Martin Luther

Sermons

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Translated by:

John Nicholas Lenker and others

Edited by John Nicholas Lenker

VOLUME 4

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J. N. LENKER.
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FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

EIGHT PAMPHLET EDITIONS OF THIS SERMON APPEARED IN 1523-24.

Text. <2169>Luke 16:19-31. Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day: and a certain beggar named Lazarus was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table; yea, even the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom: and the rich man also died, and was buried. And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 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 in anguish in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things: but now here he is comforted, and thou art in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they who would pass front hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us. And he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. But Abraham saith, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one go to them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead.

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SUMMARY OF THIS GOSPEL:

1. Here we have a parable and the connected parts of hypocritical righteousness which nowadays thoroughly knows and possesses almost everything, besides it is also highly esteemed by the world, as if it were the nearest heaven; and the Christian Cross or persecution is despised by every one.

2. The hypocritical righteousness seeks its own, rejoices in its own affairs and helps no one; but the Christian Cross must suffer everything, it lies at our door, no one shows it any mercy, has no consolation except that all who suffer oppression, anxiety and persecution have peace in God. A hypocrite is considered pious; while a Christian must be considered a heretic and a blasphemer of God.

3. Aside from this parable in this Gospel, we have nothing in the whole Scriptures as to how the dead sleep after this life, until the day of Judgment. And since we must not and should not prefer a parable to the revealed, plain and clear written Word; although I do not esteem all as a pure parable, which resembles a history; so I agree here with the explanation of Dr. Martin Luther, as will follow, namely, that we will feel and experience all that is set forth in this parable when we die; especially when the foolish virgins see that the wise virgins have oil in their lamps, and they have none, <4057>Matthew 25:7.

1. We have hitherto heard in our Gospel lessons of various examples of faith and of love; for as they all teach faith and love, I hope you are abundantly and sufficiently informed that no human being can be pleasing to God unless he believes and loves. Now in this Gospel text the Lord presents to us at the same time an example of faith and of unbelief or of the state of the godless, in order that we also may abhor the contrary and the

opposite of faith and love, and that we may cleave to faith and love more diligently.

For here we see the judgment of God upon the believers and the unbelievers, which is both dreadful and comforting. Dreadful to the faithless and comforting to the faithful. But in order that we may the better grasp the meaning of this text we must picture to ourselves both the rich man and poor Lazarus. In the rich man we see the nature of unbelief and in Lazarus the nature of belief.

PART I. THE RICH MAN.

2. We must not view the rich man according to his outward conduct; for he is in sheep's clothing, his life glitters and shines beautifully, while he tactfully conceals the wolf. For this Gospel text does not accuse him of adultery, of murder, or robbery, of violence or of having done anything that the world or reason would censure. Yea, he has been as honorable and respectable in his life as that Pharisee who fasted twice a week and was not as other men, of whom Luke 18:11f. speaks. For had he committed such glaring sins the Gospel would have mentioned them since it examines him so particularly that it describes even the purple robe he wore and the food he ate, which are only external matters and God does not judge according to them. Therefore he must have led outwardly an exemplary, holy life; and according to his own opinion and that of others, he must have kept the whole law of Moses.

3. But we must look into his heart and judge his spirit. For the Gospel has penetrating eyes and sees deep into the secret recesses of the soul; reproves also the works which reason cannot reprove, and looks not at the sheep's clothing, but at the true fruit of the tree to learn whether it is good or not, as the Lord teaches in Matthew 7:17. Hence if we judge this rich man according to the fruits of faith, we will find a heart and a tree of unbelief. For the Gospel chastises him that he fares sumptuously every day and clothes himself so richly, which reason never considers as especially great sins. Besides, the work-righteous people think it is right, and that they are worthy of it, and have merited it by virtue of their holy lives, and they do not see how they thus sin by their unbelief.

4. For this rich man is not punished because he indulged in sumptuous fare and fine clothes; since many saints, kings and queens in ancient times wore costly apparel, as Solomon, Esther, David, Daniel and others; but because his heart was attached to them, sought them, trusted in and chose them, and because he found in them all his joy, delight and pleasure; and made them in fact his idols. This Christ indicates by the words “every day,” that he lived thus sumptuously daily, continuously. From this is seen that he diligently’ sought and chose such a life, was not forced to it nor was he in it by accident, or because of his office or to serve his neighbor; but he only thereby gratified his own . lust, and lived to himself and served only himself.

5. Here one traces the secret sins of his heart as the evil fruit. For where faith is, there is no anxiety for fine clothing and sumptuous feasting, yea, there is no longing for riches, honor, pleasure, influence and all that is not God himself; but there is a seeking and a striving for and a cleaving to nothing except to God, the highest good alone; it is the same to him whether his food be dainty or plain, whether his clothing be fine or homespun. For although they even do wear costly clothes, possess great influence and honor, yet they esteem none of these things; but are forced to them, or come to them by accident, or they are compelled to use them in the service of others.

Thus queen Esther says, that she bore the royal crown against her will, and that she had to wear it for the sake of the King. David also would rather have lived a private life; but for the sake of God and of his people he had to become king. In like manner all the saints considered that they were constrained to fill their stations of influence, honor and glory; and their hearts were never entangled by them, and labored in these external things to be helpful to their neighbor, as <19620>Psalm 62:10 says: “Trust not in oppression and become not vain in robbery; if riches increase set not your heart thereon.”

6. But where unbelief reigns man is absorbed by these vanities, he cleaves to them, seeks them and has no rest until he has acquired them, and after he possesses them, he feeds and fattens himself with them as the swine wallow in the mire, and finds at the same time his happiness and felicity there. He never inquires how his heart stands with his God and what he possesses in God and may expect from him; but his belly is his God; and if he cannot get what he wants, he imagines things are going wrong. And lo,

these dreadful and wicked fruits of unbelief the rich man does not see, he covers them over, and blinds his own eyes by the good works of his pharisaical life, and hardens himself until no teaching, exhortation, threatening nor promise can help him. Behold, this is the secret sin which to-day's Gospel punishes and condemns.

7. From this now follows the other sin, that he forgets to exercise love toward his neighbor; for there he lets poor Lazarus lie at his door, and offers him not the least assistance. And if he had not wished to help him personally, he should have commanded his servants to take him in and care for him. It may have been, he knew nothing of God and had never experienced his goodness. For whoever feels the goodness of God, feels also for the misfortune of his neighbor; but whoever is not conscious of the goodness of God, sympathizes not in the misfortune of his neighbor. Therefore as he has no pleasure in God, he has no heart for his neighbor.

8. For the nature of faith is that it expects all good from God, and relies only on God. For from this faith man knows God, how he is good and gracious, that by reason of such knowledge his heart becomes so tender and merciful, that he wishes cheerfully to do to every one, as he experiences God has done to him. Therefore he breaks forth with love and serves his neighbor out of his whole heart, with his body and life, with his means and honor, with his soul and spirit, and makes him partaker of all he has, just like God did to him. Therefore he does not look after the healthy, the high, the strong, the rich, the noble, the holy persons, who do not need his care; but he looks after the sick, the weak, the poor, the despised, the sinful people, to whom he can be of benefit, and among whom he can exercise his tender heart, and do to them as God has done to him.

9. But the nature of unbelief is that it does not expect any good from God By which unbelief the heart is blinded so that it neither feels nor knows how good and gracious God is; but as 1942Psalm 14:2 says: he cares not for God, seeks not after him. Out of this blindness follows further that his heart becomes so hard, obdurate and unmerciful that he has no desire to do a kindness to his fellow man; yea, he would rather harm and offend everybody. For as he is insensible to the goodness of God, so he takes no pleasure in doing good to his neighbor. Consequently it follows that he does not look after the sick, poor and despised people, to whom he could and should be helpful and profitable; but he casts his eyes upward and sees

only the high, rich and influential, from whom he himself may receive advantage, gain, pleasure and honor.

10. So we see now in the example of the rich man that it is impossible to love, where no faith exists, and impossible to believe, where there is no love; for both will and must be together, so that a believer loves everybody and serves everybody; but an unbeliever at heart is an enemy of everybody and wishes to be served by every person and yet he covers all such horrible, perverted sins with the little show of his hypocritical works as with a sheep's skin; just as that large bird, the ostrich, which is so stupid that when it sticks its head into a bush, it thinks its entire body is concealed. Yea, here you see that there is nothing slinder and more unmerciful than unbelief. For here the dogs, the most irascible animals, are more merciful to poor Lazarus than this rich man, and they recognize the need of the poor man and lick his sores; while the obdurate, blinded hypocrite is so hard hearted that he does not wish him to have the crumbs that fell from his table.

11. Now all unbelieving people are like this rich hypocrite. Unbelief cannot do nor be different than this rich man is pictured and set forth by his life. And especially is this the character of the clergy-, as we see before our eyes, who never do a truly good work, but only seek a good time, never serving nor profiting any one; but reversing the order they want everybody to serve them. Like harpies they only claw everything into their own pockets; and like the old adage runs they "rob the poor of his purse." They are not moved in the least by the poverty of others. And although some have not expensive food and raiment, yet they do not lack will power and the spirit of action; for they imitate the rich, the princes and the lords, and do many hypocritically good works by founding institutions and building churches, with which they conceal the great rogue, the wolf of unbelief; so that they become obdurate and hardened and are of no use to anybody. These are the rich man.

PART II. POOR LAZARUS.

12. Likewise we must not judge poor Lazarus in his sores, poverty and anxiety, according to his outward appearance. For many persons suffer from affliction and want, and yet they gain nothing by it; for example King Herod suffered a great affliction, as is related in Acts 12:23; but

afterwards he did not have it better before God on account of it. Poverty and suffering make no one acceptable to God; but, whoever is first acceptable to God, his poverty and suffering are precious in the eyes of God, as <19B615>Psalm 116:15 says: “Precious in the sight of Jehovah is the death of his saints.”

13. Thus we must look into the heart of Lazarus also, and seek the treasure which made his sores so precious. That was surely his faith and love; for without faith it is impossible to please God, as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, <581106>Hebrews 11:6. Therefore his heart also must have confessed that he even in the midst of such poverty and misery expected all good from God, and comfortably relied upon him; with whose blessings and grace he was so richly satisfied, and had such pleasure in them, that he would have heartily and willingly suffered even more misery, if the will of his gracious God had so determined. See, that is a true, living faith, which softened his heart by the knowledge of the divine goodness; so that nothing was too heavy or too much to suffer and to do. So clever and skillful does faith make the heart, when it experiences the grace of God.

14. From this faith follows now another virtue, namely, love to one’s neighbor, so that he is willing and ready to serve everybody; but since Lazarus is poor and in misery himself, he had nothing with which he could serve others; therefore his good will is taken for the deed.

15. But this lack of service in temporal things he abundantly makes good by his services in things spiritual. For even now, long after his death, he serves the whole world with his sores, hunger and misery. His bodily hunger feeds our spiritual hunger; his bodily nakedness clothes (or feeds, as some editions read) our spiritual nakedness; his bodily sores heal our spiritual sores; in this way he teaches and comforts by his example, how God is pleased with us, when we are not prosperous here upon the earth, if we believe; and warns us how God is angry with us, even if we are prosperous in our unbelief; just as God had pleasure in Lazarus in his misery, and was displeased with the rich man.

