

# THE BIBLE STUDENT

A Bible Study Quarterly  
for Young People, Adult Bible Classes,  
and Home Study

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By

TH. GRAEBNER,

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri

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FUNDAMENTALS.



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THE WALTHER LEAGUE OF THE EV. LUTHERAN  
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## DIRECTIONS

These lessons may be studied by Bible classes according to customary lines, the leader or chairman reading the basic lesson material (**printed in heavy black type**) and the class members in rotation reading the other material, looking up Scripture references, and answering questions.

Wherever practical or desirable, the following scheme of class organization may be adopted:

Organize the class in groups of three. If the class numbers more than thirty, make groups of four or more. The number of groups in the class should never be more than ten.

Each group chooses a group leader who holds office for one-quarter or for one year, as the class may decide.

The group leaders serve in rotation as class leaders, each in one meeting, until all have served, when the leader of group number one serves again as class leader, and so through to group number ten.

The class leader of each meeting takes his or her place at the table with the chairman, who is the pastor or some one appointed by him or chosen with his approval.

The chairman, if chosen by the class, will serve one-quarter, or a year, as the class may determine. He has general control of the meeting and directs the study of the lessons during the Bible hour. He may apportion details of this work to the class leader as he may see fit.

You will note that each lesson consists of opening devotion, lesson study material, and closing devotion. The chairman, or in his absence the class leader, opens and closes each meeting by reading the prayers and Scripture lessons indicated and by announcing the hymns.

The passage to be studied in a particular lesson as well as all portions printed in **heavy type** are read by the class leader. The comment on the lesson printed in ordinary Roman type (like this) is read by the group leaders, in rotation.

All material printed in italics (*slanting letters*) is read by the class, each group being given one section in rotation. A member of group One reads the first italicized section, looks up and reads texts referred to (all other members of the class looking up these texts in their own Bibles), and answers any question printed in that section. The next section is taken up precisely in the same way by group number two and so on. These sections may be so assigned to the groups for study in advance.

The chairman will intersperse as he sees fit explanations and application, supplementary to the material contained in the printed lessons. He will also give opportunity for questions by members of the class, in addition to the question material of the lesson. He will also occasionally ask a member to tell the contents of a chapter, or paraphrase a story in his own words. Written reports of this nature may be called for at intervals. The lessons are considered not as a maximum but as a minimum for Bible class work. Frequent opportunity should be given to the members of the class to sing hymns of their own choice especially at

the close of the meeting. The hymns indicated are numbered according to the new Lutheran hymn-book of the Missouri Synod as well as of the Wisconsin Synod. When singing hymns the class ought to rise.

The group leaders see to it that the members have their Bibles with them. They also distribute the hymnals, and in other ways aid in the management of the class and its work.

In the use of these lessons, the utmost variety is permissible. For instance, it is possible to leave all italicized lesson study material for home work. Or written reports may be asked, each group reporting on one of the numbered portions. At first the looking-up of texts will take much time, but there is no better way to get acquainted with the whole Bible. If the texts to be looked up (referred to in italicized portions) are assigned in advance to individuals (or to groups), there will be a saving of time for the class meeting.

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## PREFACE

The lessons in this number of the Bible Student differ somewhat in plan from the lessons in the first volume. The purpose and method are still the same; the student is to be guided into an intensive study of the Word of God. But instead of treating long, connected passages, the topical plan is submitted. Each lesson treats one great fundamental doctrine of Scripture. In all other respects, the general plan and method of Volume One is adhered to.

It will be noted that when questions apt to raise considerable discussion are submitted, less text material and comment are provided, thus causing an unequal amount of printed matter in the lessons here submitted. In actual use, the time necessary for the study of these lessons will, nevertheless, prove of equal length for all, or nearly so.

However, the writer cannot too much emphasize the **flexibility** of the system advocated in these lessons. He has aimed at the elimination of all rigid form. The object is not at all to cover the same number of verses in each lesson. Again, the sessions of the class need not be of the same length but may vary from 40 minutes to 60 or more. Discussion should flow freely, even if only one **section** of a lesson is finished in that session of the class. There is no reason why these twelve lessons should be forced through in exactly twelve meetings of the class, or why each meeting should last exactly one hour.

It is, of course, to be preferred for practical reasons, to have the length of session limited to a certain time, as 60 minutes. Average classes will, ordinarily, complete each manual in twelve lessons. But if one question or Scripture reference should elicit discussion which claims even half the lesson hour, no harm is done, but quite the reverse. If the author could achieve this result, that classes actually **discuss** the Bible and its doctrines, success would be achieved even though a class spent an entire year on this one Epistle. The lesson material is so divided that short sections of the text are the subject of study, and the end of any section may fitly be made the conclusion of the session's work, if the time is exhausted.

Not all classes are alike. Some will ask many questions, others few, some will work fast, others slow. It is believed that the average class will be able to complete each of the twenty-four lessons within a sixty minute study period. If it is found that the study of the lessons transgresses this allowance of time, various expedients may be used in order to complete each manual in twelve weeks. 1) The reading of the lesson texts, as suggested in the directions above, by the class-leader instead of verse by verse by members of the class; this will mean a saving of time if the class leader has carefully studied the text in advance so as to insure rapid reading. 2) The various sections which constitute the lessons may be assigned in advance each to a student, or to a group of students, if the class is organized into groups. Such special advance work (in addition to the preliminary reading of the lessons which all students are expected to do) will very much speed up the work in class. 3) Each student (or group) may be given one Application or Question (the matter in italics, or slanting type), to report on when the class meets. 4) Out of each lesson an entire section may be assigned to the class, or to a group in the class, to be reported on at the next meeting. In such case, none of the

lesson material of this section except the text itself would be read in class. The entire work on such section would consist in a report from members of the class.

Now some cautions and don'ts:

**DON'T**, for the sake of "getting through," omit the "Questions." These questions are designed to be **thought-compellers**. Furthermore, they are intended to call out discussion, action, so that the class does not merely listen to a lecture while in session but **studies the Bible and discusses it**.

**DON'T** omit looking up the references called for in the comment and questions. These references are essential to the understanding of the lesson. By looking them up, you enable the Bible to **interpret itself**. Hence these lessons cannot be properly used unless each member has a Bible at hand.

**DON'T** try to gain time by omitting the hymns. These have been selected with the greatest care and will add greatly to the deepening of impressions. Sing them, or at least sing a number of stanzas judiciously selected from each. They will prove a wonderful stimulant to the class.

Once more,

**Don't omit the Questions, the References, the Hymns!**

And now one more caution. Do not think, because many passages treated in this manual are familiar to us, that we cannot receive from them new knowledge, new impressions of divine truth, new strength for daily life, new comfort and hope. The Bible is an inexhaustible well of Living Water. You will never go in vain when you go to it for knowledge, strength, and consolation. You will find this to be true when you study these texts. All that the editor's comment on the lessons can do is to remove obstacles to the understanding of the text. His work is not a substitute for the work of the class, but only an aid to it. If it will open anew the eyes of our Bible student to the unsearchable riches of Christ and His salvation, the purpose which this Bible Study Quarterly is designed to serve has been served.

And may God bless you!

THE EDITOR.

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# FUNDAMENTALS

## FIRST LESSON

### Inspiration

#### OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn: Holy Ghost, with Light Divine (No. 259.) (Wisc. No. 295.)  
Psalm 119, 1-16. Prayer

#### 1. THE BIBLE GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD

2 Tim. 3, 14-17

14. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15. And that from a child (from childhood) thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16. All scripture is given by inspiration of (is in-breathed, inspired by) God, and is profitable for doctrine (teaching), for reproof (to convict of sinfulness), for correction (of an evil life), for instruction (education) in righteousness: 17. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished (equipped) unto all good works.

This is part of an exhortation of Paul directed to the young preacher Timothy, whom he had converted. From his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois he had received instruction in the Holy Scriptures, the books of the Old Testament. Concerning the Old Testament this text says that it is given by inspiration of God. Men had written these books, but God had inspired what they wrote. And the profitableness of Scripture consists in ability to teach, convict, correct, and train men unto holiness. However, the same claim of divine origin which is here made for the Old Testament is made for the New Testament by the holy apostle.

1. Read 1 Pet. 1, 11. 12. Observe that here the "Spirit of Christ" is referred to as speaking through the ancient prophets and that also those who preach the Gospel of Christ, the apostles, were speaking by "the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven."

2. Read 2 Pet. 3, 15. 16. Notice that the writings of Paul are here placed on a line with "the other Scriptures."

3. Read 1 Thess. 2, 13. The Christians are praised for accepting the words of the apostles as the Word of God.

4. Read 1 Cor. 2, 13. The same is here repeated with great emphasis.

The word Bible is derived from the Greek word *biblia*, signifying "books." The Bible in a certain sense is not one book; it is rather a library, consisting of sixty-six separate volumes bound between the same covers. From Moses, who wrote in the wilderness a hundred years before King Tutankhamen was laid away in his sepulchre, to John who wrote on rock-bound Patmos, there is a century-paved highway of over fifteen hundred years.

Moses was at the head of a nation; John was in exile through the command of the head of a nation — the emperor of the Roman empire. Paul wrote from a prison cell; Daniel from the royal court of Babylon; Ezekiel as a lonely captive by the Babylonish river, Chebar; Isaiah wrote in the sacred city of Jerusalem; Amos, who was one of the herdmen of Tekoa, probably wrote in the field or in some country-town; the twenty-

third Psalm, which fell from David's pen, if not actually written by some mountain stream of Judea, is nevertheless the memory of the pasture lands and the streams which delighted the heart of the shepherd.

The books were written, some by finished scholars and others by men of ordinary learning. Most of them never saw one another. Some of them lived in heathen communities where they were in constant touch with the low morals of paganism. And yet, so dissimilar in their tastes, in their temperaments, in their acquirements, in their styles of writing, and in their modes of living, they nevertheless strike the same keynote — the Lord Jesus Christ. The Old Testament by history, prophecy, sacrifice and type is ever pointing forward to the Christ, while the New Testament by its record of the matchless Life, its story of the growing church, by its doctrine, and its appeal, is constantly pointing back to the Christ. How does it come that among all these thirty or forty writers you do not find a single discord, and that all together they make up a great doxology to the Messiah?

## 2. INSPIRATION THE WORK OF THE HOLY GHOST

2 Pet. 1, 19-21

19. We have also a more sure (confirmed) word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed (give attention) as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 20. Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of (allows) any private interpretation. 21. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will (impulse) of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

The word of prophecy is the word which God spoke through the prophets of old. It was a light to the believers in the days of the first covenant and is to every Christian still a light that shineth in a dark place. These teachings are not the result of human thought and what the holy men wrote did not arise from their own construction of what God wanted men to know for their salvation. These prophets, indeed, were directed in their writings by the Holy Spirit Himself. The Third Person of the Trinity is the true Author of the Bible, who employed the sacred penmen in order to commit to writing the books which men were to study for their salvation.

The wonderful unity of the Bible testifies to its divine origin. It required fifteen hundred years to write this book, and the man who wrote the closing pages of it had no communication with the man who began it. How did these men, writing independently produce such a book? Other books get out of date when they are ten or twenty years old; but this book lives on through the ages, and keeps abreast of the mightiest thought and intellect of every age.

Suppose that thirty or forty men should walk in through that door. One man comes from Maine, another from New Hampshire, another from Massachusetts, and so on from each State, each bearing a block of marble of peculiar shape. Suppose I pile up these blocks in order, until I have the figure of a man, perfectly symmetrical and beautifully chiseled, and I say, "How did these men, who have never seen one another, chisel out that beautiful statue?" You say: "That is easily explained. One man planned the whole statue, made the patterns, gave the directions, and distributed them around; and so, each man working by the pattern, the work fits accurately when completed." Very well. Here is a book coming from all quarters, written by men of all classes, scattered through a period of fifteen hundred years; and yet this book is fitted together as a wondrous

and harmonious whole. How was it done? — "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." One mind inspires the whole book, one voice speaks in it all, and it is the voice of God speaking with gracious power.

5. Read Acts 1, 16, and refer again to 1 Pet. 1, 12. Observe references to the Holy Spirit.

Not only did the Holy Spirit direct the sacred penmen what to write, but through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit convinces men of this same teaching, that it is He who speaks to them in the Bible. The Holy Spirit awakens in our hearts a certainty that the Bible is in truth the very Word of God. The inspiration of the Bible cannot be "proved" any more than the divinity of Christ or the effectiveness of His death for our redemption. Like all other doctrines, the doctrine of inspiration is an object of faith. If the consideration of Christ and His redeeming work does not enkindle in us the unshaken faith that the Scriptures are God's own Word, nothing else will give us this conviction. As our Lutheran Fathers taught, it is the "testimony of the Holy Spirit" in and through the Word that furnishes the only real basis for our faith in the inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures.

6. Hymn: *How precious is the Book Divine.* (No. 111.) (Wisc. No. 85.)

### 3. INSPIRATION OF WORDS

Matt. 22, 41-46

41. While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42. Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. 43. He saith unto them, How then doth (how is it then that) David in spirit call him Lord, saying, 44. "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?" 45. If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? 46. And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst (dared) any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

The Pharisees knew that the coming Messiah was to be of the line of David. Quoting from the 110 Psalm, Jesus points out that David expected the Messiah to be none else than Jehovah (Lord). Yet He was indeed to be a son of David. Jesus here proclaims Himself the Savior prophesied of old, son of David and Son of God. Incidentally He proves that the Bible is in all its words inspired. From the word "Lord" Jesus argues that the Jews might have knowledge concerning the divine nature of the Messiah. Evidently Jesus accepted the very words of the Old Testament, and not the thoughts only, as inspired.

