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Ein Prediger muss nicht allein *wei-*
den, also dass er die Schafe unter-
weise, wie sie rechte Christen sollen
sein, sondern auch daneben den Woel-
fen *wehren*, dass sie die Schafe nicht
angreifen und mit falscher Lehre ver-
fuehren 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

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ARCHIVES

katholischen Partei. Sie bestanden auf der strengsten Form der Kirchenzucht und sprachen allen andern, die nicht mit ihnen stimmten, das Christentum ab. Nach ihrer Lehre war die Gültigkeit der Sacramente abhängig von der Würdigkeit und persönlichen Glaubensstellung des Priesters. Was die katholische Partei anlangt, so kann nicht geleugnet werden, daß man vor der Zeit Augustins oft mit liebloser Strenge gegen die Donatisten vorging und vielleicht auch oft politische Rücksichten mehr gelten ließ als die Lehren des Wortes Gottes allein.

Bei dem Studium dieser Streitigkeiten können wir nicht umhin, gewisse Fingerzeige zu finden, die uns zum ernststen Nachdenken bewegen sollten. Einmal scheinen sich die Historiker darin einig zu sein, daß persönliche Differenzen sehr viel zum Ausbruch der Streitigkeiten und zur Verbitterung beigetragen haben, womit man sich beföhnete. Wenn der menschliche Ehrgeiz nicht bezähmt wird, dann ist es leicht möglich, daß man nur zu schnell den Gegner mißverstehet. Dann kommt es auch leicht vor, daß sich *Argwohn* betreffs der Motive des Gegners einstellt, daß man bei jedem Ausdruck, der von dem Herkömmlichen abweicht, falsche Lehre und Ketzerei wittert. Hiermit verbindet sich dann nur zu leicht ein *Rigorismus*, der keine Belehrung annehmen will, sondern starr und fest auf seiner Meinung besteht. Sehr oft gesellt sich hierzu eine Betonung von *Außerlichkeiten*, von Formen. Es ist hier nicht die Rede von Mittelbdingen, die infolge falscher Lehre zu Bekenntniszeremonien geworden sind, sondern von Zeremonien und ähnlichen Dingen, die lediglich auf hergebrachtem, oft verkehrtem *Ums* beruhen. Kurz: So lieb uns die reine Lehre ist und so hart wir auf lutherische Weisen halten, so laßt uns doch allen Fleiß anwenden, daß wir uns vor Separatismus, vor Kirchenspaltung hüten.

B. C. Rre h m a n n

Outlines on the Eisenach Epistle Selections

Quinquagesima Sunday

1 Cor. 1, 21—31

Unbelief directs its most vehement attacks upon the Christian religion against the cardinal doctrine of the Bible, the vicarious atonement. That has been at all times, and will be to the end of days, "unto the Jews," etc., v. 23. Alas, in our day this doctrine is being openly denied and ridiculed by many who claim to be members of, and leaders within, the Christian Church. Shall we follow the fashion of the world? Never.

The Gospel of Christ, though Folly to Unbelief, Is Indeed the Wisdom and Power of God

1. God calls it that

2. God proves it that

1

Vv. 22. 23. To the world indeed the Gospel is folly. "Can there any good come out of Golgotha? A crucified Jew, an outcast from his own people, a man dead and buried centuries ago, he the Savior of mankind? Foolishness!" And even if unbelief concedes that he is an innocent man, a mighty teacher, the noblest example of self-sacrifice, yet it ridicules the idea of a vicarious atonement. That remains an offense to the world, folly, and foolishness.