16. Tell me, what king could have rendered a service to the whole world with his possessions, like poor Lazarus has done with his sores, hunger and poverty? Oh, the wonderful works and judgments of God! In what a masterly manner he puts to shame the cunning goddess and fool of this world, namely, reason and worldly wisdom! She stalks abroad and fixes her eyes rather upon the beautiful purple of the rich man, than upon the

wounds of poor Lazarus; she would rather center her eyes upon a healthy, handsome person, as this rich man was, than upon a revolting and naked person like Lazarus; yea, she holds her nose before the stench of his wounds and turns her eyes from his nakedness. Thus the great goddess and fool of this world overlooks God in the very presence of such a noble treasure, and always quietly passes her own judgment, and at the same time makes this poor person so precious and dear, that all the kings hence are not worthy to serve him or to dress his sores. For what king, do you think, would not now with his whole heart exchange his health, purple and crown for the sores, poverty and misery of poor Lazarus, if it were possible for him to do so? And what person is there who would now give a snuff for the purple and all the riches of this rich man?

17. Do you not think that this rich man himself, had he not been so blind and had known that such a treasure, a man so precious in the eyes of God, was dying at his gate, would have run out, and dressed and kissed his sores, and laid him in his best bed; and made all his purple and riches to serve him? But at the time God's judgment went forth, he did not see that he could do it. Then God thought, truly, you are not worthy to serve him. When later the judgment and work of God were accomplished, the wise fool begins to come to himself; and since he suffers now in hell he will gladly give his house and land, to whom before he would not give a crumb of bread; and wishes now that Lazarus might cool his tongue with the tips of his fingers, whom before he would not touch.

18. Behold, even at the present day God is filling the world with such judgments and works, but no one sees it; yea, everybody despises it. There are continually before our eyes poor and needy persons, whom God lays before us as the greatest treasures; but we close our eyes to them, and see not what God does there; later, when God has done his work, and we have neglected the treasure, then we hasten and wish to serve, but we waited too long. Then we begin and make sacred relics of their garments, shoes and furniture, and make pilgrimages to and erect. churches over their graves, are occupied with many like foolish deeds and thus ridicule ourselves in that we permit the living saints to be trodden under our feet and to perish, and we worship their garments, which is neither necessary nor of any use; so that indeed our Lord will let the judgment fall as he did in <4023>Matthew 23:29-33, and say: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and garnish the tombs of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers,

we should not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye witness to yourselves, that ye are sons of them that slew the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?"

19. All believers are like poor Lazarus; and every believer is a true Lazarus, for he is of the same faith, mind and will, as Lazarus. And whoever will not be a Lazarus, will surely have his portion with the rich glutton in the flames of hell. For we all must like Lazarus trust in God, surrender ourselves to him to work in us according to his own good pleasure, and be ready to serve all men. And although we all do not suffer from such sores and poverty, yet the same mind and will must be in us, that were in Lazarus, cheerfully to bear such things, wherever God wills it.

20. For such poverty of spirit may exist in those who have very great possessions; as Job, David, Abraham were poor and rich. For David in <1912>Psalm 39:12 says: "I am a stranger with thee, a sojourner, as all my fathers were." How could that be, since he was a king and possessed extensive lands and large cities? Thus it came about; although he indeed possessed these, yet his heart did not cleave to them, and they were as nothing compared with the riches he had with God. Likewise he had said of the health of his body that it was as nothing compared to the health of his soul before God, and he would indeed not have murmured, had God afflicted him with bodily sores and sickness. So Abraham also, although he had not the poverty and affliction of Lazarus, yet he had the mind and will to bear what Lazarus did, if God had visited him thus. For the saints should have one and the same inner mind and spirit, but they cannot have the same outward work and suffering. Therefore Abraham also recognized Lazarus as one of his own and received him into his bosom; which he would not have done, were he not of the same mind and had he not taken pleasure in the poverty and maladies of Lazarus. Thus is set forth the sum and meaning of the Gospel, that we may see, how faith everywhere saves and unbelief condemns.

PART III. QUESTIONS SUGGESTED AND ANSWERED.

21. This Gospel lesson suggests several questions. First, what is the bosom of Abraham, since it cannot be a natural bosom that is meant? To answer this, it is necessary to know that the soul or spirit of man has no rest or place where it may abide, except the Word of God, until he comes at the last day to the clear vision of God. Therefore we conclude that the bosom of Abraham signifies nothing else than the Word of God, where Christ was promised, 01 22 18Genesis 22:18, to Abraham, namely: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." In these words Christ is promised to him, as the one through whom every person shall be blessed, that is, shall be delivered from sin, death and hell, and through no one else and through no other work. All who have believed this passage, have believed on Christ, and have become good Christians, and have also through faith in this Word been released from sin, death and hell.

22. Thus were all the fathers before the birth of Christ carried into Abraham's bosom; that is, at their death they were established in this saying of God, and they fell asleep in the same, they were embraced and guarded as in a bosom, and sleep there until the day of judgment; excepting those,. who have already risen with Christ, as 40 27 52Matthew 27:52 teaches, where they also remained. In like manner we, when we face death, must lay hold of and trust in the Word of Christ with strong faith, as 43 11 26John 11:26 says: "Whosoever believeth on me shall never die," or like passages; and thus die in this faith, fall asleep, be embraced and guarded in the bosom of Abraham until the day of judgment. For the word spoken to Abraham and the word spoken to us is the very same word; both speak of Christ, that we must be saved through him. But the former is more particularly called Abraham's bosom, because it was spoken first to Abraham and began with him.

23. Likewise on the other hand the hell here mentioned cannot be the true hell that will begin on the day of judgment. For the corpse of the rich man is without doubt not in hell, but buried in the earth; it must however be a place where the soul can be and has no peace, and it cannot be corporal. Therefore it seems to me, this hell is the conscience, which is without faith and without the Word of God, in which the soul is buried and held until the day of judgment, when they are cast down body and soul into the true and

real hell. For just as Abraham's bosom is God's Word, in which believers rest through faith, and fall asleep and are guarded there until the day of judgment; so must that on the contrary ever be hell, where God's Word is not, into which the unbelievers are cast until the day of judgment. That can be nothing else than an empty, unbelieving, sinful, and evil conscience.

24. The second question is: How then did Abraham and the rich man converse with one another? Answer: It could not have been a conversation with the natural voice, since the bodies of both were lying in their graves; likewise as little was it the natural tongue that complained of being tormented; nor was it natural fingers and natural water that were desired from Lazarus. Therefore this all must be in the conscience thus: When the conscience is awakened by death or by the agonies of death, then it will have a testimony of its unbelief and will see then for the first time the bosom of Abraham, and those embraced by it, that is, the Word of God, in which it should have believed and did not; from which it has the very greatest pain and anxiety as in hell, and finds neither help nor consolation.

25. Then thoughts arise in the conscience, which held such a conversation, if they could speak, as this rich man did with Abraham, and seeks then whether the Word of God, and all who have believed in it, would help; and with so much anxiety that it would receive the least comfort from the very meanest of men, but even that cannot be granted to him. Then Abraham answered him, that is, his conscience took such a view of the Word of God, that it cannot be; but he had his portion of good things in his life, and he must now suffer; while the others are comforted, whom he despised.

26. At last he feels, that it is declared unto him: There is a great gulf fixed between him and the believers, that they will never be able to come together. These are the thoughts of despair, when the conscience feels that the Word of God is withdrawn forever from him; accordingly the thoughts of his conscience rage and would gladly have the living to know that such are the agonies of death, and he craves that someone would tell it to them. But it is to no purpose; for he feels an answer in his own conscience, that Moses and the prophets are sufficient, whom they ought to believe, as he himself should have done. All such thoughts pass between the condemned conscience and the Word of God, in the hour of death or in the agonies of death; and no one can perceive what it is, except the one who experiences it; and he who experienced it wished that others should know it, but all is in vain.

27. The third question is: When did that take place, and if the rich man still daily without ceasing suffers thus until the day of judgment? That is a subtle question and not easily answered to the inexperienced. For here one must banish the idea of time from the mind and know that in the other world there is neither time nor hours, but all is an eternal moment or wink of the eye; as <6008>2 Peter 3:8 says: "A day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day," <1904>Psalm 90:4. Therefore it seems to me that in this rich man we have an example of the future of all unbelievers, when their eyes are opened by death and its agonies; which can endure but for a moment and then cease until the day of judgment, as it may please God; for here no definite rule can be established. Therefore I dare not say that the rich man suffers still at present as he suffered at that time; and I dare not deny that he still suffers thus; for both depend upon the will of God. It is sufficient for us to know that his example and the beginning of the suffering of all unbelievers are here clearly set before us.

28. The fourth question is: Shall we pray for the dead; since here in the Gospel there is no intermediate state between Abraham's bosom and hell, and those in Abraham's bosom do not need it, and it does not help those in perdition. We have no command from God to pray for the dead; therefore no one sins by not praying for them; for what God does not bid or forbid us to do, in that no one can sin. Yet, on the other hand, since God has not permitted us to know, how it is with the souls of the departed and we must continue uninformed, as to how he deals with them, we will not and cannot restrain them, nor count it as sin, if they pray for the dead. For we are ever certain from the Gospel, that many have been raised from the dead, who, we must confess, did not receive nor did they have their final sentence; and likewise we are not assured of any other, that he has his final sentence.

29. Now since it is uncertain and no one knows, whether final judgment has been passed upon these souls, it is not sin if you pray for them; but in this way, that you let it rest in uncertainty and speak thus: Dear God, if the departed souls be in a state that they may yet be helped, then I pray that thou wouldst be gracious. And when you have thus prayed once or twice, then let it be sufficient and commend them unto God. For God has promised that when we pray to him for anything he would hear us. Therefore when you have prayed once or twice, you should believe that your prayer is answered, and there let it rest, lest you tempt God and mistrust him.

30. But that we should institute masses, vigils and prayers to be repeated forever for the dead every year, as if God had not heard us the year before, is the work of Satan and is death itself, where God is mocked by unbelief, and such prayers are nothing but blasphemy of God. Therefore take warning and turn from these practices. God is not moved by these anniversary ceremonies, but by the prayer of the heart, of devotion and of faith; that will help the departed souls if anything will. Vigils, masses, indeed help the bellies of the priests, monks and nuns, but departed souls are not helped by them and God is thus mocked.

31. However, if you have in your house a spook or ghost, who pretends that the departed can be helped by saying masses, you should be fully persuaded that it is the work of Satan. No soul has yet since the beginning of the world reappeared on the earth, and it is not God's will that it should be so. For here in this Gospel you see that Abraham declares that no one can be sent from the dead to teach the living; but he points them to the Word of God in the Scriptures, Deuteronomy 31: "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them." By these words Abraham turns to the command of God in <5B1811>Deuteronomy 18:11, where God says: "Thou shalt not be a consulter with a familiar spirit." <23B819>Isaiah 8:19. Therefore it is surely nothing but the contrivance of Satan that any spirits should let themselves be entreated and that they should require so and so many masses, such and such pilgrimages or other works, and appear afterwards in the clear light and pretend that certain persons are saved. In this way Satan has introduced error so that the people have fallen from faith into works, and think their deeds may accomplish such great things. And thus is fulfilled what St. Paul declared in <530210>2 Thessalonians 2:10-11, that God would send upon them powerful error, and temptation to unrighteousness, because they have not received the love of the truth that they might be saved.

32. Therefore be prudent and know that God will not let us know how it is with the dead, so that faith may retain its place in the Word of God, which believes that God will save the believers after this life and condemn the unbelievers. If now a familiar spirit present itself before you, take no notice of it; but be assured that it is the devil, and conquer him with this saying of Abraham, "They have Moses and the prophets," and likewise with the command in Moses, "Thou shalt not be a consulter with a familiar spirit;" then he will soon be gone. If he leave you not, then let him make a noise until he is tired, and in firm faith suffer his wantonness.

as. And if it were possible that it were indeed a departed soul or a good spirit even, then you should neither learn nor inquire anything of him, since God has forbidden you to do so; because he has sent his Son himself to teach us all that is necessary for us to know. What he has not taught us, that we should gladly not wish to know, and be satisfied with the teachings of the holy Apostles, in which he is preached to us. However, I have further written on this subject in the Postils on the Gospel for Epiphany and in my booklet on the Misuse of the Mass; where you may read more along this line.