7. Which word is quoted by our Lord, John 10, 34, 35?

8. How does Paul argue from the plural form of a certain noun, Gal. 3, 16? (The reference is to Gen. 12, 3.)

9. Which words are quoted as inspired, Hebr. 4, 7, 8, 13?

In all these texts it is plain that the very words are accepted as inspired. Jesus plainly says that the Scriptures cannot be broken, cannot fail. It is the Son of God, who says, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." And He bases all His teaching upon the Scripture, and shows how all things that were written in them concerning Himself must needs be fulfilled. For in the minutest particulars all things had been foretold of Christ in those Scriptures, and they were fully and exactly fulfilled, which of itself is sufficient proof that they are the Word of the all-wise God. Even in His conflict with Satan in the great temptation Jesus uses as His weapon the Holy Scriptures, quoting Deut. 8, 3, Ps. 91, 11-12, Deut. 6, 13.



#### 4. THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE FOR SALVATION

Luke 16, 27-31

27. Then he said, I pray (beg) thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28. For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30. And he said, Nay father, Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded (convinced), though (not even if) one rose from the dead.

This is the closing of the story which Jesus told about the rich man and Lazarus, and which will be more fully considered in a later lesson. Lazarus is in Abraham's bosom (Paradise) and beyond the great gulf, in hell, is the rich man. He prays to Abraham (observe that the one prayer to a saint recorded in the Bible was spoken in hell, and was not heard!) He fears the accusations of his brothers, who will blame him when they come to the place of torment, and so he asks that someone come from the dead to teach them the way of salvation. Abraham answered, They have the sacred Scriptures (Moses and the prophets), and he adds that any one who is not converted through the Scriptures would not be converted even though one arose from the dead to preach to them. The sufficiency of the Scripture for our salvation is thus proclaimed by Jesus.

*10. How does John indicate the purpose for which the Gospel was written? Read John 20, 31.*

And thus the Bible stands as the Word of God, inspired by the Holy Ghost, inspired in its very words and a sufficient means to lead us to salvation. Should we not become ever more diligent students of the Bible? Shall not Lutherans be lovers of God's sacred Book?

The great bulk of what we read — books, papers, magazines — we toss aside when finished, and forget. So the world has practically done with almost all literature. There is only one Book that all pick up and read again; that they lay down with reverence; that they re-read times without number, because it has never grown old; because its grip on men's hearts is always new. No one would think of using a text-book two hundred years old, but the Scriptures have not lost their value in two thousand years and longer. Science is continually growing antiquated and its teachings change from one generation to another, but the truths of Scripture do not change, their power is undiminished, their glory everlasting.

#### CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn: Father of Mercies in Thy Word (No. 117.) (Wisc. No. 65.)  
Closing Prayer. Benediction

#### DAILY BIBLE READING:

Sunday: Deuteronomy 1, 1-21  
Monday: Deuteronomy 1, 22-46  
Tuesday: Deuteronomy 2, 1-15  
Wednesday: Deuteronomy 2, 16-37  
Thursday: Deuteronomy 3, 1-17  
Friday: Deuteronomy 3, 18-29  
Saturday: Deuteronomy 4, 1-20

## SECOND LESSON

## The Trinity

## OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn: God of Mercy, God of Grace (No. 71)  
or Glory be to God the Father (Wisc. No. 70)

Scripture Reading: 1 John 4, 1-8. Prayer

## 1. THE UNITY OF GOD

Mark 12, 28-32

28. And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together (having listened to the conversation), and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first (chief) commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first (chief) of all the commandments is, "Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: 30. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment." 31. And the second is like, namely this, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." There is none other commandment greater than these. 32. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other (none else) but he.

The question, Which is the greatest among the many commandments of the Law given by Moses? was one frequently discussed by the learned rabbis at the time of Christ. Since Jesus praises this scribe as being not far from His kingdom, it is probable that the question, v. 28, was an honest inquiry. The scribe wanted information from one whom he had recognized as a Teacher sent by God. In reply, Jesus quotes from the Book of Deuteronomy.

1. Read *Deut. 6, 4, 5.*

According to the teaching of the Law, here confirmed by the great Law-giver Himself, the love to God is the greatest duty. It must fill our soul, our entire mind, and enlist all our strength; God must be the Master of our life. We all must admit that we fall short of this high standard and must in daily repentance seek pardon through the merit of Jesus Christ. But while this text contains an earnest admonition, it also contains a highly important doctrine. The doctrine is that **God is One**. The text quoted teaches that there is only one God. In harmony with this and other texts, the Christian church teaches the Unity of God. This is sometimes expressed by saying that there is "one divine Essence or Being." This is one of the most important teachings of the Christian religion.

2. Read *Exodus 3, 13-15. Cf. Ex. 6, 3.*

The name Jehovah was revealed to Moses by God Himself as the name by which He is to be known as the one true God, — self-existing (dependent on no other being for His existence), eternal (the one that always is, for whom there is no past and future), the unchangeable, incomprehensible deity. He is One, and beside Him there is no God.

3. Read *the First Commandment, Ex. 20, 3-6.*

God permits no one to be called God beside Him and forbids all worship of any other being.

**Idolatry.** Idolatry is the worship of idols. It is committed by all those who worship a god besides the true God. The heathen (pagans) of ancient and modern times are guilty of idolatry because they worship many gods.

4. *Question: Can you mention idols which were worshiped by the heathen in Old Testament times? Can you give instances of idolatry as practised by the Children of Israel?*

In America we have a sect which worships many gods, the Latter-Day Saints, or so-called Mormons. In their catechism the question, "Is there more than one God?" is answered: "Yes, many." They teach that Adam is the god of this earth of ours, and that faithful Mormons will become gods, who will inhabit the stars.

5. *Question: In what way do Roman Catholics sin against the command that beside the one true God no being should receive adoration?*

6. *Hymn: Before Jehovah's awful throne. (No. 78.) (Wisc. No. 43.)*

## 2. THE HOLY TRINITY

Matthew 3, 13-17

13. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of (by) him. 14. But John forbad (tried to prevent) him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 15. And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so (Let it be so) now: for thus it becometh us (it is our duty) to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered (permitted) him. 16. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: 17. And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (in whom is my delight).

While this story is important as regarding the entrance of Jesus on His redeeming work, it contains in the plainest terms the doctrine that there are three Persons in God. The Father is manifested by a voice from heaven; the Son is here set apart from all the people as the true Son of God; and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Jesus.

7. *Find the references to the different Persons in the Trinity in Christ's own saying, John 14, 16, 17.*

Our Lutheran Confessions say that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is the "highest mystery" of our religion (Triglot Concordia, p. 1026). Illustrations by which men have tried to represent the doctrine of three Persons in one Godhead fail to illustrate: Fire is said to possess the three attributes of flame, light, and heat; but the three Persons are not so many attributes of God, but are each of them God Himself. Rather than make comparisons, let us admit that this article of our faith is like all the rest, beyond our powers of reason.

8. *Question: Is the doctrine of the Holy Trinity taught in the Old Testament or only in the New. It is referred to in the first verse of the Bible: Gen. 1, 1-3. The Son of God is there referred to by the term "said," even as He is called the "Word" in John 1. 1-3, by whom the world was made. Read also Isa. 48, 16, 17.*

That the Persons in God are equal in power and majesty is taught wherever the Trinity and its Persons are referred to. The sacred title of Jehovah is applied in the Old Testament not only to the Father, but also to the Son (Messiah) and to the Spirit.

9. Read Isa. 44, 6 (the Redeemer). Ezek. 8, 1-3 (Lord God — Spirit).

The Trinity of God is as clearly taught as the Unity and is made an article of belief by the Confessions of our church. The first Article of the Augsburg Confession reads in part as follows: "Our Churches, with comment consent, do teach that the decree of the Council of Nicaea\* concerning the Unity of the Divine Essence and concerning the Three Persons, is true and to be believed without any doubting; that is to say, there is one Divine Essence which is called and which is God: eternal, without body, without parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible; and yet there are three Persons, of the same essence and power, who also are coeternal, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And the term 'person' they use as the Fathers have used it, to signify, not a part or quality in another, but that which subsists of itself." Against the Arians, who denied the Trinity, the Athanasian Creed was written, which is also like that of Nicaea, part of our Confessions (Triglot Concordia, p. 32 f. If there is time, portions should be read).

10. Hymn: *We all believe in one true God.* (No. 393.) (Wisc. No. 210.)

### 3. OUR SALVATION THE WORK OF THE HOLY TRINITY

John 14, 24-26

24. He that loveth me not (He who does not love me) keepeth not (does not obey) my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. 25. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. 26. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

This entire discourse of Jesus with His disciples is full of references to the Father's work, the Son's, and the Spirit's. In the beginning of the chapter (v. 1) Jesus claims the right that the disciples believe in Him even as they believe in the Father. He goes into suffering and death to prepare a place for them — a mansion in the Father's house. No one, He says (v. 6) can come to the Father except through Him. How intimately, then, are both the Father and the Son bound up with our salvation! He that hath seen Jesus, hath seen the Father (v. 9) — a statement which the disciples were slow to understand, but which they understood, like all the rest of Christ's teachings, when the Spirit had been given to them, at Pentecost. The Spirit is called the "Comforter" in this chapter. He brings to hearts laden with sin, the sweet comforts of the Gospel. And through this message of salvation, Father, Son, and Spirit dwell with the Christian, in the Christian. This became our happy lot when we were baptized in the name of the Triune God.

All this is summed up in the verses which are printed above. It is the Father's offer of pardon that the Son has brought to the disciples; for that reason He has been sent into the world by the Father. But in order that they might have full comprehension of this saving message, the Spirit was promised to the Twelve. If they had not grasped the full, glorious meaning of Christ's teaching concerning the way of salvation — His atonement, and the gifts which were to be offered the world through the Gospel, — the Holy Ghost would serve as their teacher. For this

\* A Church Council which met at Nicaea, in Bithynia, in Asia Minor, A. D. 325. It was attended by 318 bishops and their assistants.

purpose the Father sends the Spirit in the name of the Son (v. 26). And in the might of that Spirit the disciples went out into all the world after Pentecost and everywhere proclaimed the saving truth, the Gospel of forgiveness freely offered to all men, and in the writings of the New Testament the same Holy Spirit has for all time to come caused this saving truth, this message of redemption and everlasting life, to be recorded.

Thus Father, Son, and Holy Ghost have been active in the work of redeeming mankind from sin, death, and the devil. And they are active today. All who believe the Gospel of Christ are children of God, enjoying the blessed privilege of prayer (v. 13, 14). The Son still intercedes for us at the throne of God, pleading His merits on behalf of the world and uniting all believers with God in the perfect union of faith. And to the end of time the Holy Spirit will call men to repentance, grant them faith and hope and rich comfort in all afflictions. And wherever His Word is preached, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit make their abode with men, now in time and after this life is past, in a blessed eternity.

11. Question: *What work is attributed to the Father v. 24? Why was this necessary for our salvation?*

12. Question: *How does Jesus here refer to His own prophetic office as Teacher of salvation?*

13. Question: *What is the Holy Spirit's work?*

14. Read Eph. 3, 14-16. *All people who THROUGH CHRIST have become the family of God through the work of the HOLY SPIRIT, bow their knee to THE FATHER in gratitude for His salvation.*

15. Read 1 Pet. 1, 2. *What was the Father's work? What was the Son's? What is the Spirit's?*

16. *Explain why we are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. (Matt. 28, 19.)*

### CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn: Holy, holy, holy (No. 263) (Wisc. 84)

Closing Prayer. Benediction

### DAILY BIBLE READING:

Sunday: Deuteronomy 4, 21-40

Monday: Deuteronomy 5, 1-21

Tuesday: Deuteronomy 5, 22-33

Wednesday: Deuteronomy 6, 1-15

Thursday: Deuteronomy 6, 16-25

Friday: Deuteronomy 7, 1-13

Saturday: Deuteronomy 8, 1-20

## THIRD LESSON

### Creation

#### OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn: Songs of praise the angels sang (No. 68) (Wisc. No. 184)

Psalm 33. Prayer

#### 1. THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

Gen. 1, 1-25

1. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2. And the earth was without form, and void (a confused mass); and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. 3. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. 4. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. 5. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day (there was evening and there was morning, one day).

6. And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let us divide the waters from the waters. 7. And God made the firmament and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. 8. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. 9. And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. 10. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. 11. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind (each according to its species) whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. 12. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind (species), and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind (species): and God saw that it was good. 13. And the evening and the morning were the third day.

14. And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: 15. And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. 16. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule (govern) the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. 17. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth. 18. And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. 19. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

20. And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl (birds) that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. 21. And God created great whales (monsters of the deep), and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind (species), and every winged fowl after his kind (species): and God saw that it was good. 22. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. 23. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

24. And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind (species), cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind (species): and it was so. 25. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

When nothing was in existence except God, the divine Decree of Creation went forth, and the Beginning was made which is recorded in the first verse of the Bible. To create is to make out of nothing. When God had made the material substance of the universe ("heaven and earth") it was a shapeless mass, the confused elements out of which all things later were made. The First Day of Creation was ushered in by the creation of light. The light that was created was elemental light, not radiating from some luminous body, but vibrating through the universe. On the Second Day the great expanse over our heads, the firmament, was made and the waters divided into those of the land and those of the sky. On the Third Day sea and land were divided. The great masses of the continents stood forth. At the same time life was created on the earth, plant-life, to begin with—grass, vegetables and trees. The Fourth Day saw the creation of the great luminaries, the bearers of light, the sources of light to the present day. Fishes and birds were created on the Fifth Day. The divine blessing gave them power to multiply their kind. On the Sixth Day the animals on land,—creeping things, reptiles, beasts of the field, wild animals, and animals that can be tamed, were created; also man, both male and female.

Thus were all things made in six natural days. Observe the plural in the following verse (v. 26: "us," "our") indicating that it was the Triune God who made all things. The Holy Spirit is referred to in verse 2, God the Son is referred to in the sentence "God said"—the Word of God being Jesus, by whom all things are made (John 1 ff).

1. Question: Why must Gen., chapter 2, be considered as being but an extended account of parts of Gen. chapter 1? Notice that the opening verses are necessary to complete the story of chapter 1 and that verse 1 of chapter 2 explicitly states that creation was finished; also that chapter 2 refers to acts recorded in chapter 1. (Compare 2, 7 with 1, 27.) There are no two separate creations, as some have taught both in ancient and modern times.