Now, the mere fact that the wise men of this world regard the Gospel as folly does not necessarily prove it to be such. The world and its wise men have ridiculed as foolish many ideas of inventors, many assertions of scientists, many theories in medicine, etc. ("Fulton's Folly," flying-machines, the various conflicting theories of scientists, etc.). In spite of ridicule these theories often proved to be immensely practical. Worldly wisdom does not render any one immune against error, nor is every statement of wise and learned men to be taken at face value. The apostle assures us that these worldly-wise men who ridicule Christ crucified and His vicarious atonement as folly are utterly incapable of passing judgment on the matter in question, v. 21. The world by its wisdom cannot fully understand and fathom even those works of God in which it recognizes to some extent the wisdom of God, *e. g.*, creation, preservation, government. The deeper man, with the help of his scientific instruments, chemical analyses, etc., succeeds in penetrating into the nature of the works of creation, the more mysteries arise before his astonished eyes, the less able is he to solve the riddles crowding in upon him. If man cannot understand and fathom the works of creation, which he can see and observe, how can he hope to know and understand God Himself, the Creator, who dwells in a light which no man can approach unto? 1 Tim. 6, 16. Though Rom. 1, 19. 20 remains true, equally true remains Is. 40, 28. Is it surprising, then, that man cannot understand that wisdom of God which is revealed in His plan of salvation, that mystery which "eye hath not seen," etc.? 1 Cor. 2, 9. For wisdom, divine wisdom, is revealed in God's work of salvation, as He who is the Fount of wisdom Himself tells us by His mouth-piece, the inspired apostle, vv. 23. 25. 30. — Now, whom shall we believe? Man, who, if honest, must confess his ignorance, his inability to understand and fathom even the visible works of creation, and hence is quite naturally utterly incapable of understanding the hidden wisdom of God in spiritual matters, or God, who is Truth Himself? God asserts that the Gospel of Christ Crucified, the Gospel of the vicarious atonement, is *wisdom*, His own, God's, *wisdom*. We place our trust not in fallible man, but in God, whose Word is truth. Though all the world deny and

ridicule and rave and rage against this Gospel and regard it as a stumbling-block and foolishness, we bow to God's authority, give to Him the glory that His Gospel is wisdom indeed, and humbly confess: Amen, this is most certainly true, though we cannot fathom it.

2

The truth of God's assertion that the Gospel of Christ Crucified is divine wisdom is proved a thousandfold, v. 21. This Gospel of Christ Crucified does not show a way whereby man may save himself by his own efforts, by his character, etc. By the very preaching of this Gospel, so foolish to the world, man is actually saved. Neither does the Gospel save only those who fully understand its mysteries and are able to fathom its depths. It saves "them that believe," v. 21, those who simply accept the preaching of the Gospel as God's own truth, God's own wisdom; those who rejoice in the fact that of God Jesus Christ has been made unto them, etc., v. 30, yea, that Christ Jesus, proclaimed in the Gospel, is indeed our Righteousness, Is. 53; Gal. 4, 4; 2 Cor. 5, 19. He is indeed our Sanctification, who breaks the *power* of canceled sin; who sets our feet on the path of righteousness; who strengthens us in our warfare against sin; who enables us to lead a life pleasing to God. And He is our Redemption. In Him we are set free, redeemed in the fullest sense of the word, free from guilt, from fear, from an evil conscience, from the fear of death, from fretting worries. In Him we have redemption here in this life, and with Him in heaven we shall have the fulness of redemption and salvation. He indeed is the Wisdom of God and the Power of God. And this Gospel which makes this Christ our own, what divine wisdom and power! Moreover, vv. 26—29. In the eyes of the world believers are fools, their faith is childish weakness, a flaw which mars the glory of even those men whom the world must honor and respect because of their achievements. Yet just what the world despises in the Christian has been chosen of God to show the utter foolishness of the world's wisdom and the divine wisdom and power of His Gospel. While the world regards Christians as fools, they, by the grace of God, have been made truly wise and thus serve to confound the worldly-wise, who, in spite of all their worldly wisdom, do not know how to obtain what should be the chief aim of man in this world, eternal salvation. While the mighty ones of this world are slaves of their own passions, are ruled by sin and Satan, the Christians, despised by them, rule over their flesh and blood, exercise dominion over sin, lead a life of righteousness, by their example succeed in raising the standard of morality in their community, and aid in making this world of sin a better and safer place to live in. Though Christians

are "base," ignoble, "despised," of no account, in the eyes of the world, though haughtily the world sweeps past them as though they did not exist, v. 28, these selfsame Christians are chosen by God to be His children and heirs. Their names, often unknown to the world, unmentioned in the annals of history, are written in heaven. They alone really enjoy their existence, their life in this world, in a manner unknown and incomprehensible to this world; for in them dwells that peace of God which surpasses all understanding and the firm conviction that after death there will be everlasting bliss with their God, their Creator and Redeemer.