34. Likewise, to give an example, we read in the Historia Tripartita (A History in Three Parts) of a bishop, who came to Corinth where he had come to attend a Council, and as he could not find a suitable lodging for himself and his attendants, he saw a house unoccupied and condemned as uninhabitable, and he asked if he might not be allowed to occupy it. Then they told him in reply that it was infested with nightly ghosts, that no one could live in it, and often people were found dead in it in the morning. Then the bishop said but little and immediately entered and lodged there the same right, for he very well saw that the devil was the author of all these ghost stories, and as he had firm faith that Christ was Lord over satan, therefore he was not moved by his stratagems and he entered to lodge with him. And thus that house was made free by the prayers and presence of a holy man from infesting ghosts and horrifying spectres. Behold, you see that the ghosts are satan, and there is little use to dispute with them; but one should despise them with a cheerful spirit as nothing.

35. A similar story we read about Gregory, the Bishop of Cappadocia, that he crossed the Alps and lodged with a heathen sexton or clerk of the church, who had an idol, that answered him the questions he asked; and he made his living by telling the people secret things. Now the bishop knew nothing of this, and proceeded the next day as soon as it was morning on his journey. But Satan or the evil spirit could not endure the prayers and presence of the holy man, and at once he betook himself out of the house, so that the heathen sexton could no longer receive answers as before. As soon as he felt his great loss, he set up a great howl to call back his idol, which appeared to him while he was asleep, and said, it was his own fault because he had lodged the bishop, with whom he (the evil spirit) could not remain. The sexton hastened to overtake the bishop and complained to him that he had taken his god and livelihood, and returned evil for the kindness extended to him. Then the bishop took paper out of his pocket and wrote

these few words: “Gregory sendeth greetings to Apollinius. Be thou at liberty, O, Apollinius, to do as thou hast done before. Farewell.” The sexton took the letter and laid it by the side of his idol; then the devil came again, and did as before. Finally the sexton began to think, what a poor god is he, who allows himself to be driven away and lead by my guest who was only a man. And at once he started to the bishop, was instructed and baptized, and grew in his faith, so that he became the eminent bishop of Caesarea, a city in Cappadocia, upon the death of the bishop that baptized him. Behold, how simply faith proceeds, and acts joyfully, securely and effectively. Treat all your troublesome evil spirits in the same way’

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

This sermon appeared in tract form under the title: “A sermon by Dr. Martin Luther on Luke 14: ‘A man made a great supper. ’” Wittenberg, 1523.

*Text. ⁴²*Luke 14:16-24. But he said unto him, A certain man made a great supper; and he bade many: and he sent forth his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a field, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee have me excused. And another said I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. And the servant came, and told his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and maimed and blind and lame. And the servant said, Lord, what thou didst command is done, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and constrain them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper.

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1. Here in this Gospel lesson, as everywhere in the Scriptures, we are to be careful that we grasp, as well as we can, the true, simple meaning, as we have often heard, and establish our hearts and consciences in that meaning. For whoever will contend with satan, dare not waver and sway hither and thither, but must be convinced of his cause and be armed with clear sure written documents, for if the devil gets him on his fork through his unsettled notions, he will then toss him here and there as the wind does the dry leaf.

2. Therefore we must here in this Gospel grasp its true meaning, in which we may be able to stand. It is not to be understood as referring to the holy Sacrament or the bread of the altar, to which the Papists have pulled it as it were by the hair on holy Corpus Christi day, along with many other passages of Scripture, which have not in a single letter any reference or very little to that Sacrament. But the meaning and substance of this text is, that while the Gospel is preached and published in all the world, few people accept it. And it is here called a supper or an evening meal, because the Gospel shall be the last word or doctrine that will usher in the end of the world.

3. Therefore this supper is nothing else than a rich, expensive meal, which God has provided in Christ through the Gospel, in which he spreads before us great possessions and rich treasures.

4. This invitation, however, took place thus, as the text says: The Lord sent out his servant to invite the guests to this costly supper, that is, the Apostles were all sent forth with one and the same word into all the world, to bid and call to this supper with one voice and with one Gospel, or with one message. Thus, when St. Peter arrived at and preached in a place where St. Paul had preached before, it was the same teaching which the one preached as the other, and the hearers also could say: Behold, he preaches just like we heard before from the first one; they agree and are one and the same. In order to show this unity, the Evangelist says: “And he sent forth his servant,” and says not, his servants, as if he spake of many servants. But the message, the servant should execute and with which he should gain recruits, was:

“Come; for all things are now ready.”

5. For Christ had been crucified, had destroyed sin and death by his death, had risen from the dead, the Holy Spirit had been given, and in short, all things pertaining to this supper were now ready. It all was so prepared that it did not cost us anything; for the Father through Christ bore all its expenses, in order that we without our merit and assistance might enjoy his treasures, and become rich and prosperous.

6. At that time he sent his servant first among the Jews, to invite them to the supper, who had the promises and oracles of God; for the Law and all the prophets were framed to the end that they should prepare a people for God, as the angel Gabriel said of John the Baptist to his father Zacharias: "He shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord their God. And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him," <4001515>Luke 1:15-17. But what do the guests say to the message of the servant? The text tells us'

"And they all with one consent began to make excuse."

7. That is what the Lord in <4001037>Matthew 10:37-38 says: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me." Now observe how few there are who are thus experts in leaving all for Christ. For whoever will come to this supper, must esteem the Gospel above everything, body and riches, wife and child, friend and foe; yea, he must forsake everything that separates him from the Gospel, let it be as good, right and holy as it ever can be.

8. Do not think that these men who excuse themselves here were engaged in public, coarse sins, and in unrighteous employment and business. No. They were occupied in a laudable, good employment. For it is never wrong that we buy and transact business, that we honestly support ourselves, or take a wife and live in the married state. But the reason we should not come into the state of these persons, is that they were unwilling to leave these things, but hung to them with all their hearts. Now we must be willing to leave them, if the Gospel require it.

9. Should you then say: I would gladly follow and cleave to the Gospel, and cheerfully also do all things besides; but shall I leave my land, my home and servants, my wife and child, that is hard? Has not God commanded that I should labor to support my wife and child? Observe, therefore, this is also the sum of it all; the Gospel is the Word of the cross and the word of offense, so that everyone is easily offended by it. Yes, God commanded you to do this, he commanded you besides to honor and love him above all creatures, and esteem him higher than all things you may know, as the first and greatest commandment teaches: “Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” <050605>Deuteronomy 6:5; <402237>Matthew 22:37. Therefore you must let all things go rather than let them separate you from his love and his Word.

10. However, he loses nothing, who forsakes anything for the Gospel’s sake. Do you lose for its sake your temporal life, God will indeed give you another and a better, an eternal life; as Christ in <401039>Matthew 10:39 says: “He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.” Must you leave your wife and child; remember, God cares for you, he will give them a much better father than you are; and if you only believe it will certainly come to pass. For you have such great pledges and rich promises and admonitions, that he will not let his Word fail; but will maintain it, if we only heartily trust in and yield to it. As he said in <401929>Matthew 19:29: “Every one that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands for my name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life.”

Here stand his very word and promise, what wish we further? Or what do we desire that is greater? Ay, where then is the trouble? Only in our faith. Therefore no one comes to this supper, unless he brings with him a true faith, which God honors and loves above all creatures. But what does the Lord do, who lets the guests be invited, and who thus excused themselves? The text says:

> “Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in hither the poor, and maimed, and blind, and lame.”

11. To go out into the streets and lanes means nothing but that the Jews made themselves unworthy of the Gospel, to turn from them and for the disciples turn to the heathen. For Christ commanded his disciples before his resurrection that they should not go into any way of the Gentiles nor

preach in any city of the Samaritans; but go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and feed them, <40105>Matthew 10:5-6, as they did. But since the Jews after the resurrection of Jesus Christ resisted his Word and would not accept it, then the disciples spake to them as we have an example in <44136>Acts 13:46-47: “It was necessary that the Word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth.” <23406>Isaiah 49:6. But what does it mean when he says to the servant:

“Go out into the highways and hedges,
and constrain them to come in, that my house may be filled.”

12. This is to be understood as referring to those of a dispirited, timid conscience, who also belong among the guests of this supper, they will be constrained to come in. However it is not an outward but an inward and spiritual constraining, and takes place in this way: When the Law is preached and sin is unfolded or made manifest, that man comes to a knowledge of himself, so that compelling and constraining them to come in means, to force anew the sins into the conscience, that thereby man may acknowledge, that he is nothing, that all his works are sinful and damnable, and thus quickly receives a despairing conscience and a bashful and terrified heart, in which every refuge and help are taken from him and everywhere he is unable to find any comfort in them, and finally despairs of all help in himself.

13. When this now takes place, it is called “constraining,” for you should not delay his “coming in,” but help him out of his state of despair. But this takes place, when you comfort him with the Gospel and tell him how he may be delivered from his sin, and say to him: Believe in Christ, that he has freed you from sin, then your sins are forgiven you. That is what “constrain them to come in” (compelle intrare) means; and it does not mean outward compelling as they explain it, so that they drive rogues and wicked persons, as it were with police force, to this supper; for that accomplishes nothing, and it is not the sense of the Gospel. Therefore do the constraining energetically in the conscience only, and let it be an inner and spiritual constraining. And the Lord says further to the servant and to others:

“For I say unto you that none of those men that were bidden
shall taste of my supper.”

14. These words are the conclusion and summary of this Gospel lesson, that those, who are the most certain and wish to taste of this supper, shall not taste of it. The reason you have heard. Therefore in brief, the guests, who are here invited and came not, are those who imagine they could obtain the supper through their own works, they greatly exert themselves and are sure of their cause, they wish to taste of the supper. But the Lord concludes with powerful words and says: “That none of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper.” Why then, dear Lord? They have done nothing bad and neither have they been occupied with false teachings. Why, the reason is that they have denied the faith, and did not publicly confess it before everybody, and did not esteem this rich and expensive supper above all creatures. For since it is costly and precious, it therefore also requires something from the people who esteem it so, and it puts them under some obligation, be it what it may. See, that is the sense of this Gospel text briefly considered. Whoever desires to develop it further, may do so.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

SECOND SERMON: <2146>LUKE 14:16-17.

This sermon appeared in 1535 in the document: “Two Sermons etc.” It agrees in part with the Sermon in the House Postil.

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THE GREAT SUPPER AND THE GUESTS.

I. THE PARABLE IN GENERAL. 1-9.

II. IN PARTICULAR. 10-48.

A. The supper. 10-14.

B. The guests. 15-40.

C. The guests judged. 41-48.

1. The Papists, contrary to the order of the ancient Church, have appointed this Gospel lesson for the first Sunday after Trinity, because they celebrated it the week during the festival of Corpus Christi, as is still the custom among them. For they interpreted the supper, of which this Gospel speaks, to signify the Sacrament of the Altar, and thereby desired to establish the Communion in one part or form only, which, as you well know, is one of their chief abuses and an anti-Christian perversion of this sacrament, concerning which we do not agree with them.