2. Question: Are the "days" of Gen. 1 natural days of twenty-four hours or are they vast periods? a.) Notice that the days are spoken of as having evening and morning. b.) The day of rest among the Jews certainly was a day of twenty-four hours, hence also the Seventh Day of creation. Read Ex. 20, 10, 11. c.) Genesis 1 is not poetry but is a historical narrative, and in the Bible as in other books we must accept everything as literal unless there is conclusive proof that it is figurative.

3. Read Hebr. 11, 3, which emphasizes the certainty of our belief in the creation of the world out of nothing.

4. Question: Can you find proof that creation is the work of the Triune God in Ps. 33, 6?

5. Read Col. 1, 16. Notice that also the creation of the angels (the invisible spirits — "thrones, dominions, principalities, powers," by which are meant the various ranks of angels) is attributed to the Son.

While the universe and its multitude of visible and invisible creatures is thus proof of the almighty power of God, of His omnipotence, it also, on every hand, reveals the divine wisdom of the Creator.

5. Read Ps. 104, 24. This psalm is a meditation upon the power, providence, and wisdom of God as revealed in nature.

The evolutionary theory has been substituted by unbelievers for the story of Creation told in the Bible. The evolutionists assert that the universe has always existed, or that it has come into existence by itself,—both ideas being opposed to logical thinking. They furthermore hold that life was originally embodied in a few specks of living matter which gradually developed into the mass of plant and animal life in existence today. For this theory there is no proof whatever and honest scientists admit that it is an assumption only,—a guess. The Biblical account expressly says that plants and animals were created to reproduce each "after his kind" (v. 11, 12, 21, 24, 25). God created the various species of plants and animals in the beginning. That one species can give rise to another, different species, as evolutionists claim, is contrary to all observation. To the present day plants and animals reproduce each after his own kind. The strawberry vine does not produce cocoanuts. No butterfly ever produced anything but butterflies. In all nature there is no proof that the so-called higher plants and animals have developed from lower forms of life.

7. Evidence of a PURPOSE AND PLAN can be observed even now in created things. Plants and animals have arrangements which fill us with wonder and amazement at the wisdom there displayed. Consider the marvels of the beehive, of the spider's web, of the eagle's eye. Can you give other examples?

8. Hymn: Songs of immortal praise. (No. 61.) (Wisc. No. 183.)

## 2. THE CREATION OF MAN

Gen. 1, 26-31

26. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion (rulership) over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl (birds) of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. 28. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish (fill) the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. 29. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. 30. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. 31. And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

9. Read the parallel account, Gen. 2, 7. 15. 21-25.

The narrative of man's creation is perfectly plain and consistent, and nothing that we can say can add anything to it. Observe, however, that whereas the other living creatures were made each "after its kind," each being a link in the system of plant and animal life, man is made not as a "kind" of animal but is made after the image of God. The fact that God Himself prepared his body and has given him a rational, thinking, immortal soul, in itself makes him the foremost among the visible creatures. But his highest excellency is that he is created in God's image.

10. Question: In what did the image of God consist? Read Col. 3, 10. Through the work of the Holy Spirit we have put off the old man (the love



of sin) and have put on the new man, and thereby the work of restoring the divine image within us has commenced. This renewal is called a "renewal in knowledge." Thus the image of God consisted in KNOWLEDGE of God and of His works. Gen. 2, 20, 23 shows the profound knowledge with which man was endowed.

11. Read Eph. 4, 24. According to this text man was created after God "in righteousness and true holiness." Man was without sin, hating that which is evil and loving that which is good. By the work of the Holy Spirit this image of God is being restored in us. It will be once more perfect in the life to come.

Evolutionists claim that also man is a product of evolutionary development. He is supposed to have evolved to his present state and condition from the animals, his nearest relative being the ape. This teaching has no evidence to support it and contradicts the Word of God, which places man not among the animals but in a class by himself. While the animals were made to come forth by a creative command, God fashioned the body of man Himself and then breathed an immortal spirit into him. For Christians there can be no choice. They will accept the Biblical account of the creation of man as literal truth and will reject evolution as a doctrine acceptable only to those who do not want to acknowledge the existence of an almighty, all-wise and holy God.

### CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty (No. 63.) (Wisc. No. 174.)

Closing Prayer. Benediction

### DAILY BIBLE READING:

Sunday: Deuteronomy 9, 1-10

Monday: Deuteronomy 9, 11-29

Tuesday: Deuteronomy 10, 1-11

Wednesday: Deuteronomy 10, 12-22

Thursday: Deuteronomy 11, 1-12

Friday: Deuteronomy 11, 13-32

Saturday: Deuteronomy 18, 9-22

## FOURTH LESSON

### Salvation

### OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn: Our God so loved the world that He (No. 327)

(Lord Jesus Christ my Savior blessed. Wisc. No. 126.)

Psalm 32. Prayer.

### 1. GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

John 3, 14-17

14. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16. For God so loved the world,

that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn (pass sentence upon) the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

1. Read Num. 21, 4-9.

Jesus is conversing with Nicodemus, the learned rabbi, by night. He draws a comparison between Himself and the brazen serpent which Moses raised in the Wilderness when serpents were sent among the Israelites. Those serpents were poisonous; their bite deadly. Thousands perished. But Israel repented and, at the command of God, Moses raised a serpent of brass and whoever, trusting in the divine promise, looked upon it, was healed and lived.

Man is bitten by the serpent of sin. Since Adam and Eve committed the first sin, our entire nature is corrupt. But as Moses lifted up the serpent in the Wilderness, so Jesus was lifted up on the Cross. Jesus means Savior and there is salvation in no other name than this. As the bitten Israelites were healed by believing in Christ, so "whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish."

2. Read Acts 4, 12.

If it had not been for the salvation prepared through Christ, all men would have perished. Of course, when you ask men how they expect to be saved, they have an answer ready: they will point to something which they have done. Even so the heathen offers sacrifices in order to bring God to be at peace with him for the sins that he has done. That such salvation by works is an idea totally at variance with God's plan of redemption is clear from the study of our text. It is God that must save, and in His Son alone there is salvation.

3. Hymn: *Dear Christians, one and all rejoice.* (No. 310, 3-5.) (Wisc. No. 59.)

Salvation then stands for that whole process or means by which a sinner, under condemnation of death, is brought back to favor with God and is made an heir of eternal life. This is a work of the Triune God and for its revelation to men we have the Bible. The doctrine is best understood as we study the great teachings involved—**Redemption**, through the **Reconciliation** made with God by the **Atonement**, which **Propitiated** the wrath of God and secured for us **Forgiveness of Sins** so that we, by **Faith** in Christ, may be **Justified** before God and heirs of heaven. Of these teachings the following texts speak. They are among the greatest in the Bible.

## 2. THE SINNER'S REDEMPTION

Romans 3, 23-26

23. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. 24. Being justified freely (for nothing) by his grace through the redemption that is (the ransom provided) in Christ Jesus: 25. Whom God hath set forth (put forward) to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through (during the time of) the forbearance of God; 26. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be (showing that God is) just, and the justifier of him which (any man who) believeth in Jesus.

The letter of Paul to the Romans treats the doctrine of salvation very fully and with great clearness. Notice in the passage just read the

terms justified, propitiation, remission (or forgiveness), believeth (faith); these will be more fully treated in connection with texts that follow. The great word which gives meaning to all the rest is redemption. Redemption means buying back. The term is borrowed from the slave market. The sinner is held as a slave to sin and death and will only be released when his purchase price is paid. When money was paid for the release of persons it was called ransom. Jesus paid His life as a ransom for our own.

4. Read Matt. 20, 28.

5. Read Acts 20, 28.

All that Jesus suffered and did on earth was necessary for our deliverance, but the greatest sacrifice was the shedding of His blood. The blood of the Son of God was sufficient ransom for all mankind. By it, God declared His righteousness, His holiness, which could not be satisfied with less. God had been patient with sinners in the past only because this great sacrifice was in store. Now all who have faith are justified.

6. Read Luther's explanation of the Second Article.

### 3. THE ATONEMENT

Isaiah 53, 3-8

3. He is despised and rejected of (by) men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem (regarded) him stricken, smitten of God (as an object of God's wrath) and afflicted. 5. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement (penalty) of our peace (which is to bring us peace) was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7. He was oppressed, and (yet when) he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her (its) shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. 8. He was taken from prison (oppression) and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation (who shall compute the length of his life=eternity)? for he was cut off (taken by a violent death) out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

The Prophet Isaiah lived 700 years before Christ and in his prophecies says much concerning the Christian Church and the blessedness of believers. In this passage he describes the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. "Our griefs," "our sorrows" are those which we deserve for our sins. To all appearances Jesus was suffering the guilt of great misdeeds. But they were our transgressions, the punishment which He received was to bring us peace. It was God who laid on Him our sins and because of the Savior's willingness His work has been accepted as perfect atonement for our sins. Only when the work of atonement was done, did God take Him out of all suffering and forever exalt Him.

7. Read Romans 5, 11.

Atonement is the work by which the justice of God was satisfied, the sin of man paid for, the satisfaction rendered to God's justice through the death of Christ.

To say that one man cannot bear the guilt of another is a poor objection; we are not talking about a mere man but about the Son of God who is vastly greater than all humanity put together.

In the atonement there was an exchange of places between Christ and us. He took the sufferings due to our sins; we take the credit due from His merit and death.

8. Read 1 Peter 1, 18, 19. *Because Christ died for us, as our substitute, we speak of "vicarious suffering," "vicarious atonement" (vicar = substitute).*  
 9. Question: *How is the vicarious atonement referred to in the words of institution of the Lord's Supper?*

10. Read 1 John 2, 2.

Here the word propitiation is introduced. Propitiation suggests that God was displeased or angry and had to be brought into favor by some gift or payment in order to make Him favorable to the sinner. To propitiate means to restore friendship by making good an injury. Christ gave Himself to God in order to make amends for our sins, to restore unto us the friendship of God. Jesus has done this for the whole world, including the ungodly, even those who reject His grace.

11. Question: *Can you prove from 2 Peter 2; 1 that also those who perish were redeemed by Christ? Why, then, do they perish?*

It is clear that God cannot forgive sin in any sense in which forgiveness is of any value except in holiness and justice. His holiness, righteousness, and justice were satisfied by Christ's perfect life and innocent, willing, suffering and death. God had been robbed of His rights by sin. In order that the relation between Him and man might be restored, it was necessary that His Son should consent to a life of self-denial, humiliation, suffering, and shame. The Father demanded, and the Son furnished satisfaction for the sins of the world. Thus the wrath of God was propitiated and hence there is "peace on earth, good will to men."

12. Read 2 Cor. 5, 18-21. *Here the word reconciliation is introduced, the act of making friendly again. The idea expressed in this word is that God is angry because of sin and by the death of Christ is made to be friendly with the sinner as He was before he had sinned. "Not to impute" is to forgive.*

#### 4. JUSTIFICATION

Romans 5, 18, 19

18. Therefore, as by the offense of one (man) judgment came upon all men (and doomed them) to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. 19. For as by one man's disobedience many (all the rest) were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many (all the rest) be made righteous.

As through Adam all men became sinners, so through Christ they are made righteous. Not by reason of any of their works but as a free gift God pronounces them just in view of the obedience of Jesus Christ. Justification means that God counts the penitent sinner who is guilty as if he were innocent, in view of the absolution which Christ's sacrifice has obtained for the entire world. Our sin became Christ's, Christ's holiness becomes ours and through His righteousness we are justified. Wherever men believe in Jesus Christ and accept His atonement as the way of escape from sin and death, they will have that cancellation of penalty which is called forgiveness of sin.

Remission, forgiveness, the justification of the sinner is an act of God. Seated upon His throne of Grace He, the Law-giver and Judge, dispenses with what was due as the penalty of sins. This God is able to do by reason of the willing offering of Himself as penalty for us by Jesus Christ, our Lord.

God does not simply forget that any wrong has been done. Forgiveness has to run hand in hand with holiness; the wrath of God over the sinner had to be propitiated; God had to be reconciled; but now that the penalty has been borne for us on Calvary, pardon is pronounced upon all men, and all that is necessary to be justified and saved is to believe and accept. Outside of Christ there is no salvation. In Christ there is salvation for all.

### CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn: Rock of Ages (No. 325.) (Wisc. No. 177.)

Closing Prayer. Benediction

### DAILY BIBLE READING:

Sunday: Deuteronomy 28, 1-14

Monday: Deuteronomy 28, 15-25

Tuesday: Deuteronomy 28, 58-68

Wednesday: Deuteronomy 29, 1-20

Thursday: Deuteronomy 30, 1-10

Friday: Deuteronomy 30, 11-20

Saturday: Deuteronomy 31, 1-21

## FIFTH LESSON

### Conversion

### OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn: The Saviour calls, let every ear (No. 47.) (Wisc. No. 199.)

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 40, 1-9. Prayer

#### 1. THE CALL

Acts 3, 11-19

11. And as the lame man which (who) was healed held (clung to) Peter and John, all the people ran together (rushed awe-struck) unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. 12. And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye (why are you surprised) at this? or why look ye so earnestly on (why do you stare at) us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? 13. The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. 14. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; 15. And killed the

Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof (of which) we are witnesses. 16. And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know; yea the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. 17. And now, brethren, I wot (know) that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. 18. But those things, which God before had shewed (showed, announced) by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. 19. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

Peter and John had in the name of Jesus Christ healed the cripple at the temple gate. The people were filled with wonder and amazement. They gathered around the apostles in the so-called "Porch of Solomon" and Peter employed this occasion to preach the Gospel. Disclaiming all power of their own, the apostles proclaim Jesus as the Son of God and a Prince of Life, the Holy One and the Just, whom the Father had glorified anew through this miracle. Observe that Peter plainly tells the Jews how grievously they had sinned. Note next that he calls them to repent of their sin; note that he quotes to them the Holy Scripture regarding the person of Christ and His work; note, finally, that by conversion to the faith in Jesus Christ forgiveness of sins is promised to them so that they may rejoice in the return of the Lord on the Last Day. All this constitutes the doctrine of Scriptures regarding Conversion and illustrates the Gospel Call. Analyzing it we see (1) that there was preaching; Peter explained the Scriptures to the gathered multitude; (2) the essence of that preaching was Jesus,—the Savior of the world has been offered up for the sins of the world; (3) there was the direct accusation: you are sinners! and (4) there was the offer of pardon, of the free remission of sins, granted to those who believe in Jesus.