Is the Gospel folly? No, never. Though the world despises it, though the world will not recognize its glory, it is, and shall ever remain, the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation. Let us not like the foolish, unbelieving world despise and reject this Gospel. Rather let us glory in the Lord and His marvelous Gospel, let us hold fast to this foolishness of preaching, and give unto God everlasting praise and honor, of whom we are in Christ Jesus, etc., v. 30.

THEO. LAETSCH

Invocavit Sunday

HEB. 4, 15. 16

In the preceding context the writer to the Hebrews warns against the fatal sin of the older generation of Israel. They did not believe the promise that the Lord would bring them into Canaan. Their unbelief made them weak. It made them long for Egypt again. It made them lose heart, to despair of ever reaching, conquering, and occupying the Promised Land. But worst of all, it provoked the Lord's anger and judgment. Let us be warned lest the Word given for our salvation become to us a two-edged sword of destruction, vv. 12. 13. To instil faith is the author's aim. That is the scope also of our text.

Let Us Come to the Throne of Grace

1. *How this is done* 2. *How we shall be blessed for it*

1

We are perhaps inclined to think of the Throne of Grace as in heaven, far removed from us, and hence to decline the gracious summons to come to it. I cannot climb into heaven, can I? If I am to come to the Throne of Grace, it must be accessible. And it is. No impossibility is here asked of us. The Throne of Grace is wherever the Gospel is. Rom. 10, 6—8. We have the Gospel in a multitude of texts, clad in a great variety of expressions, and presented to us from ever varying points of view. In our text the

Gospel, and therefore also the Throne of Grace, is near us in the words, to begin with: "We have not an high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." We have a High Priest, to state it positively, who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, who feels for us and with us, who has sympathy with us. This sympathetic High Priest is "the great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God" (v. 14), concerning whom we confess in the Apostles' Creed: "And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord," etc.

The fact that He sympathizes with us indicates that we are suffering. Sympathy is for the distressed and afflicted. What calls forth the sympathy of Jesus are our infirmities, our sins, chap. 5, 2. 3; 7, 28; Rom. 5, 6. 8. Verily, our sins put us in need of sympathy. Our sins give rise to all our other infirmities. Sin brought death into the world and all our woe, and — oh, dreadful malady! — it leads to eternal death, to complete and permanent separation from God, 2 Thess. 1, 9; Mark 16, 34; Luke 16, 26. Hence we are in need of sympathy.

And we *have* a Friend in need. Jesus, who is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (chap. 12, 26), under whose feet all things have been put in subjection (chap. 2, 8), Jesus, the Son of God, sympathizes with us sinners, chap. 2, 17. 18. Is not this an amazing statement indeed? The holy and righteous God abhors sin and punishes sin here in time and hereafter in eternity. So the Law says, and that is all we know by nature. But here we are told what is news, glad tidings, for all troubled sinners: Our great High Priest sympathizes with us. He does not hate us on account of our sins. He hates sin indeed, but He has compassion on penitent sinners. He does not want to punish us at all, but save us from our sins, and so great is His mercy that He took on Himself our nature, being made in all things except sin like unto us, and became a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people, fulfilling the Law for us, putting away sin, and obtaining eternal redemption for us by sacrificing Himself in our behalf on the cross (chap. 9, 12. 18; 12, 2), ever living to make intercession for those who come to God by Him, chap. 7, 25; 1 John 2, 1. 2.

Jesus, then, loves us sinners? is gracious, merciful to us, forgiving our sins? Surely! What could be more obvious from what has been said, which our text summarizes, saying: "He was in all things tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He submitted for our salvation and without sin to temptations and afflictions like ours, well deserved by us, but entirely undeserved by the holy Christ. Though without sin, He endured them to atone for our numberless

failures and defeats in temptation. Yes, we have a High Priest, or Savior, who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. And even so His Father is disposed towards us, with whom He is one. The Father sent Him. The Father heard the prayers and supplications our High Priest made with strong cries and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, chap. 5, 7. He exalted Christ, our Substitute. In God's heart, therefore, there is for all penitent sinners nothing but mercy, grace, loving-kindness. As soon and as long as you believe this, you are coming to the Throne of Grace. Coming to the Throne of Grace means believing in the sympathy of our High Priest as manifested in His having been tempted in all things like ourselves, yet without sin, for us. Cp. chap. 7, 25; 11, 6; Matt. 11, 28; John 6, 37, etc.