2. Inasmuch as young people are growing up and know nothing about such festivals or pompous demonstrations, and as we older persons forget it also, it is well to remind our people, so that, when our youth come to their churches and see such things, they may not be offended, but may be able to say: That it is not right, that they should play with the holy Sacrament and carry it about, in order thereby to dispense so many false indulgences, not

with the intention thereby to honor the Sacrament, for then they would have carried about the entire Sacrament, or both elements, bread and wine. But to the shame and disgrace of the Sacrament, they do this that they themselves may thereby be honored, namely, that the distinction be maintained, that the order of priests is a more special and a higher order before God, than the common order of Christians; because the priests alone receive the entire Sacrament or both elements, the body and the blood of Christ, and other Christians, as the body and the blood of Christ, and other Christians, as people of a lower order, must be satisfied with only one part of the Sacrament.

3. This difference they sought to introduce among the people by such a festival in order thus to praise their order above others, to the shame and disgrace of the holy Sacrament and our Lord Jesus Christ, who did not institute his holy Sacrament for a special order over and above the common order of Christians; just as he also did not suffer and die for a special order, but for the comfort Of his Christian church which is not divided, but consists of one body, of the one only Head, Jesus Christ, where all the members, so far as life and character are concerned, are equal; although their works are unequal and different.

4. This abuse, which is very great and harmful, we must not overlook, but picture it forth in its true colors, because the Papists insist with such hardened and impenitent hearts on their own godless conduct. For how does it happen that the holy Sacrament must be used to make a distinction among Christians? Whereas Christ our Lord instituted it chiefly for the comfort of the conscience and for the strengthening of our faith, and further that Christendom should be like a bond, by which Christians are bound together in the most intimate manner; that they be as one bread or one loaf, not only that they might have in common and at the same time one God, one Word, one Baptism, one Sacrament, one hope, one confidence, and all the grace and treasures of Christ in common; but that in their external life they are also one body, where one member assists, serves, helps, advises and sympathizes with the others.

5. This use of the holy Sacrament the Papists have thus entirely abolished, so that they alone have wholly taken the Sacrament to themselves, and thereby have formed an extra class that was to be better than common Christians. Yet, in order that the common people might also highly esteem the one part of the Sacrament and not entirely despise it, they celebrated

this festival every year for eight days, When they played with the one part, with the wafer, in a grand procession through the city and carried it about with cymbals and stringed instruments, so that they made the people stare with wonder, and made them think that even if the order of priests were grander and greater before God, yet, they too had something of which they could publicly boast.

6. For this purpose they used this Gospel lesson, although it agrees very poorly with the teaching of the Sacrament under one form. Just as though this master of the house had prepared a feast for mice, and only gave them something to eat and nothing to drink; and yet they themselves sing about it:

Venite, comedite panem meum,
Et Bibite vinum meum.

Come, eat my bread,
And drink my wine!

And after all, they only gave them the one form, the bread, and kept the wine for themselves. But thus our dear Lord God is constantly treated; whatever he institutes and orders must be perverted and put to shame by the devil and his imps. Thus the Sacrament has also been treated, which on this festival even at the present day is still most horribly blasphemed by the Papists.

7. For as said before, they do not keep this feast in honor of the holy Sacrament, else they would bear in their processions both parts, and the entire Sacrament; but they do it to honor themselves, and they had to raise it high, not for our benefit, but only that we might know what the difference is between a priest and a lay member. In other things, where God has so created them, it is proper to observe the difference, for instance, that a woman is a woman, and a man a man, that worldly government must be distinguished from its subjects, and in like manner other worldly conditions.

However, that men should here make a difference where God has put away all differences; that the Pope and bishops, yea, even St. Peter or St. Paul should have a better baptism or a better Gospel than any other common Christian is wrong. Therefore it is also wrong that they wish to have a better Sacrament than other Christians, for Christ our Lord and Savior, as already said, did not institute the Sacrament to make a difference among

his Christians, but for the sake of equality, just as baptism and the Gospel, that we may have just as much from it as other persons.

8. This I desired to say briefly for the sake of the young, and also for our sakes, that everyone should learn to know the devil, and beware of the abominations which Popery has introduced, and has thus divided the Christian church which our Lord God has made one, while they condemn and persecute us because we will not allow ourselves to be made mice and rats who eat without drinking, or only receive the one part. For this reason we in our church have altogether done away with this festival, because the Papists have made it nothing else but pure idolatry, and have gone straight against the order and institution of Christ, bringing disgrace to the holy Sacrament and a positive injury to Christianity. For we will remain with the unity of Christians, that one is as good as another, and all differences are here at an end. This is enough here for the sake of the young and the common people. We will now take up the Gospel lesson.

9. The occasion of this sermon by Christ was the miracle which the Lord Jesus Christ performed in the house of a Pharisee, when he healed one sick of the dropsy. But the Evangelist tells how they followed him and were on the watch for him, in order to catch him. Therefore, he also begins to lecture them, and tells them how they are filled with pride and vanity, and crowd into the highest seats, until he at length comes to the host, and reads a text also to him, how he should invite his guests; not the rich who can invite him again and thank him for it, but the poor, who may welcome him again in the life to come.

10. Following this address one of them who thought himself much more learned than Christ the Lord, begins to say:

“Oh, how blessed is he who eateth bread in the kingdom of God.” As though he would say in his great wisdom: You make yourself unprofitable enough by your preaching! If it would depend on preaching, I can do that, too, even better than you; for I consider this a truly great sermon: “Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.”

11. Christ replies to him: Yes, says he, I will tell you how blessed you and your comrades are: “A certain man made a great supper, and bade many,” and they despised it and would not come. This blow was meant for him. As though he would say: You say much in the words, that he is a blessed man who eats bread in heaven! Oh, but you are in very great earnest! What an

excellent holy man you are, namely, you are one of those who are invited and yet do not come. These are hard, sharp and terrible words when rightly considered; for he is speaking to real thorough-going rogues, who sat about the table, not because they wanted to learn anything, but in order to observe him closely to see by what means they might come to him and take him. To those he spoke this parable:

"A certain man made a great supper."

12. This man who prepared this supper is our Lord God himself. He is a great and rich Lord, who also once prepared a feast according to his glorious majesty and honor, and it was such a supper which is called great and glorious not only on account of the host, who is God himself, for it would be a glorious supper if he had only given a vegetable broth or a dry crust; yet the food is beyond all measure great and costly, namely, the holy Gospel, yea, Christ our Lord himself. He is himself the food, and is offered unto us through the Gospel, how he has made satisfaction by his death for our sins, and has redeemed us from all the misery of eternal death, of hell, of the wrath of God, sin and eternal condemnation.

13. This preaching of Christ is the great and glorious supper with which he feeds his guests and sanctifies them through his holy Baptism, and comforts and strengthens them through the Sacrament of his body and blood, that nothing may be wanting and a great plenty may be at hand and all become satisfied. Thus this supper is justly called a glorious, great supper on account of the fare and food, so costly and richly prepared that no tongue can describe it and no heart sufficiently grasp it. For it is an eternal food and an eternal drink, by partaking of which a man shall nevermore thirst nor hunger, but be forever satisfied, his thirst is quenched and he becomes joyful; and this not only for one man, but for the whole wide world, even if it were ten times wider, they would all have sufficient. For it is an inexhaustible food and an everlasting drink, as our Gospel says: He who believeth on this Lord Jesus Christ, that he was born for us of the Virgin Mary and crucified for out' sins under Pontius Pilate, died, descended into hell, and rose again from the dead and sitteth at the right hand of God, etc.; he who believes this, eats and drinks truly from this supper. For to believe in Christ the Lord means to eat and to drink, from which the people become satisfied, fat and stout and strong, so that they are joyful forever.

14. This is rightly called a great supper, because it is so precious, and is offered to so many people that every one may eat until he is satisfied, and

yet the food never becomes less. For it is such a great and strengthening food that it endures forever and gives eternal life, for it nourishes us differently than our mere bodily eating and drinking. If one has eaten and drunk enough to-day, he must still eat again to-morrow. But this is an eternal food and lasts forever. With this Christ gives those hypocrites at the table to understand that it is a different supper from what they had given him; and yet they are such rogues and knaves, that although they gossip and talk about it a great deal, yet they despise God and his mercy, eternal life and salvation, and hold everything else dearer. It follows further:

"And he bade many."

15. The many who are bidden are the Jews and all the people of Israel, who from Abraham on, and especially through the prophets had been invited. For to the patriarch Abraham the seed was promised through whom the blessing should come, and to him as the father of this people was this supper first announced. After that the prophets carried it further and directed the attention of the people to it, so that nothing was wanting on the part of the Lord our God, and all were diligently invited. Therefore St. Paul in his Epistles everywhere tells the Jews: *Judaeis primum et Graecis:* To the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

16. Now when the hour came to go to the table, that is, when the time came for our Lord Christ to be born, to suffer and rise again from the dead, then the servants went out, John the Baptist and the Apostles, and said to those who were bidden, to the people of Israel: Dear people, hitherto you have been invited, now is the time to come, now the supper is ready! Your Lord Jesus Christ, your Messiah is already born, has died and rose again, therefore do not remain away any longer, come to the table, eat and be happy, that is, accept your promised treasure with joy, who has according to promise delivered you from the curse and condemnation and has saved you. And this message was brought especially to the leaders of the people, who held high places in the spiritual and civil governments. But what did they do with it?

"And they all with one consent began to make excuse."

17. This was a lesson for those guests who sat with Christ at the table, and especially for the good-for-nothing babbler, who wanted to master Christ and preached much about the bread in the kingdom of God; blessed is the man who eats bread in the kingdom of heaven! Yes, Christ answers, do

you want to know how blessed you are? I will tell you. The bread is now on the table and the supper prepared. John the Baptist was here, I and my Apostles invite you now to come to the supper; but you do not only stay away, you let the host sit at his great and glorious supper, but you even want to excuse yourselves and yet be pure. Hence it is a twofold sin, not only that you despise the Gospel, but even claim to be doing right, and to be even holy, pious and wise; this is a very grievous sin. It were already too wicked not to believe in the Word of God our Lord; but as they go further and despise it, and yet want to be just besides, is going entirely too far. As our young noblemen also do, who have disgraced and blasphemed the Sacrament and have given to us erring creatures only one part, and at the same time excuse themselves, and claim thereby to have done right. Yea, they also condemn us, and oppress us with all kinds of martyrdom, murder and drive away the people who truly desire to enjoy the whole Sacrament. But let them only pour out their rage hot enough, who knows, who will yet be compelled to sweat in this bath?

18. The Jews acted and excused themselves thus: Oh, we cannot accept the doctrine, for it is opposed to the priesthood and to the law, which God himself has given us through Moses. Besides it also creates divisions in our kingdom which God has confirmed. We must see how to maintain our own affairs! Thus the first one excuses himself with his land, the second with his oxen, and both think they do well; the third does not even excuse himself at all, he simply refuses, and says he cannot come.

19. These are the excuses of the Jews as well as our own, which we prefer against the Gospel, for we are no better than they were. They first pretended that the law of Moses had to remain, and because the Apostles preached against the law, that neither their law, temple nor priests were necessary, for a greater priest was present, Jesus Christ, of the tribe of Judah; they would not tolerate such preaching, but held to their law as they still do. Thus it has come to pass that they still wait at the present day, and must wait until the last day for their Messiah to come, and they hope that he will prepare all things, the old priesthood anti kingdom as it was in the time of David, when he will give them everything in the greatest abundance.

20. For Christ here treats of these three parties. The first says: I want to see my farm. These are the foremost and best among them, among the Jews they were the entire priesthood and the chief rulers. These said: We

priests must work, cultivate and harvest the land, that is, we must rule the people, and wait upon the priesthood God has entrusted unto us, as Christ also calls ministers cultivators of the soil who sow the Gospel. But as the teachings of the Apostles are opposed to this, it is wrong, and we are justly excused when we do not accept their doctrine.