1. Read Acts 4, 1-3. Observe that these leaders of the Jews rejected the redemption offered them through the Gospel Call. Whose fault was this? Was the Gospel not intended for them? (Read Acts 3, 26.)

2. Read Acts 4, 4, also the parallel, Acts 2, 37-41. Whose work was the conversion of the three thousand on Pentecost and of the five thousand converted later? (Read Acts 2, 47.)

The rejection of the Gospel is in every case the fault of man, who resists on account of his indifference, his love of sin, his hatred of righteousness. He does not want to leave off his evil habits and lead a holy life, such as the Gospel requires, hence he resists the invitations of the Gospel. Repeated too long, this act of resistance ends in the hardening of heart, the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is unpardonable because in this condition man wants no pardon and to the end knowingly, willfully rejects it.

On the other hand, acceptance of the Gospel Call is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the Lord that adds to the church daily new converts. Through the preaching of the Word the Holy Spirit convicts man of sin and plants in his heart justifying faith.

3. Read Acts 26, 15-20. Paul is preaching to King Agrippa and Festus when confined as a prisoner at Caesarea. He describes his own conversion in the verses just read. Addressing him on the way to Damascus, Jesus promises that through him many shall be converted. How is this conversion called in the first half of verse 18? What gift is conferred upon the converted (second half of verse 18)?

Through the Gospel Call men are led to repentance, by which is meant a complete change of mind. Unconverted man is under sin. "Turn ye from your evil ways!" (Ezek. 33, 11), is the call to repentance.

4. Question: How did Agrippa indicate his refusal of the call? Read verse 28.

5. Question: Why is man unable to come to Jesus Christ or believe in Him by his own reason or strength? Read Romans 8, 7.

6. Read 2 Timothy 1, 9. What is meant by "God has called us"? What is meant by "He has not called us according to our works, but according to grace"?

Unless, then, the grace of God implants faith in the heart, man is not able to receive the things which pertain to salvation. He is void of understanding and knowledge and utterly corrupt in his will, a willing slave in the service of sin. Hence, when the Gospel Call comes it is the gracious power of the Holy Spirit alone that brings about that blessed change which we call the new birth, regeneration, through which man is converted and made a child of God.

7. Hymn: Delay not, delay not, O sinner. (No. 57.) (Wisc. No. 61.)

## 2. REGENERATION

Acts 8, 27-39

27. And he arose and went; and behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch (official) of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure (was her chief treasurer) and had come to Jerusalem for to worship. 28. Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. 29. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. 30. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou (Do you really understand) what thou readest? 31. And he said, How can I, except (unless) some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. 32. The place (passage) of the Scripture which he read was this "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearers, so opened he not his mouth: 33. In his humiliation his judgment (of condemnation) was taken away: and who shall declare his generation (estimate the length of his life)? for his life is taken from the earth." 34. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself or of some other man? 35. Then Philip opened his mouth and began at the same (starting from this passage of) Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. 36. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37. And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. 38. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. 39. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more (lost sight of him); and he went on his way rejoicing.

The occupant of the chariot was a high official at the court of the Ethiopian Queen. He was returning to his African home after worshipping at the temple in Jerusalem. Just now he was reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. The verses puzzled him. While he was meditating, a traveler afoot, who had just appeared beside his carriage, spoke up, and

was invited to enter the carriage. Then Philip the evangelist explained to him the meaning of Christ's atonement. The foreigner heard and believed. Since his companion had explained that Baptism was the ordinance established by Christ for those who believe in Him, he asks what might stand in the way of his being baptized. Explaining that the condition is faith, and receiving the answer "I believe," Philip baptized him.

This story answers many questions which must be answered if we would understand the nature of conversion. There must be instruction in the truths of the Gospel. The sinner must understand that Jesus is his Redeemer. He must accept Him as such. Then—what else?—Nothing else; then man is converted. He has become a new creature. He has been regenerated.

8. Question: *Where does Jesus teach that we are born again through the Spirit of God?* Read John 3, 5.

9. Question: *How does Paul, Eph. 2, 5, describe the conversion of a sinner?*

10. Question: *By what means shall sinners be brought to faith in Christ according to John 17, 20?*

11. Read Titus 3, 5. In agreement with this and other texts we believe that in Baptism the grace of God is conferred, sinful men are renewed through the Holy Spirit; they are regenerated, born anew; their sins are forgiven; they are made children of God. The Reformed churches, in spite of this and other plain texts, deny all this and teach that Baptism is only a sign, signifying that a Christian should put off sin.

While in the new birth or regeneration man turns away from sin and is turned to God, and hence quits the service of sin and enters a life of holiness, conversion does not mean that all evil is suddenly eliminated from man's nature. Perfect sanctification is not attainable in this life. So long as we are in this body, our mind will receive promptings to sin. Temptations from without find a response in our heart. There will even be sinful acts. In order that we might daily repent of sin, daily "renew the inward man" (2 Cor. 4, 16), it is necessary that we daily hear or read the Word of God.

12. Question: *In which petition of the Lord's Prayer does the Christian acknowledge his sinfulness?*

13. Question: *What kind of works will follow true repentance?* Read Acts 26, 20.

14. Question: *How is the change which takes place in regeneration described Romans 12, 2?*

Thus regeneration and good works go together.

As Luther says in his preface to Romans: "Faith alone justifies and fulfills the law. Faith is a divine work in us which changes and regenerates us; it slays the old Adam, makes us new creatures in heart, disposition and spiritual strength, and brings with it the Holy Ghost. Faith is a living, active, powerful principle; it is impossible that it should not be always producing good fruits." So, too, we say in the Augsburg Confession: "By faith alone is apprehended remission of sins and grace. And because the Holy Spirit is received by faith, our hearts are now renewed and put on new affections, so that they are able to bring forth good works." Christ for us in justification necessarily becomes Christ in us when the faith is true and sincere. "He that saith He abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as He walked." The faith that does not produce the willingness to live again Christ's life in mortal flesh is not



the justifying faith which Luther preached. The forgiving purpose of the Cross is declared in various and reiterated statements to be nothing less than this: "To redeem us from all iniquity and to purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works." Justifying faith agrees fully and heartily to this purpose, and seeks day by day its fuller realization.

### CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn: All that I was, my sin, my guilt (No. 308) (Wisc. No. 32)  
Closing Prayer. Benediction

### DAILY BIBLE READING:

Sunday: Deuteronomy 31, 22-30

Monday: Deuteronomy 32, 1-14

Tuesday: Deuteronomy 32, 39-52

Wednesday: Deuteronomy 33, 1-17

Thursday: Deuteronomy 33, 18-29

Friday: Deuteronomy 34, 1-12

Saturday: Joshua 1, 1-18

## SIXTH LESSON

### The Church Universal

### OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn: Glorious things of Thee are spoken (No. 464)  
or Lord of Glory, Thou hast bought us (Wisc. No. 129)

Psalm 87. Prayer

### 1. THE CHURCH'S FOUNDATION AND ORIGIN

Ephesians 2, 11-22

11. Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past (you were once upon a time) Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12. (Remember also) That at that time ye were without (outside of) Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13. But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off (far away) are made nigh (brought near) by the blood of Christ.

14. For he is our peace, who hath made both one (of both a unity), and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us (which kept us apart); 15. Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances (the Law with its system of commandments); for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace (so as to make peace by the creation of a new Man in himself out of both parties—Jews and Gentiles); 16. And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the en-

mity thereby: 17. And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh, 18. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

19. Now therefore ye are no more (no longer) strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21. In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22. In whom ye also are builded together for (to be) an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Paul reminds the Ephesians that they had been in the past outside the covenant which God had made with the Jews and which was established by circumcision (v. 11); and that as such they had no knowledge of the true God and were living a life without hope. Not having the writings of the prophets, they were "without Christ." (v. 12) By the atoning sacrifice of Christ they were brought near to the Father. As the Savior of all mankind He had broken the wall which once separated Israel from the nations: all men who hear the Gospel Call have the same opportunity to become children of the heavenly Father (v. 13, 14). The ancient laws by which the covenant nation, Israel, has been marked off from all the people were abolished through the coming of the Savior in whom they found their fulfillment. And the purpose is to make in Christ one body of believers where before there were two contending parties and constant enmity. What Christ suffered in His body has put the Law out of commission and put the Gospel in its place, and thus both Jews and Gentiles are reconciled by God and have thus become one spiritual body. Both Jews and non-Jews, if converted to Christ, would have forgiveness of sins and everlasting life, being united in Christ by the bond of faith through the Spirit of prayer (v. 15-18). Accordingly, those who were once strangers have now the same rights and privileges of the Kingdom as the believing Israelites. They are built on the same foundation, the teachings of Jesus, of His apostles and prophets. Thus they become a spiritual house of which Jesus is the cornerstone and in which the Spirit of God has a dwelling-place.

Observe that in describing the Church, Paul here addresses people who are "saved through faith" (v. 8), that is, believers. In ascribing to them membership in the Church, he describes the Church as a nation, in which the Christians are citizens; as a family, in which all members enjoy equal privileges; as a temple, of which the foundation is the doctrine of Holy Scripture and of which the one who adorns and upholds the inner structure is Jesus Christ Himself.

We note that it is the Spirit's work by whom the believers have been united with the Church and by whom they exercise the rights of fellowship (v. 18-22).

1. Question: *How is the Christian Church described in Luther's explanation of the Third Article?*

2. Read Ephesians 5, 25-27. *The Church is perfectly holy because all who are in it are clothed in the perfect righteousness and holiness of Christ by faith in Him.*

3. Question: *What terms are applied to the members of the Church Ephesians 4, 12?*

It is clear from these texts that there is a Church to which a man must belong, or be forever lost, a Church outside of which there is no

salvation. Unless we belong to the "body of Christ," all religious practices will not save our souls. Unless a man belongs to the Church described in these passages he will be forever lost, no matter how prominent a member he may be of the visible church. No mere outward membership in any visible church will avail a man anything "in the hour of death and on the Day of Judgment."

4. Hymn: *Behold the sure Foundation-stone.* (No. 452.) (Wisc. No. 45.)

## 2. MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

1 Peter 2, 9, 10

9. But ye are a chosen generation (the chosen race), a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people (the people who belong to him); that ye should shew forth (proclaim) the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: 10. Which (Who) in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which (who) had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

The highest praise that can be spoken of any man is here addressed to the members of the Christian Church. They are an "elect race," possessing a privilege which formerly was that of Israel alone among all the nations. All members of the Church are begotten of the same heavenly Father through Baptism and the preaching of the Word of God. They are now priests serving the Lord Jesus with their prayers and labors. Their priesthood is a royal one, and one day they will stand with Christ on His throne and reign with Him. Appointed to a life of good works and dedicated to holiness in Baptism, they are a holy nation. "Peculiar" in this text means a special possession. Because the Son purchased them with His innocent suffering and death they are now a peculiar treasure of God. To publish the merits of divine mercy they have been called out of the darkness of sin. This same call to repentance and faith has made of them One people. Though widely scattered, all who accept the Gospel promise and believe in Jesus are members of the universal Church.

5. Accordingly, all true Christians are members of the universal Church. Can you now state just what it is that unites them into one body?

6. Question: What promise have we that the Church is certain to endure unto the end? Read Matthew 6, 18; 28, 20.

7. Question: Where is the universal Church found? Wherever the Gospel is preached and the Sacraments are administered. Read Isaiah 55, 11. John 3, 5.

8. Question: Which other titles are applied to the Church in which true Christians are members? Read Ephesians 3, 15. Hebrews 12, 23.

The universal Church, then, has existed ever since man lived on earth and will endure until the end of time. Empires have grown up, decayed and vanished; race has supplanted race; the Church of God alone has never perished. When Adam and Eve accepted the first promise of a Redeemer, this was the beginning of a Church universal. In the person of Noah it survived the Flood. The promise of a Savior descended upon Abraham, who was justified by his faith and whose descendants (the Jewish people) many centuries were the chosen nation of God. Sometimes it seemed as if the powers of sin had prevailed. Elijah thought that he was the only believer left on earth. But the Lord told him that seven thousand others had remained true Israelites. 1 Kings 19, 18. Even so God preserved unto Himself true believers even during the Dark Ages and the time before Luther.

9. Question: *The Bible contains many examples of the efforts of the world to destroy the Church. Can you mention rulers who persecuted the believers in Old Testament times? In the New Testament age?*

10. Hymn: *A mighty fortress is our God.* (No. 273.) (Wisc. No. 36.)

### 3. THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH IS AN INVISIBLE CHURCH

John 17, 19-21

19. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. 20. Neither (Nor do I) pray I for these alone, but for them (those) also which shall believe on me through their word; 21. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

The passages are taken from what is called the sacerdotal prayer of Christ, the seventeenth chapter in John's Gospel. "Sacerdotal" signifies something pertaining to the priesthood. It is a prayer which Jesus spoke as our High Priest, interceding for us with His heavenly Father and praying for our sanctification in the truth and preservation in the faith. "I sanctify Myself": Jesus fully consecrates Himself as a sacrifice for the world's sins. Thereby every believer is likewise consecrated, a separation is established between the world and those who believe in Him. This prayer was spoken, in the first place, on behalf of the twelve disciples, but the Savior includes (v. 20) all those who would believe the Gospel. He prays for their unity. Now observe that He asks the Father to make the Christians One "as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee." The Father and the Son are united in one divine essence. It is an invisible, spiritual union of Christians among each other, the union in the faith, for which our Lord prays. And since no one can see the bond of union, faith, it follows that the union of believers is an invisible one. The universal Church is an invisible Church.