2

What are the blessings of such coming to God? First, boldness. While we are bidden to come to the Throne of Grace with boldness, yet at the same time it is impossible to do so without first believing. Eph. 3, 11. 12. The external and seemingly bold approach of pharisaic individuals is foolhardiness, presumption. Gen. 4, 3. 5; Luke 18, 11. 12. Unbelievers with any knowledge of sin at all are cowardly in their attitude toward God. Adam and Eve, Gen. 3, 7. 8. Conscience makes a coward of natural man. His slavish fear precludes salvation, chap. 10, 39: draw back (cower, shrink) unto perdition; 1 John 4, 18. But when a sinner comes to the Throne of Grace, believes the Gospel, he becomes bold. His heart no longer condemns him, and the result is what we read 1 John 3, 21. He has boldness to approach God in prayer with all kinds of petitions, with great petitions, 1 John 5, 14. He opens his mouth wide for God to fill. He has boldness as to the day of Judgment, 1 John 2, 28; 4, 17. What a blessing such boldness is!

Next the apostle mentions mercy. Mercy is for the miserable, the wretched. And we often are wretched. "O life, thou art a galling load Along a rough and weary road For wretches such as I." But if we through Christ come to God, we can be sure of God's mercy. It may not seem to us at times as if God were merciful to us, but He is. Ps. 103, 13. 17. 18; Luke 1, 50; 18, 13b. 14a. We experience it again and again, and finally it will burst upon us in full and everlasting splendor. God's mercy is as sure to us as the Word.

Another blessing: grace to help in time of need. Believers always get timely help. They get into many difficulties in this life. Hymn 318, 3. Their life is like St. Paul's, though doubtless on a smaller scale, filled with things like those mentioned 2 Cor. 6, 4. 5; Rom. 8, 35. 36. But as a believer you will always get timely help.

And when God says to you: 2 Cor. 12, 9, and when angels carry you into Abraham's bosom, that, too, is timely help. At times the timely help is quite marvelous. The heroes of faith, Heb. 11. What a relief to the harassed soul to be able to count with absolute certainty on grace for timely help.

Let us deplore our sins, but also take comfort in Christ, our precious, sympathetic, loving High Priest, who by being tempted in all things like as we are, yet without sin, restored us to God's favor. He is the Way to the Father (John 14, 6), and we go that way by accepting Him as our Savior. Do that, and you will be blessed with boldness, mercy, and grace to find help at the right time. Hymn 512, 1.

P. G. BIRKMANN

Reminiscere Sunday

1 JOHN 2, 12—17

Palm Sunday is drawing near and with it the solemn hour when a large group of children will be received into communicant membership of the Church. On this day they renounce the devil, all his works, and all his pomp, the sinful, wicked ways of the ungodly world, the ally of the devil, and promise to remain true to Triune God. As we view the wrecks along the highway of life, our hearts grow heavy. Let us pray for these children. As pastors we are to remind them of the things they have learned. Latin name for this Sunday is Reminiscere, remember. So today we say to all members of present and past confirmation classes, Remember your Savior and His grace; beware of your enemies and the dangers. Hence it is appropriate to consider the admonition of the apostle —

Love Not the World!

1. *What it implies*
2. *Why it should be heeded*

1

Admonition of text is of course addressed to believers. Others would not understand. In a fatherly manner the aged Apostle John speaks to his Christians as his children. What blessed people they are! Sins forgiven for the sake of the precious name of Jesus. Pardon earned for all men is accepted only by Christians through faith. Moreover, older Christians have known Him who is from the beginning, still know Him as Son of God and Savior. The apostle admonishes the young because they have been brought to faith, in conversion have overcome devil, still are standing in His grace. Old and young have been admonished to love the brethren; now they are warned, Do not love the world lest you frustrate the work of the Spirit, lest you have received the grace of God in vain.