21. Thus others also who had offices in the civil government excuse themselves with the oxen. For oxen are called the rulers of the people, <19222>Psalm 22:12: “Many bulls have encompassed me; strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.” These also have a fair excuse and say: We have a kingdom and government, instituted and appointed of God, with this we must remain and see to it how we may preserve it.

22. The third class say: The Gospel is a doctrine that will not allow covetousness, nor permit us to strive to have sufficient for our bodily needs, but commands us to risk everything, body and life, money and goods, for Christ’s sake. Therefore we will and cannot come, for we must see how we may keep our own, which God has given us. For to take a wife is not to do or undertake anything dishonorable, but to enter an honorable state, and to be at home and plan how to support yourself, which is everyone’s duty. But all this is just that by which an honest housefather commits sin, when he only thinks of this, how he may become rich, keep house well and prosper. God grant it whether it be done with or against God.

For the Jews took into consideration only how Moses had promised them if they would be good and keep God’s commandments, to give temporal blessings, cattle, lands, wife, child, and all things should be blessed and prosper. Therefore they only sought to have their cellars and kitchens full, and to be rich, and then they thought that they were good, and that God had thus blessed them, as the Psalm says, <19143>Psalm 144:13-14.

23. Just in this very manner our Papists still excuse themselves and say: The doctrine is right, of course, but we must still adhere to the Church and her orderly government. Again, we must above all things maintain obedience to the worldly power, so that there may be no disturbance and insurrection. Thus they are troubled just like the Jews. If they would accept the Gospel, they fear they might lose their Church and government, whereas the Gospel alone builds up the true Christian church, and prevents all injustice, violence and insurrection. Besides covetousness is also present; since they see nothing in the Gospel but mere poverty and

persecution, so that it goes as it does here, that they simply and without fear refuse to obey the Gospel and say, they have taken wives and cannot come, and still they want to be Christians and claim to have done just right, and want to be regarded as pious bishops, good princes and good citizens.

24. But how will it go with them? Just as it did with the Jews. They held so long to their law, priesthood, kingdom and treasures, until they at last went to destruction, and lost one after the other; so that now they dwell here and there and have their homes under foreign princes as if living in a swing. This is the reward for which they labored. For they desired not this supper, and preferred their kingdom, priesthood and houses, rather than the Gospel. Therefore they lost all three, and received the sentence that none of them should taste of this supper, and thus be deprived of both, of temporal things here on earth, and of the everlasting feast in heaven. The same will also certainly be the fate of our adversaries.

25. Thus Christ our Lord lectured this sharp doctor and his associates at the table, and showed them how they stood before our Lord God, namely, that God was angry at them, and would look out for other guests, as follows:

> "Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servants, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in hither the poor, and maimed, and blind, and lame."

26. As though he would say: Very well, inasmuch as this must be done, that you must examine your land and oxen and take unto you wives, and on this account neglect my supper, that is, you want your priesthood, kingdom and wealth, and will let me and my Gospel go, hence I will let you go, too, that on this account you will lose all, and I will provide me other guests. Therefore go forth, my servant, into the struts and lanes of the city and bring in hither the poor and crippled, the lame and blind. This was also done among the Jews. For as the great lords, princes and priests, and those who were the best among the people would not accept the Gospel, for reasons already given, our God and Lord accepted the humble fishermen, the poor, miserable and despised little flock, as St. Paul also says, ⁴⁶1 Corinthians 1:26-28: "For behold your calling, brethren, that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world that he might put to shame the things that are strong, and base things of the world, and the

things that are despised, did God choose, yea, and the things that are not, that he might bring to naught the things that are."

27. According to this passage all that are wise, holy, rich and powerful, God has rejected, because they will not accept his Gospel; and the foolish, simple, and the most insignificant little lights, as Peter, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew and the like, who were poor fishermen and needy beggars, whom he here calls the poor, the maimed, the lame and blind, are chosen, whom no one would have considered worthy to be the servants of the priests and princes of the people. These were left like dregs, and as Isaiah says, the dregs of the good costly wine; the best among the people, the priests, the leaders, the rich and powerful are cast out as a vessel of good wine, and the dregs alone are left, which the Lord here calls the poor, the lame, the maimed and the blind. These are promoted to grace and honor, so that they become acceptable to God and dear guests, because the others, the high and great people will not come.

28. What the Pharisee now says: "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God"- to which Christ answers: Yes, blessed are they; but you and your followers are concerned about your farm and oxen. You speak of these things, therefore you shall know that a supper has been prepared, of which the poor shall eat, as the text says, 40115Matthew 11:5, *Pauperes evangelizantur,* the poor have the Gospel preached to them. For the powerful, the saints, the wise do not want it, therefore it has come to pass that both priests and leaders have been cast away as the best wine, because they have held so firmly to their oxen, their land and their wives; and in their stead have been promoted the poor beggars, who came to the Gospel in this glorious supper.

29. This is to press the Jews very hard, and especially this one here, who wants to be wise and to eat bread in heaven, and yet he clings to his priesthood and kingdom, let Christ' and his Gospel be what they may. For his heart is so constituted that he does not need Christ at all to make sure of heaven, but thinks our Lord God will say to him and all the Jews: Come, you Jews, and especially you priests, you saints, you princes, you fat citizens, for you the supper is prepared! Yes, says he, it is true, you are invited, but you care nothing for it and excuse yourselves and claim that you are right. Therefore I cast you away, and accept rather the most humble people, even if I shall obtain no one but the despised, the poor, the maimed and the lame.

30. Thus it shall also be done to our adversaries, and nothing shall help them, though they be great, holy bishops, powerful princes and lords, and think that our Lord God will not thus cast them away, and accept only the poor rats' nest at Wittenberg, and the humble flock who love the Gospel. Yes, my dear friend, if God has cast away the best among his people who had such glorious and great promises, and took the dregs, neither will he give it to thee. Simply because you are great, holy and powerful, will not enable you to eat bread in heaven, for the poor have the Gospel preached to them. For our Lord is much greater, stronger, wiser and holier than all kings and all devils; therefore he cares but little about your holiness or power. And if you will still defy him and so wickedly despise his Word, he will then also rise up against you, so that all your wisdom, power and holiness will come to naught.

31. Thus far this Gospel lesson pertains only to the Jews; for Christ speaks of the lame and cripple who are found in the streets of the city. The people of the Jews are called a city, because they were a constituted and well ordered people, and had the law, the worship, the temple, the priests and 'king, all of which was ordained by God himself and established by Moses. Now he also sends his servant into the highways and commands him to take guests wherever he could find them, even the beggars along the hedges and everywhere.

> "And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the high. ways and hedges, and constrain them to come in that my house may be filled."

32. This refers to us, the heathen, who have dwelt in no city, who were without any worship of the true God, but were idolatrous, and did not know what we or God were. Therefore our condition is properly called a free, open place on the highways, in the field, where the devil walks over us and has his quarters.

33. Go thither, he says, and constrain them to come in. For the world arrays itself against the Gospel in every way, and cannot tolerate this doctrine, and yet this housefather wants his house full of guests, for he himself has thus made preparations, and he now must have people to eat, drink and be joyful, even if he had to make them of stones.

34. Here we can also see that Christ our Lord suffers the world to stand so long for our sakes, although he would have sufficient reason, because of

our sins to destroy it every moment. Yet he does not do this because he still desires more guests, and because of the elect who also belong to this supper. Now, because his servants bring the precious Gospel to us, is an indication that we who are baptized and believe, also belong to this supper, for we are the great lords of the hedges, who are blind, poor and lost heathen.

35. But how shall we be constrained, as God does not want any forced worship? He constrains us by having the Gospel preached to all men: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Here he shows us both heaven and hell, death and life, wrath and grace, and reveals unto us our sins and ruined condition, so that we may be awakened on account of it, because we hear that a man as soon as he is born, naturally belongs to the devil and is condemned. This is part of this constraint, by which one is terrified at the wrath of God and desires grace and help from him.

36. When this has taken place by preaching and the hearts are thus stricken and awakened, he then desires that we should preach thus: Dear friend, do not despair because you are a sinner and have such a terrible sentence passed upon you; but do this, go forth and be baptized and hear the Gospel. Here you will learn that Jesus Christ has died for your sake, and has made satisfaction for your sins. If you believe this, then you will be safe against the wrath of God and eternal death, and you shall eat here at this glorious supper and live well, become hearty and strong.

37. This means rightly to constrain, namely, to terrify with sin, not as the Pope constrains with his ban. He does not properly awaken the conscience, because he does not teach what sin really is, but deals with his foolish work, saying, whoever does not observe his order and human tradition, shall be put under the ban. But the Gospel begins to reveal sin and the wrath of God from heaven, Romans 1, that we all live unrighteously and godlessly, without exception. This our Lord commands us to preach through the Gospel when he says to the Apostles: “Go forth and preach repentance.” But a man cannot preach repentance unless he declares that God is angry at all men, because they are full of unbelief, contempt of God and other sins.

38. This wrath must terrify them and make their consciences timid and fearful, that they constrain themselves and say: O, Lord God! what shall I ever do to be relieved from this distress? Now when man is terrified and

feels his wretchedness and misery, then it is right to say to him: Sit down at the table of this rich Lord and eat, for there are yet many tables without guests and plenty to eat, that is, be baptized and believe in Jesus Christ, that he has made satisfaction for your sins. Otherwise, there are no means to aid you, except you be baptized and believe. Thus wrath will cease and heaven will shine with pure grace and mercy, forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

39. Therefore these words, "Constrain them to come in?' are for the poor, miserable multitude of those who are constrained, that is, especially we, who before were lost and condemned heathen, the lovely and comfortable from the masses, by which God desires to forcibly portray and show unto us his unfathomable grace. For it must ever be an unspeakable love, that he shows in these words that he is so desirous for our welfare and salvation, that he commands us not only friendly to call and encourage poor sinners to come to this supper, but also desires them to be urged and constrained, and that such urging is not to cease, that they may only come to his supper. By this he sufficiently shows that he will not cast them away or permit them to be lost, wherever they themselves will not only through malicious contempt and hardened impenitence oppose such efforts to constrain them. So that he is as Tauler said, immeasurably more anxious to give and help us, than we are or ever can be to receive or to pray, and demands and requires nothing more difficult from us, than that we should widely open our hearts and accept his grace.

40. This constraining, however, is necessary in preaching both repentance and forgiveness of sins; for without repentance we remain too hard and obdurate under his wrath, in our sinful nature and in the kingdom of the devil. And moreover, when the terror of divine wrath strikes us, we are again too fearful, modest and disturbed, to take this to heart and believe, that he will show us such great grace and mercy, and we are always full of anxiety that we do not belong to them, and that he will reject us because of our sins and great unworthiness. Therefore he must himself command and work that men continue and persevere evermore to constrain and urge as much as possible, both by holding forth wrath for the wicked and grace for the faithful Wrath and repentance urge man to run and cry for grace. This is then the right way a person goes to this supper, and thus from Jews and Gentiles there will be one Christian church, and all will be called alike poor, miserable people, lame and crippled, for they accept the Gospel heartily and with joy.

41. Those, however, who will not do this, be they as wise and as shrewd as they please, receive this sentence, they shall not taste of this supper, that is, the wrath of God shall remain upon them and they shall be condemned on account of their unbelief. For here our Lord does not inquire, as before said, whether they be rich, wise or holy. Therefore, although they be already secure and think there is no danger, they will nevertheless experience, that this sentence will stand, when the Lord here concludes: *Non gustabunt,* "they shall not taste of my supper." We, however, who accept it and with terrified hearts on account of our sins do not reject the grace of God which is made known to us in the Gospel through Christ and is offered to us, shall receive grace instead of wrath; instead of sin, eternal righteousness; and instead of eternal death, eternal life.