11. Read *Ephesians 4, 4-6.* Not an outward, but an inward union is here described.

12. Question: *Who, according to the Scripture, is the invisible Head of the Church? Which church claims that the head of the church must be visible?*

13. *While the Anglicans (Episcopalians) do not accept the pope as visible head, they believe that there is no true church where the ministers are not consecrated by regular bishops. How would you argue against this position?*

Every Christian may and should know that he is a member of the Church; but of not every man can he know whether he be or only seem to be in the faith and a member of the Church. "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17, 21). The Church is not discernible by human eyes, is invisible; it is an object of faith. Hence, in the Third Article, we believe in the Church just as we believe in the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting. And we believe in forgiveness and salvation not because we see it or feel it, but because we are assured of it by the Word of God. We believe that there is a Church of true believers on earth because the Gospel is preached and God has promised it.

### CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn: *The saints on earth and those above* (No. 463)  
or *Blessed be the tie that binds* (No. 462) (Wisc. No. 47)

Prayer. Benediction

## DAILY BIBLE READING:

Sunday: Joshua 2, 1-24  
Monday: Joshua 3, 1-13  
Tuesday: Joshua 3, 14-49  
Wednesday: Joshua 4, 10-24  
Thursday: Joshua 5, 1-15  
Friday: Joshua 6, 1-27  
Saturday: Joshua 7, 1-15

## SEVENTH LESSON

## The Visible Church

## OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn: Jesus shall reign (No. 483.) (Wisc. No. 112.)

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 55, 1-11. Prayer

## 1. THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

Matthew 13, 31, 32

31. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: 32. Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge (roost) in the branches thereof.

There had been something very saddening in the lesson of the two parables which preceded this one. In the parable of the Sower, three parts of the good seed were lost. By the parable of the Tares among the Wheat, the disciples had been taught that the good seed was mingled with weeds. It may be that the parable of the Mustard Seed was intended to encourage the disciples. The seed will grow; it will become a tree, spreading its branches afar. Let us examine the parable more closely.

The mustard seed referred to by Christ is the common mustard of Palestine, found abundantly in a wild state and also cultivated in the gardens for its seed. It is the same as our own mustard but grows in the rich soils of Canaan to a much greater size than in our country. It becomes greater than the other herbs, a tree in which the birds of the air can lodge. Such, says Jesus, is the kingdom of heaven. It was small in its beginning and its first growth seemed very slow. The King was a Man of Sorrows; He died the shameful death of the cross. Twelve men were sent forth to fight the battles of the kingdom, to confront the whole power of heathendom. They were few and they were, most of them, of no reputation. But as the little seed had a vital power hidden within, so it was with the kingdom of heaven. Through the labors of the apostles it spread until it filled the greatest kingdoms of earth, and men flocked from all cities to take refuge in its shelter. There are hundreds of millions in the Christian Church and still Christianity is spreading and has vitality enough to fill the whole world. Even today it provides a home of heavenly safety, heavenly rest for all that will seek it.

In the following parable, of the Leaven, Jesus speaks of the inward growth in knowledge, faith, and holiness of life. Here He speaks of the outward growth. The Church of Christ is invisible. It consists of all those who accept Jesus as their Mediator and Savior. But the members of the invisible Church unite for worship, for hearing the Gospel, for Christian work. They are thus a visible organization. All who gather around the Word and Sacraments are the visible Church. In a narrower sense the Holy Scriptures use the word church also with reference to the local congregations. Every group of Christians which establishes in its midst the ministry of the Gospel is a church.

1. Read Galatians 1, 2. 1 Corinthians 1, 2. 1 Thessalonians 1, 1. Observe that the word church is here applied to local congregations.

In another sense the word church is applied to larger bodies into which congregations unite with each other. Thus we have synods and general church bodies. Hence we speak of the Methodist, the Baptist, the Catholic, the Lutheran Church, organizations made up of local churches which hold certain teachings and practises in common.

2. Question: How has the parable of the Mustard Seed been verified in the history of the Lutheran Church? — of the Missouri Synod? — of your congregation?

3. Hymn: The morning light is breaking. (No. 471.) (Wisc. No. 196.)

## 2. THE PARABLE OF THE DRAG-NET

Matthew 13, 47-50

47. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered (collected fish) of every kind; 48. Which, when it was full, they drew (dragged it) to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good (fish) into vessels, but cast the bad away. 49. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever (separate) the wicked from among the just, 50. And shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

The Lord here spoke to fishermen who knew the sea and its trade, and He compared His work to theirs. He compares the work He does through His Church to the casting of a great net and the drawing of it through the waters. As the net is drawn to shore the fishermen sort out their catch. The bad fish are those which are not edible, the worthless, the unfit for use. The edible fish are gathered into vessels and sold at the market.

The meaning of the parable is clear. The sea is the world; the net is the Gospel. The net is drawn through the sea till it is filled with fishes. The Gospel is preached throughout the world till the number of the elect is accomplished. This work is still going on, there are many not yet gathered into the net. The Gospel has not yet been preached all over the earth. All waters must be tried, the glad tidings of the kingdom of heaven must be carried everywhere. Then shall the end come.

The point of the parable is that the net gathered fish of every kind. So in the church are good and bad. But the bad will be sorted out in the Judgment and cast away. Here as in other parables the angels are the ministers of God's justice. Again, as in the parable of the Tares, we hear the words of fearful meaning, the furnace of fire, the wailing and gnashing of teeth.

This is a parable of awful warning but also contains a very important teaching. As long as the church is on earth there will be in it the good and the bad, believers and unbelievers.

4. Read Matthew 13, 24-26, which teaches the same lesson. In the visible church the devil sows tares, people who are unbelievers yet are so similar to Christians that one cannot tell them apart. They are hypocrites.

5. Question: How shall we answer those who try to shake our faith by pointing to church-members who have proven themselves hypocrites?

6. Question: How is this same teaching set forth Matthew 25, 1. 2. 11, 12?

7. Question: What is the meaning of the man without a wedding garment Matthew 22, 12. 13?

Observe that the local congregations are called churches in spite of the fact that they harbor hypocrites.

8. Read Revelation 2, 12. 14, also 3 John 10. In spite of false teachers and godless men that creep in, the congregation may be rightly called a church.

Because of the children of God who cannot fail to be where the Gospel is preached, a society gathered about the means of grace is called a Christian church, even as Christ speaks of the kingdom of heaven as comprising both good and bad fishes.

9. How did Jesus describe the hypocrites of His own day? Read Matthew 15, 7-9.

While teaching us that a body of believers is a church in spite of the unbelievers that slip in, these texts are a solemn warning that we be numbered among the true believers who alone have the benefit of church membership and who alone exercise the powers and rights given to His invisible church by Jesus, its Lord.

### 3. THE RIGHTS AND POWERS OF THE CHURCH

Matthew 16, 13-19

13. When Jesus came into the coasts (district) of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? 14. And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 15. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16. And Simon Peter answered and say, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God. 17. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed are thou, Simon Bar-jona (Son of Jona): for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which (who) is in heaven. 18. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail (succeed) against it. 19. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

The Savior was sojourning with His disciples at the source of the Jordan in the neighborhood of great Mount Hermon with its crown of snow. For the sake of the apostles, to help them gain clear thoughts about Him, to deepen their convictions and to confirm their faith He asked them the question (v. 13). The disciples related the various opinions current among the people. When asked for their own opinion, Peter spoke up for the disciples. His answer was a strong and decided one. He was sure that Jesus was the Messiah promised to the world in the Old Testament. It was a knowledge gained by divine revelation and Jesus says that on this rock, on the doctrine that He is the Savior of the world, He would build His invisible church. Furthermore He says that by vir-

tue of faith in Him, the church can loose men from their sins (if they are penitent) and bind their sins upon them (when impenitent). Peter had spoken for the rest, and to all those for whom he had spoken Christ commits the keys of heaven.

10. Read *Matthew 18, 17, 18*, addressed to all disciples.

11. Read *John 20, 23*, addressed not only to the apostles but to all disciples (v. 19).

To the church Christ commits the Gospel, the power to remit and to retain sins in His name. The Gospel is its bread of life. Those powers which Jesus possesses He delegates to the church,—the power to preach the Gospel, to call preachers, to send missionaries, to baptize, to celebrate the Lord's Supper, to admonish, to exclude the wicked sinners. Observe that all these rights, while belonging to the invisible church, are given to the local congregation. You have noticed that when He instructs His disciples in the right use of the keys, He says: "Tell it unto the church." This cannot mean the invisible church universal, which no man's voice can reach. The brother who would gain a brother is directed to the church before which they can both appear, a visible congregation of Christians. The hypocrites who mingle with the church have no real share in its prayers or its confession of faith. Only by the true believers of Christ and because they are members of the congregation are the right and powers of the church administered. Because there are Christians where the Gospel is preached, the congregation may call ministers, do missionary work, establish schools and do everything else necessary to bring men into the kingdom. When necessary congregations may join hands and thus carry on the work of Christ. But the synods into which churches thus unite are not ruling bodies but advisory bodies only so far as the rights and affairs of the congregations are concerned.

Our main business in this life must be to make sure that we are members in the invisible church. In that we hold membership if we have faith in Jesus Christ. Mere outward membership in a visible church brings no one to heaven. A believer excluded from the church, as Luther was excommunicated from the church of Rome, is not thereby separated from the invisible church. Knowing that the doctrine of Christ is taught in all its purity by the Lutheran Church, we have a right to designate it as the true visible church. The more we study the Bible the more we shall be strengthened in our resolve to remain with it as we promised on the day of confirmation.

### CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn: Let me be Thine forever (No. 408.) (Wisc. No. 123.)

Closing Prayer. Benediction

### DAILY BIBLE READING:

Sunday: Joshua 7, 16-26

Monday: Joshua 8, 1-22

Tuesday: Joshua 10, 1-14

Wednesday: Joshua 20, 1-9

Thursday: Joshua 23, 1-16

Friday: Joshua 24, 1-18

Saturday: Joshua 24, 19-33



## EIGHTH LESSON

### Baptism

#### OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn: Baptized into Thy name most holy (No. 400.) (Wisc. No. 229.)

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 52, 9-15. Prayer

#### 1. BAPTISM A MEANS OF GRACE

Titus 3, 4-7

4. But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared. 5. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6. Which he shed (poured) on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

The doctrine of Scripture regarding Baptism has been the subject of much argument in the Christian Church. The cause of the controversies about this Sacrament is not any lack of clearness of Scripture, but is the unwillingness of human reason to bow to the simple words of the Bible. That Baptism is a means of grace is denied by all Reformed churches (Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterian, etc.) yet is a clear teaching of Scripture. In the text printed above Paul refers to Baptism as "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Let us study these words in their connection. Paul says that the free grace of God has appeared to all men. There is no merit on the part of man, no works of his by which he can earn salvation. This salvation is given to the believers through a washing of water, Holy Baptism. Through it a new birth takes place in man, his heart and mind are renewed. In itself simple water, Baptism is endowed, through the Word of God connected with it, with such wonderful power that it becomes a means by which faith is created and divine pardon is conferred. In our regeneration or conversion we receive forgiveness of sins and even now we are through it heirs of heaven. Such faith is worked in the heart of the children by Baptism and perseverance in such faith is by the same means worked in adults who have been previously converted.

1. Find the reference to the holy Trinity in this text. Read Matthew 28, 19.

2. Read Acts 2, 37, 38. Forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit are promised to those who receive Baptism with penitent hearts.

Note the difference between infant and adult Baptism. Since the Holy Spirit regenerates the person baptized and washes away his sins, we verily believe that faith is implanted in the heart of children when baptized. In the case of grown persons, we speak of Baptism as sealing their faith. We baptize only those adults who confess their faith in Jesus Christ and have given proof of true repentance.

3. Read Acts 8, 35-38. Here faith is made a condition of Baptism.

4. Question: Where does the Bible say that Baptism actually "saves us"? Read 1 Peter 3, 21.

## 2. THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

Romans 6, 3, 4

3. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Christ's salvation is our own because we were baptized into His death. We are now delivered from the power of death. This blessed union with Christ is given and sealed to us in Baptism. This means, however, that the believer is now dead unto sin. It is the plain teaching of this text that a baptized Christian should daily bury and shun all sins, daily walk in newness of life. Hence by daily repentance we must drown the old Adam, our sinful desires and inclinations. This we promise in Baptism when we renounce the devil and promise to serve God only.

5. *Question: How, then, can we tell whether we continue in the grace of our Baptism?*

6. *Question: Why can a person who leads an evil life not comfort himself with the thought that he is baptized?*

## 3. INFANT BAPTISM

John 3, 5, 6

5. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except (unless) a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

In His conversation with Nicodemus Jesus gives both the manner by which and the reason on account of which every sinner must be saved in the same way. That which is born of sinful flesh is sinful flesh, under sentence of damnation. No one can escape this condition if he rejects the means of salvation provided for all men: He must be born again of water and of the Spirit. Only that which is born of the Spirit has true spiritual life, has forgiveness of sins and salvation. So universal is this statement that undoubtedly all mankind is included,—men and women and also infants. What is born of sinful flesh has in itself original sin, which condemns and brings eternal death. To speak of children as being by nature pure and spotless as the angels, utterly lacks the support of God's Word. The child, by its natural birth, "cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

7. *Question: How can we infer from Acts 2, 39 that also the children were baptized? The promise was unto the hearers, — therefore Peter tells them to be baptized. The promise was to their children; what, then, must we conclude?*

8. *Question: Can children believe? Read Matthew 18, 6.*

Jesus has not left us in doubt regarding the faith of children. He knows their hearts better than we, and He asserts that they believe in Him. Of course, infant faith is not a conscious faith as in the case of the adult, but it is faith just the same. Last night, when asleep, you were unconscious of yourself, of God, of everything; but you were then a believer just as truly as when now wide-awake. You were in a **state** of faith.

So much we know about the faith of children: By the power of God in Baptism, which is the washing of regeneration, faith is worked in the little children. God works faith, whether in the adult or in the infant, and God's ways and workings are wonderful in either case.