Love not the world. The world was good as it came forth out of hand of Creator, especially man. Sin has corrupted the world, changed man, and now man by nature is the enemy of God, hating the Gospel. The mass of unconverted men are designated in Scripture as the world. They refuse to confess sin, to repent, to accept Jesus, to prepare for eternity, and are indifferent to Bible teachings; many openly ridicule the Word of God. This world we are not to love. This does not mean that we should leave the world. Luther states correctly: "To be in the world, to see the world, to feel the world, is a different thing from loving the world." Christians are inwardly separated from the world; they have different aspirations, different views of life, different aims. They live for heaven, to please God; the world lives for this life only, to please itself, ignoring eternity. With this world we are not to be on terms of intimate friendship, lest its ways become our ways, we become callous to sin, have mammon as our god and this world as our heaven.

Neither love the things that are in the world. What are they? Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life. Threefold lust characterizes the world. Lust is satisfaction of sensual appetites by eating, drinking, immorality, sinful pleasures. The world of today calls such things innocent amusements. It reeks with filth, surpassing in wickedness the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah. — Lust of the eyes is the desire to view shameful things. World feasts its eyes on mammon. In itself money is not sinful, but the world makes earthly possessions an end in themselves and ever covets more. It calls avarice faithfulness in one's profession; dishonesty, business acumen; covetousness, thrift. But lust of eyes refers also to feasting the eyes on shameless pictures, lewd stories, obscene screen and stage productions. The final characteristic of the world is the pride of life. It is that haughty, puffed-up arrogance, that braggart show and vainglory, which causes men to make a display of the things of this life. It makes men wish to be great in eyes of others, excel in luxuries, look down on the less fortunate. Others are eaten up with envy as they behold the prosperous. Men forget that everything comes from God. They are stewards, not owners. They make idols of earthly treasures. Satan makes use of this threefold lust ever since he deceived Eve in Paradise. (Trace the threefold lust in the story of the Fall.) — Friends, is there no reason for this admonition? Is not worldliness one of our greatest enemies? Are you feeding these lusts? What about pride of life? Little children already are taught to take false pride in dress and finery, to look down on others. Are you guilty? Love not the world. Why not?

2

The wicked ways and lusts of the world are not of the Father, but of the world; they are ungodly ways. Thus Christians beginning to love the world sin against God, the loving Father, merciful Savior, gracious Comforter. True, the world speaks of sin as something harmless. But let no man deceive you with vain words. Remember what you are, a child of God. Whatever comes from the world, no matter how highly recommended, comes from ungodly, antigodly men and women, not from the loving Father. Remember that Jesus had to die to redeem you from the wicked world, Gal. 1, 4. By Christ the world is crucified unto me, says Paul, and I unto the world.

What is more, this admonition should be heeded because love of the world crowds out love of God, v. 15b. That is the devil's trick; he tries to persuade men that they can be friends both of the ungodly and of God, that they can love both sin and the Savior. But it cannot be done; you cannot serve God and Mammon. 1 John 1, 6; Jas. 4, 4. What are you, a friend of the world or a friend of God? If a believer, you must be an enemy of world; if you love the world, where is your faith? The lust of the world destroys faith and love, makes men indifferent to spiritual things. Must not God say to many members of the Church today: "How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me?" Judg. 16, 15a.

And he who loves the world deprives himself of eternal salvation. He who listens to the allurements and vain promises of the world will find that bitter disappointment is in store for him. Even in this life the world cannot fulfil its tempting promises, because it passes away with its lusts, v. 17. How shall it be in eternity? The world has nothing to offer there. Hence: Matt. 16, 26. Christians have been freed from sin, called into the kingdom of Christ; if they return to the wicked ways of world, they will perish with the world, for the world passes away. "It was a custom in Rome that, when the emperor went by upon some grand day in all his imperial pomp, there was an officer appointed to burn flax before him, crying out, *Sic transit gloria mundi!* This was done to put him in mind that all his honor and glory should pass away like the smoke from the burning flax." So we should ever bear in mind the vanity of earthly things. Shall we make these things our chief delight or turn to God, the unchanging God, to Jesus (Heb. 13, 8)? Text, v. 17b. Reminiscere; remember, children and adults, your blessed estate, Jesus and His love, the dangers of Satan and the world, your baptismal vow, and love not the world, but remain true to the Father unto death. Then you shall abide forever.

PAUL KOENIG

Oculi Sunday

1 PET. 1, 13—16

This is the Third Sunday in Lent. In this blessed season we have before us more than ever in hymns and sermons the suffering and dying of our God and Savior in Gethsemane, before Caiaphas, etc. With His life-blood God has dearly bought us. Our life must now be His. Cp. 1 Cor. 6, 20; Acts 20, 28; Gal. 2, 20. We ask:—

What Kind of Life does God Justly Expect of His Christians?

