38. He shows that when the seed is sown into the ground, one does not use the plant itself, but merely the bare seed, and out of that seed God causes the plant to grow. V. 38. The plant that grows out of the seed of corn is different from the seed, yet it receives its body from the seed of corn that was sown. So the body that is sown in God's acre differs from the body that shall come forth out of the grave, yet it is the same body which died and was laid in the grave coming forth more glorious.

(B) Not all flesh is the same. V. 39. Human beings have bodies, have flesh similar to other creatures, and yet what a difference between the flesh of men and the flesh of beasts, of fish and of birds. Even a blind man can tell whether he is eating fish or fowl, beef or pork. So there will be a difference between the body, the flesh before the resurrection and after the resurrection.

(C) Vv. 40, 41. Paul also points to the celestial bodies differing from bodies terrestrial — both have glory, but the glory of each differs from the glory of the other bodies. V. 41. From these examples in nature St. Paul now points to the glorious resurrection of the dead and shows that though there is a tremendous difference in the glorious body of the resurrection from that body which was here in this world, yet it is the very same body which God hath given unto us here in this world.

(D) V. 42. In this life the body is in a process of decay — the doom of death is upon us, but it will be raised in incorruption, with nothing in it upon which disease and corruption will fasten, a body of undecayable parts and powers — it is mortality swallowed up by life. V. 43. Death makes spoil of the human body, deprives it of its beauty. But this human body, sown in dishonor, is to be raised in glory. V. 43. Cp. Phil. 3:21. The new and glorious body of the resurrection sown in weakness will be raised in power, 1 Cor. 15:43. Here in life the body tires of effort, needs frequent rest, at death it is utterly powerless, but when it will be raised, it will be free from the possibility of weakness and graced with the vigor of immortal youth. O death, where is thy sting? Vv. 45-49. He speaks of the first man, Adam, giving us a body of

the earth (earthly), while the second man, Christ Jesus the Lord of heaven, gives us a heavenly body, a body fit for the realms of bliss, a body that is to bear not the earthly image of Adam but a wonderful image of the heavenly King, into which our mortal body will be transformed, since in its present state it cannot inherit the spiritual and eternal kingdom of heaven, V. 50.

(E) In heaven we shall be associated with God, who is a Spirit, and with the holy angels, who are spirits, and so it is necessary that we have a spiritual body. Not a spirit body, but a body that is prepared for life in that spiritual realm of heaven, for life of immortality. On earth we are in need of food and drink to sustain our earthly body. In heaven these things shall no more be needed, and so the resurrection is necessary, giving us a spiritual body.

(F) Most assuredly the doctrine of the bodily resurrection is a blessed doctrine. It may have little meaning to us in days of health and strength, but it will mean much in days of sorrow and death. It may have little meaning to us while the family circle is complete, but when there are empty chairs at the table, when our loved ones die in distant lands, what a wonderful thing to turn to 1 Cor. 15 and to see Paul picture to us in inspired words the wonderful resurrection of the dead. May this story of the resurrection ever be a comfort to us in sorrow and sickness and especially in death.

E. L. ROSCHKE

Festival of the Reformation

Is. 40:6-8; 1 Pet. 1:24, 25

Christ's disciples were utterly hopeless when their Master had died on the cross. Luke 24:19, 20. Worst of all, v. 21; their greatest hopes lay buried with their Master in Joseph's grave. Then came Jesus and said to them, vv. 25:27. Had they only believed the Scriptures, they could have rejoiced on Good Friday because Jesus could end that day with the triumphant cry: "It is finished." Step over a period of 1500 years into the cell of an Augustinian monk in Erfurt; he has worried his way through school, university, into the monastery, trying to find the assurance that all is finished; but the result was despair: "My sin! My exceeding great sin!" Then the same Lord led him into the Scriptures; there he found the assurance he sought. Then he told others what he had found; and so he became the Reformer of the Church. And the keynote of his reformation was and remained: *Sola Scriptura*; or, as he put it in his great hymn:

The Word They Still Shall Let Remain!

1

Why was it necessary in the Christian Church to assert this principle so firmly? Christ's word was so plain, John 8:31. Was that forgotten? Yes. When Luther at the Diet of Worms asserted that pope and councils could err, only the Scriptures were infallible, Charles V in amazement forgot to close his mouth. In 1519, at the Leipzig Debate, Dr. Eck thought he had won the day when he had argued Luther into the assertion that "a layman who has the Scriptures is more to be trusted than pope and council without them"; Eck concluded, "If the Reverend Father believes that a council can err, he is to me as a heathen man and a publican."

That shows the condition in the Church at that time. Ever since the sixth century God's voice had become fainter; Rome, the pope's word, was supreme law in the Church, yea, in the world; no appeal from his decision; disobedience meant ban, interdict, death. That was the true root of all the trouble in the Church: God's Word had been supplanted.

That made the situation so serious. There had been great controversies before and great warriors for the truth: Athanasius, Augustine; but they fought for single doctrines, and they had the old trusty shield and weapon; and when they swung the sword of the Word, Christian men rallied round them. Now the authority of the Word of God was at stake. The foundation had been undermined.

2

For the Word of God Luther demanded right of way; in his First Thesis: "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ says"; before Cajetan and Miltitz; at the Diet of Worms: "Unless I be overcome and convinced by proofs of the Holy Scriptures." When Aleander, the papal legate, cried, "Burn the heretic!" Luther said, "Rather will I lose life and limb than surrender God's true and clear Word!" He translated the Bible for the people, while Rome prohibited the study of the Bible. True? No papal Bull to that effect; but Rome condemned all unauthorized translations; and Rome refused to authorize any translation. Sufficient?

Luther was banned by the pope, outlawed by the emperor. The world against Luther—and the Bible; and this proved a majority. At Worms, one confessor; at Augsburg, a goodly band; before Luther died, in every land those who feared God and gave Him glory. Luther said, "By the Word the world has been conquered; by the Word the world has been saved; by the Word the world will be restored. God's Word has been my sole study and concern, the sole subject of my preaching and writing. Other

than this I have done nothing in the matter. This same Word has, while I slept or made merry, accomplished this great thing." He refused to compromise with Rome, Zwingli, the Anabaptists, and other dreamers of dreams; he knew if it were not Scripture solely, it would not be Scripture at all.

3

What was truth in Luther's day is truth today. Men are still the same, Rom. 3:23, 24; God is still the same, Ex. 34:6, 7; Christ is still the same, Matt. 11:28. Despite all who attack it, "Das Wort sie sollen lassen stahn."

Isn't it well that we have that assurance? Two words at the head of our discussion, one from the Old, one from the New Testament; not an old idea, now out of date; not a new fad that may soon change; but a truth warranted by Scripture from beginning to end and corroborated by experience of all times. What will you give for the crown of Charles V? And Leo X, who banned Luther, where is he? But men may come and men may go, and the world change with them; but the Word of the Lord abideth forever.

It is well that in this changing world we have one thing that is abiding. We speak of the "everlasting hills"; but the mountains are dying; rain and wind, sun and ice are leveling them. Today the world is topsy turvy; our whole social system is threatening to crash. Let it crash! Let the whole world crash! In the ruin is one rock immovable: the Word which in the Gospel is preached to you and which will save your souls.

The whole world is reaping the fruit of Luther's work; none more so than we who bear his name. Let us, with fervent thanks to God whose instrument he was, erect a monument to him, not of marble, not of brass, but of hearts inscribed:

God's Word and Luther's doctrine pure
Shall in eternity endure.

THEO. HOYER