9. Hymn: *Thine forever! God of love. (No. 411.) (Wisc. No. 201.)*

#### 4. THE MODE OF BAPTISM

Acts 16, 25-33

25. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. 26. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands (fettters, chains) were loosed. 27. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed (was at the point of killing) himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled (made their escape). 28. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. 29. Then he called for a light, and sprang (rushed) in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas. 30. And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 31. And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house (household). 32. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. 33. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway (instantly).

Paul and Silas, when in Philippi, had been unjustly thrown into prison. But the Lord did not forget His servants. At the hour of midnight He sent a great earthquake which set the prisoners free. The jailer in great alarm would have taken his own life, fearing that the prisoners had escaped. Paul kept him from his evil purpose. Realizing then that the thing was from God and that he himself was a lost sinner, falling at the feet of his prisoners the man poured out before them the agony of his soul in the cry: "What must I do to be saved?" Seeing that the jailer was deeply penitent, Paul preached to him salvation through faith in Christ and immediately he "was baptized and all his, straightway." Again we note that the entire household, which surely included children, was baptized. Now, the jailer could not leave his charge and Paul refused to leave the prison (v. 37). These people were baptized in their room. How? Certainly not by immersion (dipping). No doubt Paul baptized the jailer and his family by sprinkling the water upon their heads.

10. Question: *How was the mode of the use of water in the New Testament church indicated by prophecy? Read Isaiah 52, 15. Ezekiel 36, 25.*

The word used in the New Testament for baptize is the Greek verb baptizo. The word means to apply water whether by dipping, washing, or sprinkling. The Baptists insist that dipping is the only Scriptural mode of Baptism. The Lutheran doctrine is that any application of water, if performed according to the command of Christ and in His name, is Baptism. The evidence of the New Testament, however, is very strong that sprinkling was the mode of Baptism employed by the disciples.

11. Question: What is more probable, that the eunuch was baptized by dipping or sprinkling when in the desert with Philip? Read Acts 8, 38. There are no streams or lakes in the desert, at most a rain-pool or a spring. Evidently both went down into it and while the eunuch bowed his head, Philip caught up the water and baptized him by sprinkling it upon his head.

12. Read Acts 10, 47, 48. Undoubtedly the assembly was sprinkled as the only possible mode of Baptism in a dwelling.

13. Question: How shall we imagine the thousands on Pentecost to have been baptized? For twelve men to baptize three thousand in the midst of the city of Jerusalem was impossible by immersion. Jerusalem had no stream inside of its walls where this could be done, nor any running water nearby. Dipping three thousand in a public pool used for drinking purposes was out of the question. Note that this multitude was baptized "that day." Immersing three thousand could not have been accomplished in one afternoon.

14. Question: Was Jesus baptized by immersion? Read Matthew 3, 16. That Jesus "went up straightway out of the water" proves nothing. If you are in a stream only ankle deep you would also come up out of the water. True, John baptized "in the Jordan." But it is also said that he baptized "in the wilderness." Besides, John was a teacher of the Law of Moses and baptized under it (Matth. 3, 15) and this Law demanded sprinkling, not immersion. Read Hebrews 9, 19.

The Savior had told His disciples just before His ascension that "John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence," Acts 1, 5. On Pentecost the disciples were baptized with the Holy Ghost, but not by immersion. Peter explains this wonderful event by a reference to Joel: "I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh." Clearly, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit was accomplished by pouring. When we follow the mode of Baptism employed by the Holy Spirit we are not wrong.

### CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn: Now Christ, the very Son of God (No. 403.) (Wisc. No. 231.)  
Closing Prayer. Benediction.

### DAILY BIBLE READING:

Sunday: Judges 2, 6-23  
Monday: Judges 4, 1-24  
Tuesday: Judges 5, 1-31  
Wednesday: Judges 6, 1-24  
Thursday: Judges 6, 25-40  
Friday: Judges 7, 1-14  
Saturday: Judges 7, 15-25

## NINTH LESSON

## The Lord's Supper

## OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn: Lord Jesus, Thou art truly good (No. 436.) (Wisc. No. 237.)

Scripture Reading: Exodus 12, 1-14. Prayer.

## 1. THE INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

## A. THE ACCOUNT OF ST. MATTHEW

Matth. 26, 26-28

26. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake (broke) it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. 27. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; 28. For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

## B. THE ACCOUNT OF ST. MARK

Mark 14, 22-25

22. And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. 23. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. 24. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. 25. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that (when) I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

## C. THE ACCOUNT OF ST. LUKE

Luke 22, 17-20

17. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this and divide it among yourselves: 18. For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. 19. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. 20. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

Here we have what the Holy Spirit gave to Matthew, Mark, and Luke to utter on the subject of the Lord's Supper. Of the three, Matthew was himself present; Mark, according to reliable tradition, wrote according to the dictate of Peter, whose assistant and companion he was. Luke was the companion of Paul on his missionary journeys, who investigated very carefully the narratives about the life of Christ which were current in the Christian Church (Luke 1, 1-4). All three were guarded against all errors by the Holy Spirit, under whose inspiration they, as well as John, wrote their gospels.

We have, then, here a true account of one of the greatest events in the Kingdom of God, and one of highest meaning for us. Let us examine the separate accounts closely, comparing them with one another.

1. Read in each account what is said about the occasion when this took place. Read also Matthew 26, 17-19.

2. *Read in each account the words pronounced by Christ as He gave the bread.*

3. *Read in each account the words spoken as he gave the cup.*

We notice that there is mutual agreement in these accounts, each sustaining the other and each to some extent completing what the others write. While it is plain that they did not copy from each other, for then we would not have the differences in the wording, it is also plain that there can be no question about what Jesus said. By gathering what is said in all three accounts we have the complete story. (Even so we get the complete story of Christ's words on the cross, of his appearances to the disciples on Easter Day: by comparing the accounts of the evangelists.)

On that memorable Thursday night, when "between the two evenings" (Exod. 12, 6)—from six o'clock Thursday to six o'clock Friday evening—the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" presented himself for slaughter, as the true Passover, Jesus sat at table with the Twelve. He was eating the Passover (paschal) lamb with unleavened bread (bread without yeast or fermentation). The Jews had the custom of drinking wine at their Passover meal. According to Luke, the cup was passed around twice, each time with a short thanksgiving or blessing. The first time it pertained to the meal as such; the second time is the time recorded by the other evangelists, when it was used in the sacrament.

John tells us that before the meal was served, Jesus performed for his disciples the service otherwise performed only by slaves,—he washed their feet.

4. *What was the purpose of this unusual action? Read John 13, 12-17.*

5. *For the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which was part of the Passover festival, read Exod. 13, 3-10.*

All narratives of the institution of the Lord's Supper agree that on the night when he was betrayed, Jesus took unleavened bread, broke it, and passed it around to all. They were still eating the Passover meal, probably just concluding it. It was customary that the head of the household would dip some of the bitter herbs which were a prescribed part of the meal, into salt-water, speak a blessing, and hand them to each of the company. Then a "sop," which was made up of flesh of the lamb, a piece of unleavened bread, and bitter herbs, was dipped into the sauce and passed around. The disciples may not have been surprised when Jesus also passed around the bread. But imagine their astonishment when He said: "This is my body!" And after supper He took a cup, blessed it, gave it to them, and announced: "This is my (the) blood of the new covenant!" The old covenant (agreement) had been established by Moses; its signs were circumcision and the Passover. The new covenant, too, has its sacraments: Baptism and Lord's Supper.

The astonishment of the disciples must, indeed, have been great. That a man sitting bodily present in their midst, takes a loaf of bread and a cup of wine, passes them around and declares that they are now eating and drinking his body and blood, would seem unreasonable enough. But, more than that, Jesus connects this act with events that had happened fourteen-hundred years ago, and suggests that it should continue indefinitely into the future! But unreasonable as it sounded, we find that the apostles accepted the words as they were uttered, in faith believed what they said. These facts, then, are very clear:

(1) That Jesus instituted and commanded that His followers should eat and drink His body and blood and thus have remission of sins, life, and salvation in and through Him.

(2) That His apostles, as revealed in their writings, held and practiced these truths, and that from the beginning Christ's words were understood in no other way than to mean that His body and blood were truly present and communicated to those who partake of the sacrament, regardless of whether they believe or not.

Let us now turn to the account which Jesus Himself caused the Apostle Paul to write.

## D. PAUL'S ACCOUNT

### 1 Corinthians 11, 23-26

23. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: 24. And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped (after the supper) saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew (show, proclaim) the Lord's death till he come.

That Paul regarded this special revelation, by which he received the narrative of the Lord's Supper from the Lord Himself, as very important, is clear from the reading of this passage. He "delivered" this revelation to the churches, and wanted it to be handed down through all time. The story as told by Paul emphasizes the: "Do this in remembrance of me!" Jesus does not want His sacrament to be forgotten.

6. *Once more compare, with the verses 2 Cor. 11, 24, 25., the accounts of the evangelists.*

The apostle continues: "For as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death, till he come." Not only as a memorial friendship-dinner, not only even as a memorial of His death, but as a continual proclamation and publication of the death of our Lord shall this sacrament be celebrated to the end of time. As in ancient Israel the children, at Passover time, watching the curious preparations, would ask: "Why do ye thus? What is this?" (Exod. 12, 26, 13, 14) and would be told the story of the deliverance out of Egypt, so even the children of the church will ask these questions about the eating and drinking. And wherever the sacrament is being celebrated today, men are reminded of the breaking of Christ's body and the shedding of His blood on the cross. It is gospel invitation, offer of pardon and grace.

## 2. THE REAL PRESENCE

### 1 Corinthians 10, 16, 17

16. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17. For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

7. *Review Luther's Catechism on the Lord's Supper, especially Sec. 2 and 3.*

Forgiveness of sins, life and salvation, are the gifts offered to those who commune at the Lord's Table. But that faith which alone receives

these gifts must have a firm foundation in the promise uttered by our Lord when He instituted the sacrament. And the same Lord who says "Given for you," "Shed for you and for many," also says: "This IS my body," "This IS my blood." In other words, the Lord teaches the Real Presence. And this is likewise the doctrine which He teaches us through His apostle, Paul. Study the words above quoted from First Corinthians. Note the connection in which they stand. Paul discusses the very natural condition for that time, that the Christian might be invited by heathen friends or neighbors to feasts in honor of the idols. The point he makes is this: Eating at some heathen festival the meat of an animal slaughtered as a sacrifice to an idol, brings the participant into union with devils which are back of all idolatry. Just as the drinking of the cup and the breaking of the bread in the sacrament brings the participant into union with Christ. Why? Because the cup is united to the blood of Christ, and the bread to the body of Christ.

These brief verses, then, plainly teach that the body and blood of Jesus are actually there in the sacrament (Real Presence). Those who partake of the bread actually partake of His body, and those who drink of the wine truly partake of His blood. And it is the body "given for us," and not another; the blood "shed for us," and not another. The elements have not been changed into body and blood, as the Catholics teach, and then worship the wafer as Christ Himself, "created anew" at every Mass by the priest. No, the bread is bread, the wine is wine, but in, under, with these elements we receive, in a way which we know not, the true body and blood of our Lord. And by such communion with Christ there comes a closer union with the brethren, all being made into one body through their union with Christ.

Neither Paul nor the evangelists make any attempt to explain the mystery of the Lord's Supper. They leave it where the Lord had left it. Jesus is united with the sacramental bread and wine—we are united with Him when we partake of the sacrament—and we are thereby united with the brethren. And the purpose of it all is to seal God's pardon, to strengthen faith, and to give spiritual powers towards a God-fearing life.

### 3. WHO SHALL COMMUNE?

1 Corinthians 11, 27-29

27. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of (will have to answer for a sin against) the body and blood of the Lord. 28. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning (discriminating; showing due recognition of) the Lord's body.

According to Roman doctrine, the Mass is a sacrifice, in which the priest offers up the body and blood of Christ every day for the sins of the living and the dead. According to Reformed doctrine, the Lord's Supper is only a memorial feast, the bread and wine signifying the body and blood. According to the Scriptures, the sacrament is a means of grace, by which all who partake of it are invited to accept divine grace and pardon. But are all benefited by it? Study the lesson verses.

Paul was complaining that many Corinthians were treating the sacrament like any other meal, some even getting drunk on the wine.

8. Read verses 20-22.



Now Paul tells them that partaking of the sacrament in such a thoughtless manner brings damnation upon such a one. He desecrates the body and blood of his Lord. We note again that the Real Presence is taught, since no one could become guilty of dishonoring Christ's body if it were not actually there. We notice, too, that all communicants partook of the wine, not the clergy only, as in the Catholic church. Most important of all,—Paul teaches that not everyone is a worthy communicant. Not that our worthy use of it can add anything to the sacrament. But we miss the blessing and bring judgment upon our souls if we partake of it without earnest longing for forgiveness, faith, and sanctification. Only the penitent communicant receives what the sacramental words promise.

9. *Review Luther's Catechism, the Lord's Supper, Part 4.*

10. *Why is absolution pronounced before communion?*

11. *Why must we first be taught the doctrines of Christianity before we can commune?*

12. *How do we prepare for communion properly?*

### CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Hymn: No. 436 (Wisc. No. 237) Verses 7 and 8

Closing Prayer. Benediction

### DAILY BIBLE READING:

Sunday: Judges 11, 29-40

Monday: Judges 13, 1-25

Tuesday: Judges 14, 1-20

Wednesday: Judges 15, 1-20

Thursday: Judges 16, 1-20

Friday: Judges 16, 21-31

Saturday: Ruth 1, 1-22

## TENTH LESSON

### The Holy Ministry

### OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn: Look from Thy sphere of endless day (No. 479.) (Wisc. No. 124.)

Scripture Reading: Ezekiel 34, 11-16. Prayer

### 1. THE ORIGIN OF THE HOLY MINISTRY

2 Corinthians 5, 17-21

17. Therefore if any man be in Christ (becomes a Christian) he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 18. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 19. To-wit (namely), that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing (counting) their trespasses unto them; and hath committed (entrusted) unto us the word of reconciliation. 20. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech

you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. 21. For he hath made him to be sin for us (for our sakes) who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteous of God in him.