1. *A life of hope*

2. *A life of holiness*

1

Having reminded the Christians of their election, redemption, regeneration, preservation, final salvation, having praised God for it all, and having told them that all this was so great that all the prophets inquired and searched diligently and that even the angels desire to look into it, the apostle continues in our text: v. 13.

A) *The Christians should hope.* Their whole life should be a life of hope. Ordinarily everybody hopes—the patient for recovery, the farmer for a crop, everybody for better times. Without hope life is unbearable. In spiritual matters the Christians are the only ones that can hope. Of the heathen and unbelievers the apostle says they “have no hope,” Eph. 2, 12; 1 Thess. 4, 13. This becomes evident when afflictions come upon them, when their sins bother them, and death approaches. With the Christians it is different. They can exclaim: 1 Pet. 1, 3. Having been born again to a lively hope, they should now also hope, as the apostle tells them in v. 13.

B) *For what should the Christian hope?* “For the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” By grace here not the redemption wrought on Calvary, or the forgiveness of sin, but our final redemption is meant, which as a free gift of God’s grace will be given us in part when Christ comes to take us home in death, but fully on the last day. Cp. vv. 4. 5. Oh, what a glorious hope is ours! Cause enough always to hope and wait. 1 Cor. 1, 7; Phil. 3, 20. 21; Titus 2, 13. Cp. also Pieper, *Christl. Dogm.*, III, 103, etc.

C) The apostle also tells us in the text *how we should hope* and look forward to our final salvation in heaven—“to the end,” fully, wholly, completely. Nothing should distract us, lead us away from the final goal. Therefore he also adds: “Gird up the loins of your mind.” The picture is taken from the long, loose robes of the Orientals. To be ready for work and marching, they had to be girded up at the loins. Israelites, Ex. 12, 11. We do not know when our Lord will call us to come with Him into His heavenly Canaan

and glory; therefore let us be ready always, having our loins girded, not the bodily loins, but the loins of our "mind." Let us draw all our thoughts together and concentrate them on the fulfillment of our glorious hope at the revelation of Christ. Cp. Luke 12, 35. And there is another word: "Be sober." We of course should not be given to strong drink, for drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Cor. 6, 10; Luke 12, 45. 46. But the word *sober* here evidently means more. We should be sober in all things, not carried away by some infatuation or some craze of the day. We should wait for the Lord's coming, not as some of the Thessalonians, who grew indifferent, reckless, lazy, and would not work because they thought the Lord's Day was already at hand, 2 Thess. 2, 2; 3, 11. Such enthusiasts we still have with us. No; the very fact that the Lord may come at any time must make us sober, sensible, wide awake, cause us to be especially faithful and diligent in our earthly and heavenly calling. — Let us examine ourselves, whether our life is such a life of hope, whether we set our affections on things above and not on things on the earth, Col. 3, 2. What is it that you are really hoping for in this life?

2

In the second place, the life which God can and does justly expect of His Christians is a life of holiness. Hope and holiness are closely linked together 1 John 3, 3 and also here; v. 13 is followed by vv. 14—16.

A) God demands holiness in His hoping Christians. He says (v. 15b): "Be ye holy in all manner of conversation." He reinforces this demand with a quotation from Lev. 11, 44: "Be ye holy, for I am holy." The Christians are children of God through faith in Christ, Gal. 3, 26. They are children of obedience, text, v. 14. Having become obedient to the Gospel by the gracious operation of the Spirit, they should now also show obedience to the Law of God and gladly do the will of their heavenly Father as it is expressed in the Ten Commandments.

B) In what does true holiness consist? In this, that the Christians as obedient children no longer fashion and shape themselves according to their former lusts in ignorance, v. 14. Formerly, in their natural state, they gave themselves over to their fleshly lusts. They knew no better. They did not know the true God and His great salvation. They thought that, in order to enjoy life and get the most out of it, they would have to yield to their lusts. But now old things have passed away. They have become new creatures in Christ, and as such they will crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts. 2 Cor. 5, 17; Gal. 5, 24; Titus 2, 11—13.