42. In our time this terrible sentence, as we see, most powerfully goes forth against the Jews and the Turks, and no saver of the Gospel is left them; yea, it is to them a disgust and abomination, so that they can neither tolerate nor hear it. So are also our Popes and bishops, they shall not even smell this supper, not to say anything of their being filled with it. But we, who by God's peculiar grace have come to this doctrine, shall become hearty, strong and joyful by it, and at the table of this supper we are of good cheer. God grant that we may thus remain constant to the end! Amen.

43. Thus in this parable the Lord would admonish us to esteem the Gospel as dear and precious, and not hold to the crowd who think they are smart, wise, powerful and holy. For here stands the sentence: They shall be cast off and shall never taste of this supper; as among the Jewish people they have been cast off, and only the small dregs thereof remained. Thus it will also be with us, when we prefer our land, oxen, wives, that is, as it is at present called, spiritual or worldly honor along with temporal goods, to the Gospel.

44. He declares in simple, humble, short but very earnest words: "They shall not taste of my supper." As though he would say: Very well, my supper, too, is something, and what does it profit if it be better than their oxen, lands, homes and wives, when they now despise it, and regard their lands, oxen and homes, more precious? And when the hour shall come when they must forsake their oxen, lands and homes, then they would gladly also taste of my supper. But then, too, it shall be said: Dear friend, I am not at home at present, I cannot now wait on the guests, go forth to

your lands, to your oxen, to your homes, they will, of course, afford you a better supper, because you have so securely and impudently despised my supper. Of course, I have cooked for you and let it cost me dear; this you have rejected with disdain. If now you have cooked better things, eat and be joyful, but you shall not taste of my supper.

45. This will be to them all a hard, terrible, and unbearable sentence, when he will call his supper everlasting life, and their lands, oxen and homes the everlasting fire of hell; and remain firm by this forever, that they shall not taste of his supper, that is, there shall be no more hope for them forever. For there neither repentance nor sorrow will avail, and from thence there shall be no return. Therefore these are exceedingly violent words, which show the great and endless wrath of the master of the house, for this is customary with great lords and high people, when they are real angry, they do not speak many words. But what they do say, every word weighs a hundred pounds, for they intend to do more violently than they can express in words. Bow much more do those short words of the Almighty Lord signify an inexpressible wrath, which can never be reconciled.

46. Yet we act as though a fool or a child had spoken such hard, terrible words, at which we could laugh and make sport, or as though it were our Lord's jest and mockery, and neither hear nor see what the text plainly says, that he is angry, and has spoken this in great wrath; and that he is not a fool or a child, but the Lord and God over all things, before whom we justly tremble and are terrified, as the Scriptures say, the mountains with their base and foundation, and both the sea and the waters flee before him. But no creature is so hard and perverse as man, who has no fear whatever for anything, but despises and makes light of it.

47. But we are indeed sufficiently excused who say: This is our boast. For on that day the whole world must bear witness and confess that they have heard it from us, saw and experienced it, and it does not worry us if they condemn it as heresy. We will gladly bear it, that they call it heresy, and we hear it enough and beyond measure, and thank them kindly besides, that they cry it down as heresy. For thereby they always confess that they have certainly heard, seen and read it. I desire nothing more of them, for in that they confess that they have heard it, they testify that we have not been silent. If then we have not been silent, but have faithfully and diligently taught and preached this, so that our enemies themselves say that we have pressed it too hard, then let that man judge us, whom we hold has

commanded us so to preach, and then let that god defend or condemn them, who urges them to condemn us. It shall be known in God's name, whose God is the true God, and whose Christ is the true Christ, and which church is the true Church. It shall be known when the snow disappears.

48. Although there can be no better government for this world than the devil's, or instead of the devil's, the government of the Pope, for this is what the world wants. What the devil wants goes forth and mightily prospers; what God wants both in the spiritual and worldly government, never succeeds and has innumerable hindrances, so that, if I could separate the world from the church, I would gladly assist to subject the world to the Pope and the devil. But Christ our Lord will do this and other things besides, and will keep his supper far enough from the world and the devil. Amen.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

No separate pamphlet edition of this sermon is known. It is found in the collections of 14, 17 and 5 sermons.

Text. <250>Luke 15:1. 10. Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto him to hear him. And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake unto them this parable, saying, What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go alter that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his [riends and his neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto your, that even so there shalt be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, who ,need no repentance.

Or what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a lamp, and sweep the house, and seek diligently until she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth together her friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost. Even so, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

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SUMMARY OF THIS GOSPEL:

1. The nature and characteristic of the Gospel are that sinners, or those who acknowledge themselves to be sinners, believe the Gospel; and the Pharisees, or those who consider themselves to be pious and righteous, murmur against the Gospel.

2. The love of God is praised in that it restores us lost sinners in Christ.

3. Righteousness we have only through Christ. The lost sheep can not of itself find its way home, and the lost piece of money can not find itself; all which is against free will.

PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP.

1. The words of the Gospel are living and quickening, if we only comprehend them aright. But, in order that we may learn to understand this Gospel better, we will now place before us two classes of men, namely, public sinners and Pharisees, and will make Christ their judge. You have often heard that it is our duty, for love's sake, to serve our neighbor in all things. If he is poor, we are to serve him with our goods; if he is in disgrace, we are to cover him with the mantle of our honor; if he is a sinner, we are to adorn him with our righteousness and piety. That is what Christ did for us. Philippians 2. He who was so exceedingly rich did, for our sake, empty himself and become poor. He served us with his goods, that we in our poverty might become rich. He was made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

2. Now, the outward works of love are very great, as when we place our goods in the service of another. But the greatest is this, that I surrender my own righteousness and make it serve for the sins of my neighbor. For, outwardly to render service and help by means of one's goods is love only in its outward aspect; but to render help and service through one's righteousness, that is something great and pertains to the inward man. This means that I must love the sinner and be his friend, must be hostile to his vices and earnestly rebuke them, yet that I must love him with all my heart so as to cover his sins with my righteousness. I am commanded to rebuke; but Christ tells me, in <4018:15>Matthew 18:15-18, how I am to do this: "If thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone; if he hear thee, then hast thou gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church; and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican. Verily I say unto you, what things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

3. In short, such an enemy of my neighbor am I to be that I cannot let him suffer. So dearly must I love him that I shall even run after him, and shall become like the shepherd that seeks the lost sheep, like the woman that seeks the lost piece of silver. On this occasion, therefore, we shall speak concerning such great work of love as is shown when a pious man invests the sinner with his own righteousness, when a pious woman invests the most wanton harlot with her own honor.

4. This is something that neither the world nor reason will do. A work like this cannot be done by honorable and pious men who are actuated only by reason, by men who would prove their piety by turning up their nose at those who are sinners, as here the Pharisees do who murmur and grumble at public sinners.

5. This is what our monks do. They have gone about making faces at all who lie in their sins, and have thought: “Oh, but this is a worldly fellow! He does not concern us. If, now, he really would be pious, let him put on the monk’s cowl.” Hence it is that reason and such hypocrites cannot refrain from despising those who are not like them. They are puffed up over their own life and conduct, and cannot advance far enough to be merciful to sinners. This much they do not know, that they are to be servants, and that their piety is to be of service to others. Moreover, they become so proud and harsh that they are unable to manifest any love. They think: “This peasant is not worthy to unloose the latchet of my shoes; therefore do not say that I am to show him any affection.” But at this point God intervenes, permitting the proud one to receive a severe fall and shock that he often becomes guilty of such sins as adultery, and at times does things even worse, and must afterwards smite himself, saying: “Keep still, brother, and restrain yourself, you are of precisely the same stuff as yonder peasant.” He thereby acknowledges that we are all chips of the same block. No ass need deride another as a beast of burden; for we are all of one flesh.

6. This we clearly see in the two sorts of people here presented to us as examples. In the first place, we have the Pharisees and hypocrites who are exceedingly pious people, and were over head and ears in holiness. In the second place, we have the open sinners and publicans, who were over head and ears in sins. These, therefore, were despised by those shining saints, and were not considered worthy of their society. Here, however, Christ intervenes with his judgment and says that those saints are to stoop down and take the sinners upon their shoulders, and are to bear in mind that, with

their righteousness and piety, they are help to others out of their sins. But, no’ That they will not do. And this is indeed the way it goes.

7. A truly Christian work is it that we descend and get mixed up in the mire of the sinner as deeply as he sticks there himself, taking his sin upon ourselves and floundering out of it with him, not acting otherwise than as if his sin were our own. We should rebuke and deal with him in earnest; yet we are not to despise but sincerely to love him. If you are proud toward the sinner and despise him, you are utterly damned.

8. These, then, are great and good works in which we should exercise ourselves. But no man pays attention to them. Such works have entirely faded away and become extinct. In the meantime, one resorts, in the name of the devil, to Saint James, another proceeds to build a church, a third provides for the saying of masses, — this one does this, the other does that, and no one thinks of praying for the sinner. It is therefore to be feared that the holiest are in the deepest hell, and that the sinners are mostly in heaven.

But it would be a truly Christian work, if you received sinners, if you entered into your closet and there said, in earnest prayer to the Lord: “Oh, my God! of such a person I hear so and so, he lieth in his sins, he hath fallen. Oh, Lord, help him to rise again,” etc. This is just the way in which to receive and serve the sinner.

9. Moses acted thus when the Israelites worshipped the molten calf. He mingled freely with the people in their’ sins. Yet he punished them severely, and caused three thousand men to be slain from gate to gate. Exodus 32. After that he went up and bowed down before God, and prayed that he would forgive the people their sin, or blot him out of the Book of Life. Behold, here we have a man who knew that God loved him and had written his name in the book of the blessed; and yet he says: “Lord, I would rather that thou shouldest damn me and save the people.”

10. Paul, too, acted thus. At times he rebuked the Jews severely, calling them dogs and other names. Yet he knelt down and said: “I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren’s sake.” <5903>Romans 9:3. It is as if he had said: “I would willingly be anathema, if only the mass of the people might be helped.” Such a course as this is much too lofty for reason, and passes beyond its conception. It is thus that we, too, must act, and thus that we must serve our neighbor.

11. Again, we have an incident in the first Book of Samuel. When the people demanded a king, and would not be ruled by God's Word alone, but lost faith in the Lord, and said that they wanted a temporal king to go out before them and fight their battles, like all the nations, <0902>1 Samuel 8:20. Then God came and punished them for the sin of having despised him, and spake thus to the prophet Samuel: "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me." After that the people came to Samuel and besought him to pray for them, saying: "Pray for thy servants unto Jehovah thy God, that we die not; for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask a king." Then Samuel, among other things, said unto them: "Far be it from me that I should sin against Jehovah in ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you in the good and right way. Only fear Jehovah, and serve him in truth with all your heart, for consider how great things he hath done for you." <0902>1 Samuel 12:19-24.

12. David also acted thus. When the Lord inflicted the plagues upon Israel he spake unto the Lord and said: "Lo, I have sinned, and I have done perversely; but these sheep, what have they done? Let thy hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house."

13. Such should be your bearing toward sinners; inwardly the heart in service, outwardly the tongue in earnest. God requires this of us; and this is what Christ, our Captain, has manifested in himself, as Paul says to the <5004>Philippians 2:4-9: "Not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others. Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross."