In conversion, man has become a new creature. As a Christian he bids farewell to the things that once engaged his attention, the pride and pleasure of the world. Now the things of the kingdom of God, the Word and the Sacraments, the church and its tasks, the striving against sin and the exercise in good works fill his entire life. This work of regeneration the apostle brings into close connection with the office by which God establishes His kingdom on earth, the Ministerial Office. It is here called "the ministry of reconciliation." Ministry signifies service. A minister is one who labors in the service of another. He who gives a ministry to another makes him his agent. Paul and others to whom God has given the ministry are servants of God.

1. Read 2 Corinthians 6, 4. 1 Timothy 1, 12.

This service or ministry was not simply identical with the apostleship. Also others than the apostles are called ministers of God.

2. Read 1 Corinthians 3, 5. Colossians 4, 7.

That which is to be achieved by the work entrusted to these servants of God is reconciliation. We find Paul in the actual performance of his ministry as we read again v. 20. In God's service, God working by them and through them, in Christ's stead, these servants pray and beseech men to be reconciled to God, to accept pardon for sin and every spiritual gift gained for them through the work of Christ. The preaching of the Gospel is the work of the Christian ministry.

The first form of the ministry of the New Testament was the apostolate (the office of the apostles). Paul, Peter, John and others were apostles of Christ, His messengers directly called to carry the Gospel in all lands, planting the church of Christ throughout the nations. For all time they were to be the teachers of Christendom.

3. Read Ephesians 2, 20.

In the Book of Acts we see the apostles serving as pastors and teachers of the congregation which they had gathered, administering the ministry of the Word (Acts 6, 4). But as the number of disciples increased other ministers were added. They were termed elders and we find them side by side with the apostles.

4. Read Acts 15, 23.

These servants of the Word and pastors of the churches were also known as bishops, a word meaning overseers. The terms elders and bishops were applied to the same persons.

5. Read Acts 20, 17, 28.

Thus we find in the earliest church the institution of the ministry, established by our Lord Himself when He called His twelve apostles, and we find that for the same ministry in which they labored others were called, the elders or bishops of the first congregations.

## 2. THE MINISTERS AS THE SERVANTS OF CHRIST

John 20, 21-23

21. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. 22. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: 23. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them: and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.

This event took place on Easter-day when Jesus appeared to His disciples as they were gathered behind closed doors for fear of the Jews. The risen Lord addressed His followers with words of the deepest significance. He was sending His disciples forth as His Father had sent Him. As He had been the official spokesman of His Father, preaching the Gospel, so it was His will that there should be those whose office it should be to continue His work, preaching the Gospel in His name. There was to be a ministry of reconciliation and those who serve in it were charged with the same ministry in which He had been engaged during His life on earth. And what the ministers do by the power received through their commission was to be as valid as if done directly by the Head of the Church. Through the power of the Holy Spirit they should announce forgiveness, and the pardon so announced would be valid in heaven. Even so if they retained the sins of impenitent sinners, they would be indeed retained. Thus the ministers of Christ, bearing the message of their King and officially carrying on the work of the great Prophet sent from God, possess a dignity greater than that of any office which men have created on earth. God wants all men to accept their doctrine, to confide in their promises, to heed their admonition, even as if Christ Himself was speaking the message.

6. Read Luke 10, 16.

It is Jesus that speaks to us through all who, being Christians, have command to speak of Him, especially as He addresses us through the public service of the Word, the Holy Ministry. Thus even today Christ is acting as our Prophet, leading us unto saving knowledge of God.

7. Questions: *In what sense are the ministers called "stewards of the mysteries of God," 1 Corinthians 4, 1? To whom is a steward responsible? What are the mysteries revealed through them to the world?*

8. Hymn: Lord, pour Thy Spirit from on high. (No. 488.) (Wisc. No. 131.)

### 3. QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE MINISTRY

#### 1 Timothy 3, 2-7

2. A bishop then must be blameless (above reproach), the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach (skilled in teaching); 3. Not given to wine (a drunkard), no striker (violent), not greedy of filthy lucre (a lover of money), but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; 4. One that ruleth (manages) well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity (obedient and respectful); 5. (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) 6. Not a novice (one recently converted), lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7. Moreover he must have a good report (reputation) of them which are without (among outsiders); lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Two letters to Timothy and the letter to Titus are called the pastoral letters. The persons addressed were Christian pastors and in his letters Paul speaks to them about the work and the duties of their holy office. Twice does Paul describe the qualifications for the ministry, in the above text, and in Titus 1, 7-9. The minister must above all be apt to teach, "able to teach others" (2 Timothy 2, 2). Deep and correct knowledge alone does not make a teacher. The minister must not only believe the doctrines of the Bible, know the difference between the Law and the

Gospel, but he must be apt to teach both. He must be able also to defend the Truth against its enemies. This is especially mentioned by Paul when he addresses Titus.

9. Read Titus 1, 9.

A minister of the Gospel must be blameless in his life, must be an example for the flock, as Peter says, and must have a good reputation among those outside the church. A man who gives his preaching the lie by an ungodly life would thereby show himself unqualified for the ministry.

10. Question: What is meant by the proverbial saying: "Your deeds speak so loud, I cannot hear what you say"?

11. Question: What special virtues are required of a minister according to our text?

12. Question: Against which special faults does Paul warn all ministers?

Women may not be called to the ministry of the Gospel. They are barred from public speech in the presence of the men and from exercising the right of public instruction. This law of the New Testament church is ignored in some denominations. We hear of women being called and ordained as preachers. But the Word of God is very clear on this point.

13. Read 1 Corinthians 14, 34, 35 and compare 1 Timothy 2, 11, 12.

However, the women are not ignored but are represented by the men in the meetings in which the business of the church is transacted. A woman's protest against action taken by the congregation, if properly brought before it, must be heard and if well founded must be heeded. When a pastor is called he is called by the entire congregation, men, women, and children, though it is the men who, for themselves and for the others, call him.

Women are not, by the texts quoted, prevented from doing such church work as instructing other women, teaching children in school, Sunday-school, etc. The church owes much to the women in congregational work. But by the word of Paul, written by divine inspiration, the office of the New Testament ministry is limited to men.

#### 4. THE MINISTERIAL CALL

##### Acts 20, 28

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

This meeting of Paul with the elders or pastors of the church at Ephesus took place during his third missionary journey as he was returning to Palestine by ship. He made a stop-over near Ephesus and knowing by the Spirit that he would never meet these elders again — "ye shall see my face no more," — spoke to them words of earnest admonition and tender farewell. He tells them that the Holy Ghost had made them bishops to feed the church of God with the Bread of Life. They had their ministry from God, their call was divine like the call of the apostles. But the apostles had been singled out and called directly by Christ Himself.

How were the pastors chosen in the early Christian Church? We know that the deacons or assistants to the pastors were chosen by the congregation.

14. Read Acts 6, 5.

In the same manner the churches were provided with elders. When Paul and Barnabas visited the churches which they had founded in Galatia, they caused them to choose ministers for themselves.

15. Read Acts 14, 23. The word translated ordained signifies the act of voting by ballot; the method used was that of lifting up the hand while we today use the written ballot, or vote by aye and no.

So, while the first teachers of the church were given to the church directly, when more ministers were needed the churches chose suitable men for elders, pastors, teachers. In this manner God gave those whom by the church He called to be His ministers.

16. Questions: How are the men who labor in the ministry called 1 Corinthians 12, 28? With what gifts were some of the servants of Christ endowed?

Being charged to "take heed to the flock" (see text of lesson), the pastor is the official teacher of the old and the young, not only in the pulpit, in the Christian day-school, in confirmation class, but also in the meetings of the congregation, in the meetings of committees and boards, or whenever individuals need instruction concerning Christian faith and life. To these tasks the minister is called when the congregation chooses him as its pastor.

17. Question: In what sense does a minister rule over the congregation and in what sense does he not rule over it?

By virtue of his call the minister, then, exercises publicly, in the name of all those who called him, and for the benefit of all, those powers which Christ has given to the church. In this sense the ministers are servants of the congregation. As ambassadors of Christ, officially carrying on the work of the great Prophet sent from God, they are servants of Christ, under-shepherds who "when the chief Shepherd shall appear, shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

### CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn: The Savior calls; let every ear (No. 47.) (Wisc. No. 199.)

Closing Prayer. Benediction

### DAILY BIBLE READING:

Sunday: Ruth 2, 1-23

Monday: Ruth 3, 1-18

Tuesday: Ruth 4, 1-22

Wednesday: Galatians ch. 1

Thursday: Galatians ch. 2

Friday: Galatians ch. 3

Saturday: Galatians ch. 4

## ELEVENTH LESSON

## The Second Advent

## OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn: Wake, awake, for night is flying (No. 549.) (Wisc. No. 209.)  
 Scripture Reading: Matthew 24, 1-14. Prayer.

## 1. THE SIGNS OF THE LAST TIMES

Mark 13, 28-31

28. Now learn a parable of the fig tree: When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near: 29. So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it (or: He) is nigh, even at the doors. 30. Verily I say unto you that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done (happen). 31. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

This chapter, like the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, read in our opening devotion, contains a discourse of Jesus concerning the Last Times. In a wider sense, the entire New Testament age, from the Day of Pentecost onward to the end of the world, is called "the latter days," "the last times," "the time of the end." In a special sense, this term is applied to the last period of this world's history, the age just preceding the end. Jesus had repeatedly discoursed about His return to judgment in the clouds of heaven, and in this chapter He speaks about the signs which should continually remind the Christians of His blessed promise that He would come again to take them with Himself into glory.

Our Lord refers to a common observation among men: When they see the fig tree, or any other tree, put forth young shoots or blossoming into buds, they know that it is spring-time; they know that summer is near. So, too, certain natural phenomena (events in the ordinary course of nature) and certain happenings and conditions in the world of men, are endowed by our Lord with a special meaning. They are to be understood by Christians as reminders, signs and tokens of the approach of the end of the world.

1. What natural phenomenon received a special significance when God renewed His covenant after the Flood? Read Gen. 9, 13.

2. "This generation" is a reference to the Jewish people. The godless King Frederick II of Prussia once demanded of a preacher that he prove in two words the truthfulness of Christ's teachings. The preacher answered: "Your Majesty: THE JEWS." Explain this answer. Does it hold good today?

3. Read Mark 13, 7. 8. Wars — Earthquakes — Famines: Can you point out fulfillment in recent times?

4. How is Mark 13, 22 being fulfilled today? Can you mention names of men and women who seduce (mislead) Christians by their false teaching?

5. What prophecies, recorded Matth. 24, 14. 37-39, are now being fulfilled, and how?

6. Does our age generally correspond with the description which Christ gave of the time before the end?

7. What lesson does Christ impress on His followers in the last verses of Mark 13 (verses 32 to end)?

Jesus says in our lesson text that His words "shall not pass away." They will all be proven true, all will be fulfilled. Also His saying that "no man knoweth that day and that hour" are true today. There are many who attempt to figure out the exact year, if not the day, when Jesus may be expected to appear again. But Jesus says that in the days of his humiliation even He, according to His human nature, did not know that day, but only the Father. So let us not be misled by those who by juggling words of Scripture try to predict the year of Christ's return. Both Jesus and His apostles tell us that His Second Advent will be as sudden as a flash of lightning; when none expects Him, His "sign" (what this is we do not know) will appear in the heavens.

What we do know about Christ's Second Advent is:

- (1) That it will be unexpected.
- (2) That it will be glorious.
- (3) That it will be a visible return.

8. Read Acts 1 11. Revelation 1, 7.

(4) That He will raise all the dead, gather the living and the resurrected dead before Him for judgment, and that when judgment is pronounced the end of the world will come.

## 2. THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

John 5, 28, 29

28. Marvel not (be not surprised) at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29. And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Jesus tells the Jews not to be astonished at His claim, that to Him the authority to execute judgment is given by the Father. Not only those who will be living at His return, but all human beings that have ever lived will be judged by Him—those who are dead being called to life to receive their sentence. The hour is coming: Not only the day, but the very hour is fixed in the foreknowledge of God. In that hour all the dead will arise. There are people in the Christian Church today, (the so-called Millennialists—from two Latin words meaning "thousand years," or Chiliasts—from a Greek word meaning "thousand") who believe that Jesus will not come to resurrect all the dead but will raise up the believers first, rule with these in glory a thousand years, and then raise the rest of the dead. But this passage says: In that "hour" all will come forth. They will come forth: the dead bodies, the identical bodies that were separated from the soul in death, the bodies of believers as well as of unbelievers. And the one class is raised for life—they will go to heaven; the others for damnation—they will receive the punishment of their evil deeds, committed in this life.

All this is clear from the brief words quoted above. The Scriptures speak very often and very plainly elsewhere of the Resurrection. Not only in the New Testament. Also the believers of the Old Covenant knew that there is a resurrection-life.

9. Read Job 19, 25-27. Under what conditions did Job utter this hope of a resurrection-life? Which expressions plainly exhibit Job's faith in a coming-back-to-life of his present body?

10. Questions: What blessed change will come over our bodies when they are raised from the grave. Read Phil. 3, 20. What attributes or qualities did Christ's body possess when He had been raised from the tomb?

By studying the manner in which Christ's body had been changed after His Resurrection, we are able, to some extent, to understand how our bodies will be fashioned when they will be glorified. The body of Christ was the same that had been crucified, but though it still consisted of flesh, blood, etc., it was now a spiritual body, with powers such as a natural body does not possess.

11. Read, if there is time, the Resurrection Chapter in 1 Corinthians (Ch. 15). Especially verses 42-44. 53-57.

12. Hymn: Jesus Christ, my sure Defence. (No. 220.) (Wisc. No. 103.)

### 3. THE LAST JUDGMENT

2 Cor. 5, 10

10. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that (whatever) he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

We must all be manifested, be made to appear in our true character, before the judgment-seat of Christ. Then the outward appearance of having been a Christian will not save. Hypocrites can deceive men, they cannot deceive the All-knowing One. And it will be a universal judgment. No one will be excluded, no one can escape. There will be no change of venue, no lawyer's appeal to a higher court will avail, because there will be no higher court.