However, holiness of life, on the other hand, consists also in this, that we become more and more holy. "It is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy," v. 16. God is absolutely holy. 1 Thess. 4, 3; Heb. 12, 14. Being God's children, we should show even here on earth more and more the nature of our holy Father. For how can we be truly the children of the holy heavenly Father if here on earth we live and deport ourselves as children of the devil?

Are we living up to the expectation of our holy God also in this respect that we no longer have the shape and form of our former unholy self, but that as obedient children of our holy God we most earnestly strive after holiness in thoughts, words, and deeds? Then our hope will not be in vain. The day will come when all imperfection of the present will have to give way to perfection. Ps. 17, 15. May God hasten the day! J. T. ROSCHKE

Brief Lenten Outlines

I

Sorrowful unto Death

MARK 14, 32—36

In viewing the consummation of the work of our precious, divine Savior, Mark, brief, but vivid in his narrative, will be our guide. Let us go to the scene of our Lord's suffering not as curiosity-seekers, but as repentant sinners, conscious of having had a share in causing Him this deep woe. We see the beginning of it in Gethsemane, where the Savior says of His soul that it is —

Sorrowful unto Death

1. *His anguish was inexpressibly great*
2. *It was caused not merely by a knowledge of impending suffering, but by His being our Substitute as Sin-bearer*

1

After the Passover meal and the institution of His Holy Supper, Jesus came to Gethsemane with His apostles. Here there was a garden affording a place for rest.

Something now occurred into the full nature of which we shall not be able to enter here on earth. Jesus withdrew to the interior of the garden. Mental and spiritual suffering set in. The words used by Mark signify that a state of terror came over Him and that He was distressed and troubled.

His inner agitation was so intense as to threaten to bring on death, separation of soul and body. We know that great grief, unexpected grief, has often brought on death.

Jesus prays. How strange! He that can avert all trouble pleads for help. See His deep humiliation. He leans on His disciples for support, v. 33. He who has often helped others now looks around for help.

2

What is the explanation? Jesus had full knowledge of His impending suffering and death. He suffered like a criminal awaiting execution. This was a dreadful thing for Him who is pure and holy.

But more must be said. He had a cup to drink, the chief content of which was guilt, the guilt of sin contracted by all mankind. Cf. 2 Cor. 5, 21. There was glaring down on Him the wrath of God, which smites all sinners. Hence His indescribable woe.

He did drink the cup. He became our Substitute, Mark 10, 45. And so we think not merely of our sins, but rejoicingly, gratefully, likewise of the help effected for us. A.

II
Betrayed

MARK 14, 43—46

In the Passion narrative, so it has been well said, we are shown a cross-section of humanity, its various types of characters, its many ways of opposing Jesus and His message. Let each one of us, instead of merely condemning the enemies of Christ and instead of judging others, watch to see his own likeness appear as the story unfolds. In today's text from Mark's gospel we are shown Jesus as—

Betrayed

1. *The dastardly deed is done by a disciple*
2. *Under the guise of friendship*
3. *With the capture of Christ as the result*

1

The enemies of Jesus had not dared to arrest Him in the Temple, when there was a great multitude of people around Him. A certain man, however, offered to lead the servants of the high priest to a secluded spot where Jesus could be arrested without commotion. This man was one of the disciples of Jesus, one of the Twelve, Judas. He had been one of the closest friends and

companions of Jesus for several years. — Money did it. Even the world despises such an act. Jesus, our Substitute, endures it.

Christians, through their many acts of sinful weakness, hurt Christianity more than all its outspoken enemies.

2

What made the act of Judas particularly repulsive was that it was perpetrated in the garb of sincere, affectionate friendship. A kiss was employed by him. This means was probably chosen to make identification certain. Cf. Ps. 41, 9. — The sin of hypocrisy here looms up. We constantly avow friendship for Jesus. Are we sincere? Do we somewhat resemble Judas?

3

Jesus is taken captive. Judas had hurried away from the Passover meal to get a number of soldiers. In Gethsemane he finds Jesus. The soldiers bind Christ.

The great paradox: The Lord of the universe is now a prisoner. Sin is a mighty force, as we see here; but love, which makes the omnipotent Creator submit to such indignities, is still greater. A.