14. Christ was filled with all righteousness, and might justly have condemned us all as sinners. But he did not do so. What did he do, then? He gave himself to be our Servant. His righteousness has served for our sins, his fullness for our feebleness, his life for our death. This we find illustrated, for our example, in the Gospel before us, where he bears himself with such friendliness toward sinners that the Pharisees murmur. The Lord therefore sets before them the following parables in order to teach how they are to receive sinners and be of service to them, saying:

> "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it, etc. Or what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a lamp, and sweep the house, and seek diligently until she find it?"

15. Christ is both the shepherd and the woman; for he has lighted the lamp, that is, the Gospel, and he goes about in the desert, that is, the world. He sweeps the house, and seeks the lost sheep and lost piece of silver, when he comes with his Word and proclaims to us, first our sins, and then his grace and mercy. Christ's declaration, that he is the shepherd and has laid our sins upon his back or shoulders, makes us trust in him fully, and makes publicans and other sinners run after him. These would not have come unto him thus, had they regarded him as a hard and wrathful judge; for they had previously acknowledged themselves to be sinners and in need of his grace. And so they were drawn to him when they heard his loving doctrine. Here comes the sheep out of the wilderness, and here the lost piece of silver is found.

16. Learn from this, then, that our neighbor is to be sought as a lost sheep, that his shame is to be covered with our honor, that our piety is to be a cover for his sins. But nowadays, when men come together they backbite one another; and thus they would show how zealous they are against sin. Therefore, ye men, whenever ye come together, do not backbite your neighbors. Make not one face at one person and another at some one else. Do not cut off one man's foot and another man's hand; make no such traffic of living flesh. Likewise, ye women, when you come together, conceal the shame of others, and do not cause wounds which you cannot heal. Should you meet with anything like this in some one's house, then throw your mantle over shame and wounds, and close the door. A very good reason for doing this is, that you would have others do the same to you. Then, if you have kept the matter secret, bring the parties before you afterwards, and read them a good lecture; and let it remain with you as a secret.

17. Christ, too, acts thus. He keeps silent and covers our sins. He could, indeed, expose us to shame, and could tread us under foot, as our text shows that the Pharisees did. But he does not do so. All will be brought to light, however, at the final judgment. Then everything hidden must be revealed. Then the virgin must place her crown upon the harlot, the pious

woman must throw her veil over the adulteress, and everything we have must serve as a garment to cover the sins of others. For every man shall have his sheep, and every woman shall have her piece of silver. All our gifts must be the gifts of others.

18. Hence there is, in God's judgment, no greater sin on earth than that pious men and women and virgins commit when they despise those who lie in their sin and would appropriate to themselves their natural gifts, puffing themselves up and despising their neighbor.

19. Hence this Gospel is very comforting to sinners. But whilst it is friendly to sinners, it is a source of great fear to Pharisees. Had this Gospel been nothing more than a good counsel, it would not have been so comforting; but now that it has been commanded I can recognize the mind of God in Christ, since he will have it so, and enjoins that we are to cover the sins of others. Yea, what is still more, Christ himself does this, and to this end was he sent; for no man fulfills the law of God as perfectly as he. We are scarcely a spark amid the divine fire and light. He is the fire of which heaven and earth are full.

20. The Gospel is spoken to those only who acknowledge their sins, and their sins they acknowledge when they repent of them. But this Gospel is of no use to the Pharisees, for they do not acknowledge their sins. To those, however, who do acknowledge them, and are about to despair, the Gospel must be brought. But at this point the devil sets up a game, and suggests to the consciences of those who acknowledge their sins and long to be freed from them, that this one should resort to Saint James, that one to Rome, this one should take refuge in prayers, the other in confession. And then they are told: "Give six pounds of wax, have so ninny masses said, do this, do that, and thus you will be freed from your sins." Thereby they are led farther and farther from the Gospel, and are brought to the standpoint of works. In this way they must certainly despair at last.

21. Therefore, when you feel your sins gnawing at you, and feel your heart trembling and agitated, place yourself beside the publicans where they are standing. These are the very ones who shall receive the Gospel. Do so joyously, and say: "Oh, God! it is thy word that says there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, who need no repentance, and that all the righteous and angels are to interpose and cover up sins. Now, Oh, God! I have come to

this that I feel my sins. I am already judged. I need but the one Shepherd who seeketh me; and I will therefore freely venture on thy Gospel."

22. It is thus that you come to God. You are already the sheep placed upon his shoulders. You have found the Shepherd. You are the piece of silver in the hand. You are the one over whom is joy in heaven in the presence of all the angels. We are not to worry, if we do not experience or feel this at once. Sin will daily decrease, and its sting will drive you to seek God. You must struggle against this feeling by faith, and say: "Oh, God! I know thou hast said this, and I lean upon thy Word. I am the sheep and the piece of silver; thou the shepherd and the woman."

23. You might say: Yes, this I will gladly do; but I cannot atone for my sins. I can render no satisfaction for them. Consider then the publicans and sinners. What good have they done? None. They came to God, heard his Word and believed it. Do the same. His are living words. The Gospel is too deep to be fathomed by human words. Conscientious men who tried it readily understand this.

24. The learned and idle may determine the meaning of the ninety-nine in the desert. It is enough for us to learn the main thought of this Gospel.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

SECOND SERMON — LUKE 15:1-10.

This sermon appeared first in pamphlet form entitled: “A sermon on the Lost Sheep, by Dr. M. Luther, delivered at Wittenberg in the presence of the Elector of Saxony, Duke John Fredrick, etc. , 1533.”

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1. This Gospel contains the teaching we hold and boast of as our chief doctrine, which is called the true Christian teaching, namely, the doctrine of grace and forgiveness of sins, and Christian liberty from the law. It is a very loving and friendly admonition to repentance and the knowledge of Christ. And it is ever a pity, that a godless, impudent person should be permitted to hear such an excellent, comforting and joyful sermon. And yet it is more sad, that every one graduates so soon in it and masters it so that he thinks he knows it so well that he can learn nothing more from it. Yet God, our Lord, does not permit himself to become vexed or weary in repeating it yearly, yea, every day, and enforces it as though he knew nothing else to preach, and as though he had no other skill or art. While we poor, wretched people immediately become so overlearned, so satisfied, tired of it and disgusted besides, that we have no longer a desire or love for it.

2. But before we take up the subject taught in this Gospel, let us first examine what St. Luke gives as an introduction to show what prompted Christ to preach the following sermon, when he says: "Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto him to hear him," because they wanted to be near him to hear his word, and he expresses freely and

plainly what kind of people he had about him, namely, those who openly lived as they should not live, and were called downright sinners and wicked people. Thus it would appear that the Pharisees had sufficient reason to blame him, because he, who pretended to be a pious and holy man kept company with such low characters.

3. For at that time the men scattered hither and thither through the land were called publicans, to whom the Romans gave charge of a city, or of the revenue, or other duties or offices, and required of them a certain amount of revenue; just as the Turks or Venetians now assign a city or office to a certain person from which he must give many thousands of dollars a year, and whatever he extorts over and above that amount is his own. In this manner they proceeded. Those who collected such revenue and tax proceeded so that they had a profit from it. And as this sum thus appointed was large for each city or office, the officers extorted without let or hindrance, so that they might enjoy more as their ,own; for their masters were so close with them that they could not gain much for themselves, if they desired to act justly and take advantage of no one. Hence they were reported in all lands as being great extortioners in whom little good or honesty could be found.

4. Thus the other great crowds in general were called “sinners,” who otherwise were worse people and publicly lived in a shameful and wild way, in covetousness, adultery and the like. Such drew near to Christ in order to hear him, since they had heard, that in the light of his doctrine and his many miracles he was an excellent man.

5. Now, after all, there was a spark or two of virtue and honesty in them, that they had a desire for Christ and gladly heard his doctrine, and see what he did. Inasmuch as they well knew that he was a good man, and heard nothing but good of him, both in words and deeds, so that their doings did neither agree nor harmonize with his life; and yet they feel no enmity against him, nor flee from him, but go to him, not to seek anything evil in him, but to see and hear something good, and to hope that they might become better.

6. The Pharisees and the scribes, on the contrary, who were held and esteemed as the most pious and holy, were such poisonous reptiles, that they were not only enemies of Christ, and could not bear to see or hear him, nor suffer poor sinners to come to him and hear him that they might be made better, yet they even murmured and blamed him for harboring and

receiving them, and said: Behold, is this that excellent and holy man? Who will now say that he is of God, as he associates with such rogues and wicked people? Yes, he is a “wine-bibber and a glutton,” and they say in another place, “a friend of publicans and sinners.”

7. Such names he must bear from these holy people, not because he was riotous or given to gluttony and drunkenness, but only because he permitted them to come to him, and did not thrust them from him nor despise them. For they thought he should have done so, and should have gone forth in a gray frock with a sour countenance and remained secluded from common people, and when he saw such publicans and sinners, he should have held his nose and looked the other way, so that he would not become polluted by them, as they themselves like holy people were accustomed to do. As Isaiah, 65:5, writes of them: that they kept themselves so pure that they would not dare to touch a sinner; as may also be seen in the example of [479]Luke 7:39, where the Pharisees so bitterly opposed Christ, because he allowed himself to be touched by a woman who was a sinner. Now, these were they who at all times desired to be his master, and to prescribe to him and give him rules how he should conduct himself and live holy. Hence they murmur here, because he does not hold to them and avoid such public sinners as they do.

8. Now Christ is also a little self-willed and shows here that he is simply not to be dictated to by any one, and that he will be free in all things, as we see also everywhere in the Gospel, that a peculiar firmness or self-will is found in this man, who is nevertheless at other times so mild a man, willing and ready to help, the like of whom was never found on earth. But when they came to him with laws and wanted to be his teachers, then all friendship was at an end, he starts and bounds back, as when you strike on an anvil, and he speaks and does just the contrary they demand of him, although they even say rightly and well, and have God’s word for it, as they do here where they come and say: You should do thus, you should hold to the society of good people and not to sinners. This is a precious doctrine taken out of the Scriptures; for Moses himself writes that they should avoid the wicked, and put away evil from among them. They have the text on their side, and come trolling with their Moses, and want to bind him and rule him by their laws.

9. But, whether it be God’s law or the law of man, he will in short be unbound, like the unicorn, of which it is said, that it cannot be taken alive,

it matters not how you attempt it. It will suffer itself to be pierced, shot and killed, but it will never submit to be taken. Thus Christ also acts, although you approach him with laws to throw them over him, he will not endure it, but he bursts through them as through a spider's web, and gives to them besides a good lecture. As in <4012B>Matthew 12:3, where they blamed his disciples because they plucked the ears of corn on the Sabbath day, citing the divine command to keep the Sabbath day holy; he turns it around altogether and bursts through the commandment and proves besides, both by Scriptures and examples, just the contrary. Again, in <4016B>Matthew 16:22-23, where he tells his Apostles how he shall suffer and be crucified, and when Peter with good intentions comes forth with the law of love and sets before him God's commandment and says: "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall never be unto thee." In this connection he also gives him a good strong reply, and handles him roughly and unfriendly, and says: "Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men."

10. In short, wherever they begin to deal with him only according to laws, he resents it and will be free from all laws, and be the Lord of them all, by which he thrusts them from him, and will observe no law at all, as though he were bound to keep it. And yet, on the contrary, when it springs from himself no law is so trifling, but that he will gladly keep it, yea, even much more than the law could demand, so that a more willing servant could not be found, when he is left free without a master. Yea, he even humbles himself as lowly as to wash and kiss the feet of Judas, his betrayer, and even protects his disciples at night, as history relates of him, and we may well believe, as he says himself, <4020B>Matthew 20:28: "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." There, of course, belong the works of the law, but not as springing out of the law nor compelled by the law. As also may be seen by his life in that he always goes about hither and thither in the land, sleeps at night on the bare earth, fasts forty days without rest, and performs so many labors that they feared he might lose his mind, <4021B>Mark 3:21, or harm his body. He does whatever he should and can, but he will be free and unbound, and will have no laws prescribed to him, and wherever one attempts it, there he halts and defends himself most determinedly. Thus he is both the most obstinate and the most kind of all men, and at the same time he is neither stubborn nor slavish, who will do nothing to which he is driven by the law, and yet he does all

things in abundance like a flood of good works, when he is only permitted to work of his own free will, without being mastered and taught.