13. Tell, in outline, the description of the Judgment as given by Christ Matth. 25, 31-46.

Both in the lesson-text and in the description given by Christ it appears that our works will be made the basis of the judgment. We, and all men, will be judged by what we have done in this life. But the works which men have done will not be investigated as if the Judge needed evidence for the purpose of rendering a just judgment. No, when the dead rise, they will be separated into two groups, and the works will be produced simply for the purpose, that all men may know that when the goats are placed to the left, they belong there and deserve their sentence; and that when the sheep are placed to the right, they belong there, having given evidence of their faith by their works. The Judgment is rendered, when mankind is divided into the two groups, one to the right, the other to the left. What remains is, that sentence is pronounced.

14. But are we not saved by faith alone? Certainly. The good works of the believers are produced in evidence of their living faith; the works of the unbelievers, in evidence of their unbelief. In Matth. 25, the believers make no claim to being worthy of heaven, while the unbelievers boast of their outward good works. Just as they do today!

Faith is invisible, but the fruits of faith can be seen. On Judgment Day all men will see that the Judge is right when He acknowledges the good works of the Christians and sentences the ungodly to suffer the just deserts of their evil life. The good works of the righteous are brought forward, not by the righteous, to prove their righteousness, but by the Judge, to prove the righteousness of His Judgment. But what of the sins of the Christians? Concerning them, God had promised that He would pardon every sinner who pleads Christ's merits; shall He not remember this promise on Judgment Day? He promises that He will "not remember our sins" if we repent of them; shall He then bring to light again what was covered up by the blood shed on Calvary? "The gift of God is eternal life!"

15. Read 1 John 2, 28.



#### 4. THE END OF THE WORLD

2 Peter 3, 10

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

When the faithful have received their heavenly reward, and the godless have been given their dread sentence, the End of all things is at hand. The terrible commotion which will accompany the End is described in our lesson text. The forces which once held the heavenly bodies in their places will be withdrawn, and so the universe will come down in a tremendous crash. The fragments of the present world will not be used to build a new one, but will be set afire and thus destroyed. A new heaven and a new earth will take the place of the first, to be inhabited by God, the angels, and His redeemed, to endure forever.

16. Read Revelation 21, 1-4.

#### CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn: Jerusalem, thou city fair (No. 559.) (Wisc. No. 101.) Verses 1. 2

Closing Prayer. Benediction

#### DAILY BIBLE READING:

Sunday: Galatians Ch. 5

Monday: Galatians Ch. 6

Tuesday: Ephesians Ch. 1

Wednesday: Ephesians Ch. 2

Thursday: Ephesians Ch. 3

Friday: Ephesians Ch. 4

Saturday: Ephesians Ch. 5

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### TWELFTH LESSON

Heaven and Hell

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#### OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn: Guide me, O thou great Jehovah (No. 340.) (Wisc. No. 77.)

Scripture Reading: Romans 5, 12-21. Prayers

#### 1. THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

Luke 16, 19-31

19. There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared (lived) sumptuously every day: 20. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores (ulcers), 21. And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. 22. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23.

And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off (far away), and Lazarus in his bosom. 24. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would (want to) pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would (want to) come from thence. 27. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28. For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear (listen to) them. 30. And he said, Nay, father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31. And he said unto him, If they hear not (will not listen to) Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though (even if) one rose from the dead.

Whether this story is a parable or whether it records an actual happening, does not make any difference, so far as its lesson is concerned. Even if it were only a parable, it would still be one of the clearest passages in the Bible regarding the condition in which men will find themselves in the hereafter. But Luke does not say that Jesus was speaking in parable, when he told about the Rich Man and Lazarus. It reads like an actual happening. And so we shall treat it.

In a preceding verse, Jesus had warned the Jews against the love of money. "No servant can serve two masters. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon (the things of this world, possessions, money)." Then he tells the story of the Rich Man (sometimes called "Dives," the Latin word for "rich man"). Some think that the story contains a lesson for rich men only, and they, indeed, are to be especially impressed by its lesson. When a man becomes wealthy, he is apt to find all his pleasure in the making of more money, and in the enjoyment of it. And this may lead him finally where Dives landed, in hell. What a solemn lesson! How dangerous may not riches become, if we devote our heart and life to them!

*1. Wealth in itself is not a sin. Can you mention believers of Old and New Testament times who were rich in earthly goods? The trust in riches is what keeps men out of the Kingdom of God. Read Mark 10, 24. Against which commandments is covetousness (the desire for riches) a sin? Read also Col. 3, 5.*

But the story was not told as a warning for rich men only. The sin of the Rich Man was that he had not "heard Moses and the Prophets." These and these alone were able to save his brothers, says the text, and they might have saved the Rich Man. "Moses and the Prophets" is the term often used in the gospels for "Old Testament." The Rich Man had not heeded the teachings of the Bible.

*2. How does the Parable of the Sower illustrate the truth that riches are apt to cause faith in the Word of God to die?*

And since he was not a believer of the Word, his life was not governed by the Law of God. That law is, above all, the Law of Love. There was Lazarus lying beside the door of the Rich Man. Feasting, fast and furious fun within, and beside the gate a sick beggar, with none but dogs to bring him some comfort. What an unforgettable picture! How

sad—and how terrible. For in this lack of love for fellow-man, the Rich Man showed his lack of respect for the divine Law, his lack of love toward God.

3. Read 1 John 3, 17.

But the Rich Man died.

And Lazarus died. What next?

Next we find the Rich Man in hell, and Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham.

Note how the quick succession of events is fixed. Read the story again, verses 22-23. No interval there: Death — then Burial for the body, Hell for the soul.

But let us for a moment consider first the Rich Man's death.

His riches had not saved him from the King of Terrors. No man is exempt from paying tribute to that great enemy of our race.

4. Read again, from the lesson of our opening devotion, Rom. 5, 12.

Like a keen wedge, either working its way slowly from infancy to old age, or speeded up by actual sins, such as drunkenness or an immoral life, or by a sudden blow, or through sickness (the consequence of sin), sin forces itself through and finally separates what God had once joined together, body and soul. Death is the separation of body and soul. And when it is an unbeliever that dies, it is a soul laden with guilt that passes into the beyond. This makes death so dreadful to the unbeliever.

5. Mention some means by which unbelievers try to dispel from their minds the horrid thought of death?

The Rich Man died, and we do not doubt that his funeral was made an occasion of great pomp and magnificence. His tomb was probably a very splendid one. When a rich man leaves five brothers, these can generally be counted on to "do the right thing."

6. Today doing "the right thing" at a funeral, also of one who never in his life-time paid much heed to the Word of God, includes the services of a minister. Can you tell why? And why are people so angry, when a minister refuses to preach or officiate at such a funeral? What is it that worries them? Why does a minister commit a sin when he knowingly buries an infidel?

The Rich Man did not appreciate the splendor of his funeral. He lifted up his eyes in hell. This is said in such plain words that nothing can change their meaning. He was in the abode of the damned. There are people today who say they do not believe in hell. The Russellites (Millennial Dawn, International Bible Students' Association) claims that all references to hell must be taken figuratively. Concerning this story they say that it is only a parable, and the meaning of it, according to their false prophet, "Pastor" Russell, was this: Lazarus is the modern Jew, Dives stands for the Western Nations, who ought to come to the relief of the Jews wherever they are oppressed. Judge for yourself, whether this can be the true interpretation, even if we are dealing only with a parable. Surely, Jesus here teaches that after this life there is a state of torment for the wicked, that there is a hell.

Hell is a place of punishment. Read verse 25. He was reaping what he had sown. He had sown to the flesh, and from the flesh he was reaping corruption, damnation. He was in the great company of those who serve sin in this life, and of the devils.

7. Read 2 Peter 2, 4.

As in the present life, wicked men associate with wicked men, so shall be their company in the hereafter. And as they served the devil with lying, stealing, uncleanness, slander, and misuse of God's name, so they will be confined in a prison with those who were their fellow-servants and with the devil himself. Terrible state! Unspeakable, unimaginable horrors!

8. *In what words does our Savior elsewhere describe the state of the damned?* Read *Matth. 8, 12. Mark 9, 44.*

And this state of punishment is endless. Hell is hopeless. There is a gulf fixed between hell and heaven, verse 26. Their worm dieth not, the fire is not quenched, their punishment is everlasting,—these words of the Bible are so plain, that nothing can deceive us as to their real meaning. The Bible teaches us that there will be, indeed, **degrees** of punishment. Great was the guilt of Pilate, but greater that of Judas and of Caiaphas. The greater our opportunity of hearing the Gospel, the greater our responsibility when we reject it. Hence those will receive the greater punishment who “know their Lord's will, but do not do it.”

9. *Read Matth. 10, 15.*

Men may escape the penalties of human law, and judges may pronounce too light a sentence, or too heavy a one. Not so in the hereafter. The penalties measured out in the last Judgment will be just in every way. The Rich Man in hell did not complain that his penalty was out of proportion to his guilt.

Yet, he might have escaped all this misery, had he heard Moses and the Prophets. That was the only hope which was held forth for his brothers, whose coming he so dreaded as former companions of his evil life. And if Lazarus was in heaven, it was not because he had been poor, or because he had merited heaven by his sufferings, but—to this the Bible testifies in many places—because he had trusted in the Savior of Israel, as poor, suffering Job trusted in Him. (“Lazarus” means “Telp of God.”) This is the only way to heaven, even as there is no other Savior from hell but He, who destroyed the works of the devil, Jesus Christ. Lazarus was in the bosom of Abraham,—a figurative expression, signifying that he enjoyed the bliss of Abraham. Abraham was the Father of the Faithful, who believed in God and His promises, and “His faith was accounted to him for righteousness.” Since our Substitute stood condemned and sentenced, and sentence executed upon Him when, forsaken of God, He suffered the pain of the damned, there is no condemnation for us, no sentence, no penalty, if we believe in Him.

10. *Read Romans 8, 1.*

The blissful state of the departed believers is called “eternal life.” Man forfeited life when he fell into sin. That life will be restored to God's children in the heavenly mansions, in Paradise, perfect life in a perfect body and soul. Lazarus is comforted. No more sores, wretchedness, disgrace, but full enjoyment of every heavenly blessing and eternal glory.

11. *Read Revelation 21, 4.*

And in that state of happiness we shall be confirmed, like the holy angels. There will be no longer any temptations without us or evil desires within, no more danger of falling away. There is a gulf fixed between heaven and hell. There will be an ample, overpowering reward for every work which we have done in this life by faith in Christ, even for a cup of water which we have given to the thirsty. So great will be

the glory of that state, that the Bible speaks of it in wondrous images, that we might, even in this life of sorrow and sin comprehend something of that which is in store for us.

12. Read *Revelation 22, 1-8.*

13. Hymn: *Jerusalem, thou city fair and high. (No. 559.) (Wisc. No. 101.)*

## 2. THE STRAIT GATE

Matthew 7, 13, 14

13. Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction; and many there be which go in thereat. 14. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Another word of admonition from our Savior, taken from the Sermon on the Mount. What is the "strait" (meaning narrow) gate? It is conversion and repentance. By repentance one enters on the narrow way, a way full of self-denial, beset with many dangers to the soul. It is so different from the wide gate and the broad way; that was the way of the Rich Man. And there is no third way. There is only one name by which we can be saved, the name JESUS, blessed forever, Amen.

## CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn: *Jesus, still lead on (No. 331.) (Wisc. No. 115.)*

Prayer. Benediction

## DAILY BIBLE READING:

Sunday: Ephesians ch. 6

Monday: Colossians ch. 1

Tuesday: Colossians ch. 2

Wednesday: Colossians ch. 3

Thursday: Colossians ch. 4

Friday: Titus ch. 1

Saturday: Titus ch. 2 and 3

## OPENING PRAYERS

Almighty God, Who hast given us commandment to pray for the gift of the Holy Ghost: Most heartily we beseech Thee, through Jesus Christ our Advocate, to grant us Thy Holy Spirit, that He may quicken our hearts by Thy saving Word, and lead us into all truth, that He may guide, instruct, enlighten, govern, comfort, and sanctify us unto everlasting life; through the same, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Send, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, Thy Holy Spirit into our hearts, that He may rule and direct us according to Thy will, comfort us in all temptations and afflictions, defend us from all error, and lead us into all truth; that we, being steadfast in the faith, may increase in love and in all good works, and in the end obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

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O Lord God, heavenly Father, we beseech Thee, let Thy Holy Spirit dwell in us, that He may enlighten and lead us into all truth, and evermore defend us from all adversities; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Almighty and Everlasting God, Who makest us both to will and to do those things which are good, and acceptable unto Thy Divine Majesty: Let Thy Fatherly hand, we beseech Thee, ever be over us. Let Thy Holy Spirit ever be with us. And so lead us in the knowledge and obedience of Thy Word, that in the end we may obtain everlasting life; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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Almighty and Eternal God, Thou hast taught us in true faith to know and to acknowledge Thee, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one eternal God, gracious and merciful, Who hast created, redeemed, and sanctified us according to Thy wonderful and infinite love and grace: We supplicate Thee, ever to keep us steadfast in such faith. Grant us grace, that we may ever laud, praise, magnify, and glorify Thy holy Name; who livest and reignest from everlasting to everlasting. Amen.

## CLOSING PRAYERS

Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, unto Thy Church Thy Holy Spirit, and the wisdom which cometh down from above, that Thy Word, as becometh it, may not be bound, but have free course and be preached to the joy and edifying of Christ's holy people, that in steadfast faith we may serve Thee, and in the confession of Thy Name abide unto the end; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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O God, our Protector; Behold, and look upon the face of Thine Anointed, Who hath given Himself for the redemption of all, and grant that from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, Thy Name may be great among the Gentiles, and that in every place, sacrifice and a pure offering may be made unto Thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Almighty God, unto Whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from Whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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O God, Who resistest the proud, and givest grace to the humble; Grant unto us true humility, after the likeness in which Thine Only Son hath revealed it in Himself, that we may never be lifted up and provoke Thy wrath, but in all lowliness be made partakers of the gifts of Thy grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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