III

Condemned as a Blasphemer

MARK 14, 55—64

As we in these days think of our sins, let us not fail to include among them sins of the tongue: words of unjust anger, of peevishness, lies, slanders, defamations, curses, unnecessary or false oaths, blasphemies. That among the transgressions which Jesus atoned for were sins of this nature we are reminded of by our text, which shows us Jesus —

Condemned as a Blasphemer

1. *The charge of blasphemy was a measure of last resort*
2. *It was totally unfounded*
3. *It was made the basis of a capital sentence*

1

From Gethsemane, Jesus was led to the high-priestly palace, first before Annas (John 18, 13), next before Caiaphas (John 18, 24), and it is before the latter where Mark's narrative places Him. A meeting of the chief council had hastily been called in the deep of night.

Charges are sought against Him. Witnesses have been gotten ready. They testify, but there is no agreement. Jesus' effective reply to the falsehoods is silence.

The attempts of the enemies appear frustrated, when the high priest finally resorts to a different method. He asks Jesus directly whether He is the Messiah. Jesus now speaks, answering in the affirmative. It is what His enemies desired. Now they charge Him with blasphemy.

2

Jesus had spoken the truth, and had spoken it clearly.

He could not have spoken differently. And what abundant proofs of His Messiahship had He not furnished in His miracles!

His reply indicated the importance of His being accepted as the Messiah, v. 62. This was not merely an academic matter.

His judges, instead of investigating the truthfulness of His assertion about Himself, called Him a blasphemer. If He had not been the Son of God, He would have been guilty of this sin. Cf. John 10, 30—39.

3

The sin of blasphemy was punished by death in the old theocracy. Cf. Lev. 24, 11—16. Accordingly the death-sentence was now pronounced upon Jesus. The people condemning Him were His own countrymen, the rulers of the nation which, first of all, He had come to bless.

This ingratitude and rejection must have caused Jesus the severest pain.

He was falsely accused of a sin of the tongue; we, let us say it again, have often actually transgressed in this fashion.

Behold with what a price we are purchased! In thankfulness let us guard our tongue and use it to sing the Savior's praise. A.

 IV

Delivered to be Crucified

MARK 15, 6—15

Who can enumerate all the occasions of injustice that the annals of mankind record! Israel was treated unjustly by Pharaoh in Egypt; innocent Naboth was condemned and stoned at the instigation of Jezebel. What must not be overlooked — we ourselves are often unjust in our judgments, finding fault without cause. May this lead up to our discussion of the most heinous perversion of justice history reports. In the text we see the Holy, the Innocent One —

Delivered to be Crucified

1. *The trial had convinced the judge of Jesus' innocence*
2. *The verdict ordering crucifixion was wrung from the judge by His enemies*

1

The chief council of the Jews could not carry out its sentence, which condemned Jesus to death. The right of meting out capital punishment the Roman government had reserved for itself. Jesus is led before the Roman governor. The charge is that He made Himself the King of the Jews. Jesus admits that He is the King of the Jews. Then many false accusations are hurled at Him. Jesus is silent; these false accusations deserve no reply.

The custom of freeing a prisoner at the feast came in. Pilate was anxious to set Jesus free. Why? He saw that Jesus was innocent and that the chief priests had delivered Him up to him for envy, v. 10. Evidently no proof that He was the fomenter of a rebellion had been presented. While Jesus called Himself King of the Jews, the governor realized that this was not a political title. Pilate saw that Jesus was popular and that the high priests wished to rid themselves of One whom they considered dangerous to their authority.

It is important that we should have assurance of Jesus' innocence. The iniquity He bears is not His, but ours.

2

The verdict of condemnation was wrung from the governor. The freeing of Jesus under the customary amnesty granted at the feast was not acceptable to the Jews. Barabbas, a notorious murderer, was preferred.

With regard to Jesus the shout is: "Crucify Him!" Repeatedly this cry is sent up.

When Pilate sees the determination of the Jewish leaders and he cannot break it down, he weakly yields.

Knowing that he is condemning an innocent person, he delivers Jesus to be crucified.

Justice is outraged, but the highest demands of divine justice are met. The greatest crime of the ages is committed, but all the crimes and transgressions of mankind are atoned for. The Jews compass the destruction of Jesus; they have to help to save the world. Cf. Gen. 50, 20.

A.