11. This has been written for us as an example, that we may learn what a true Christian man he is according to the Spirit, and that we should not judge him according to the law, nor master him according to our own shrewdness; for this reason also Christ is our Lord, that he may make out of us such people as he is himself. And as he will not suffer himself to be bound by any laws, but is Lord over the law and all things, thus also the faith of a Christian church should not suffer it. For through Christ and his baptism we are to be so highly exalted and liberated that our conscience according to faith may know no law, but simply remain unmastered and unjudged by the same, that nothing else may be so cheerful to us according to the internal experience of conscience, than as though no law had ever appeared on earth, neither ten nor one commandment, either of God, or the Pope, or the emperor; but at all times stand in liberty, that we can say: I know no law, and do not desire to know any.

12. For in this state and nature by virtue of which we became Christians, all human works cease, and hence all law. For where there is no work, there can be no law to demand work and to say: do this, leave that; but we are through baptism and through the blood of Christ simply free from all works, and justified by mere grace and mercy, and even live before God alone by them. This is, I say, our treasure, according to which we are Christians and live and stand before God. For how we should live according to the outward life in our flesh and blood before the world, has nothing whatever to do here.

13. Therefore a Christian must so learn to rule his conscience before God as not to permit himself to be ensnared by any law, but whenever his faith is attacked by the law, let him defend himself against it, and act as Christ does here and in other places, where he shows himself so firm, exceptional and odd, that neither Moses nor any legal exacter can do anything with him, although he is otherwise the most humble, the most gentle and friendly of men.

14. However, this is an excellent and sublime art, which no one knows but he alone who was the master of it, who was able to defy all laws and teachers of law. But we cannot attain to this high degree, for the devil sports with our flesh and blood, when he attacks a man in his conscience and makes him tell what he has done and not done, and disputes with him

both concerning his sins and piety. Here a man is drawn into a pit of clay and deep mire, so that he cannot extricate himself, but only sinks deeper and deeper. For it rests upon him as a heavy load and presses him down, so that he is not able to rise above it, under which he goes on and consumes himself with it, and can not obtain peace. As I also feel in my own experience, when with my labor I can not extricate myself, although I labor incessantly, and though I strangle myself to get out of the pit, that I might rise above the law, and accomplish enough to compel it to be quiet and say: Well, you have done sufficient, now I am satisfied with thee! But it amounts to nothing, for it is such a deep pit and mire, out of which no one can emerge, even if he take the whole world to his assistance, as all can bear me witness who have tried it, and still daily experience.

15. Now the cause of this is that our entire nature is so that it is in short inclined to be occupied with works and laws and hear what they dictate and follow those who say: Why does he eat with publicans and sinners? If he would eat and drink with us, then he would do right. Again: Why do your disciples pluck the ears of corn and do what one ought not to do on the Sabbath day? And they always act and dispute with the law until it says: Now you are good. For it can not rise higher nor understand anything better than that the doctrine of the law is the highest doctrine, and its righteousness is the best life before God. Thus human nature remains in the law, forever captive and bound. And as it lays hold and makes the attempt, it can never quiet the law, so that it has nothing to demand or to punish, but is compelled to remain captive under the law as in a perpetual prison. And the longer human nature struggles and afflicts itself with the law, the worse it becomes until entirely overcome.

16. What then am I to do when the law attacks me and oppresses my conscience, because I am conscious of not having done what it requires? I answer: Behold what Christ does here, he sets his head against it, and grows firm, and allows no law to be forced upon him, even though it be taken from the law of God. Thus you must learn to do, and flatly say to it: My dear law, let your contention cease, and go your own way, for I have nothing to do with thee; yes, just because you come to dispute with me and inquire how good I am, I will not hear thee; for nothing avails before this judge, with whom we now dispute, nothing what I am and shall do or not do; but only what Christ is, gives and does. For we are now in the bridal chamber, where the bride and the bridegroom should be alone, you have no right to enter there, or speak on this subject.

17. However, in this very way the law still continues to knock and say: Yes, nevertheless you must do good works, keep God's commandment, if you want to be saved. Here answer again: Do you not clearly hear, that it avails nothing now to consider this. For I have already my righteousness and the sum of all salvation in Christ my Lord without any works, and I was already saved long before thou camest, so that I have no need whatever of thee. For as I said, where works are of no avail, the law also amounts to nothing, and where no law is there is also no sin. Therefore nothing shall rule here except the bride alone in the bridal chamber with Christ, in whom she possesses all things together, and lacks nothing that is necessary unto salvation, and the law must remain excluded with drums and trumpets, and courageously despised and banished when it would attack the conscience. For it does not belong here, it comes out of season, and wants to make a great ado where it should not intrude, for here we are in the sphere of the article of faith; I believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, who suffered for me, died and was buried, rose again from the dead, etc. Before him must give place the law of Moses, of the emperor and of God, and I am to repel everything that would dispute with me about sin, right or wrong, and everything I may do.

18. Behold, Christ would here present to us such liberty, so that we as Christians according to our faith may tolerate no other master, but only hold that we are baptized and called unto Christ, and through him have become justified and sanctified, and say: This is my righteousness, my treasure, my work and everything against sin and wrong, which the law can do and bring against me. If you want another righteousness, work, law, sin, then take them where you may, you will not find them in me. In this way a man may defend himself and withstand the suggestions and temptations of the devil, either referring to past or present sins; so that these two may be kept wide apart, Moses and Christ, works and faith, conscience and the outward life; so that when the law attacks me and would terrify my heart, then it is time to give the good law a furlough, and if it will not go, bravely drive it away, and say: Gladly would I do and promote good works where I can at the proper time, when among the people; but here where my conscience must stand before God, I will know nothing of them, in this only let me alone, and do not speak to me of what I do or fail to do. Here I will not listen either to Moses or the Pharisees, but my baptism and Christ only shall reign here in full sway, and I will like Mary sit at his feet and

hear his Word. But Martha must stay out and go about in the kitchen and do her housework, and in short, leave the conscience alone.

19. But how is it, if I still continually have sin in me, that is certainly not right? I answer: It is true, I am a sinner and do wrong; but I am not going to despair on that account nor run straight to hell, or flee from the law; for I have still a righteousness and work far above Moses, by which I apprehend him who has apprehended me, and I cleave to him who has embraced me in baptism and laid me in his bosom, and by his Gospel has promoted me to the fellowship of all his benefits, and commands me to believe in him. Where he is, there I command the Pharisees, and Moses with his tables, all lawyers with their, books, all men with their works, immediately to be silent and depart. For here no law has any right to accuse or demand, although I have not done it nor can I do it, for in Christ I have all things in abundance, whatever I need or lack.

20. Such, I say, is the Christian's doctrine and skill, and it belongs only where Christ reigns, and the conscience acts as in God's presence. But this is not preached to rough, impudent and light-minded people, who understand nothing of it, and who as St. Peter says in his second Epistle, 3:6, only confuse and pervert such doctrine to their own condemnation, from which they take license to live as they please, and say: Ho! why shall I do good works? What harm is it if I am a sinner? Has not Christ abolished the law? Now, this too will not avail, for here you must view Christ from another point, and observe what he further does. For here he himself says that he is the man who seeks the poor lost sheep, and besides proves it by his present deed, in that he receives publicans and sinners, and preaches to them. Here you will see that he does a great deal more than what the law has commanded, and by his example also teaches thee to do likewise. He is so proud that he will not be under the law; and again he is so willing that he desires to do much more than the law can require.

Do thou also likewise, and wait not first until you are driven and tormented with the law, but do what you should of your own accord without the law, as St Peter admonishes, ⁶⁰²¹⁶1 Peter 2:16 "As free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bond servants of God;" and in ⁴⁵⁶¹⁸Romans 6:18 says: "And being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness." These are they who do all things with a free conscience without the coercing of the law.

21. For where the Gospel is truly in the heart, it creates a new man who does not wait until the law comes, but, being so full of joy in Christ, and of desire and love for that which is good, he gladly helps and does good to every one wherever he can, from a free heart, before he ever once thinks of the law. He wholly risks his body and life, without asking what he must suffer on account of it, and thus abounds in good works which flow forth of themselves. Just like Christ will not be compelled to pick up a straw, but without compulsion he permits himself to be nailed to the cross for me and the whole world, and dies for the lost sheep. This may indeed be called work above work.

22. Therefore learn now carefully to discriminate, both rightly to place and to divide these things, when it comes to the test, and when the law and sin would dispute with the conscience, that you courageously take the word out of the mouth of Moses and tell him to be still, and order him out to your old man, whom you are to lead into the school of Moses, that he may dispute with him and say: Listen, you are both lazy and slow to do good, and to serve your neighbor. When you should praise Christ, you rather drink a bottle of bee,'. And before you expose yourself to danger for Christ's sake, you prefer to rob and cheat your neighbor wherever you can. For the same lazy scoundrel who will not move whose hands will not work, whose feet will not go where they should, whose eyes are not chaste, here you may take stones and smite the old Adam until he does move.

23. Therefore, when Moses attacks me where it is right, I am to say to him, I will gladly hear and follow thee, namely with my hands and life, aside from the faith and righteousness of my conscience before God, there thou mayest reign like a schoolmaster amid the servants of the family, and order me to be obedient, chaste and patient, to do good to my neighbor, to help the poor, to praise and honor God, besides allow myself to be disgraced and slandered for the sake of his Word, and suffer the world to bring upon me all its torments. In all this I am well pleased, and am willing to do even more than I am able as to the outward man. For Christ says the spirit is willing, and more than willing, but the flesh is weak. For thus he permits himself to be circumcised, to offer in the temple, to be scourged and crucified, none of which was necessary for him, nor could the law demand them from him.

But should Moses go further, where he has no right, that is, into my heart and conscience, there I will neither hear nor see him. For there I have another great and unspeakable treasure, called Christ, with his baptism and Gospel. In a word, what concerns the outer man, there Moses cannot burden nor urge too much, but he dare not in the least burden the conscience. For where the Spirit is who brings us Christ, he is above all law, as St. Paul says, <5009>1 Timothy 1:9: “That law is not made for a righteous man,” and yet he at the same time does more than he is able to accomplish according to the flesh. For after the flesh we are nothing but sinners, and as to our person we would of course have to remain condemned under the law; but by virtue of Christ and baptism we rise high above all law.

24. Thus let Moses carry on his rough work, aside from Christ to urge those who are not Christians, or ever spur the old Adam. For Christians he cannot thereby make either pious or righteous; but of course he does this, namely, he shows them their duty, which according to the Spirit they gladly do, and much more besides, except that the flesh does not willingly follow nor obey the Spirit, so that on this account they still need not be admonished and urged. But at the same time the conscience must remain free, for the law has no right here before God to accuse and condemn. Wherefore in Christianity such doctrine and admonition must be upheld, as even the Apostles did, whereby every one is admonished and reminded of the duty of his calling.

25. But Moses must be allowed to have absolute rule over those who are not Christians, and burden them both outwardly and inwardly, so that he may force and torment them to do what is right and omit what is wrong, although they do it not gladly, like the licentious multitude and stiff-necked people, who neither esteem nor understand the liberty of Christ, although they can prate and boast of the Gospel, and yet they only misuse it for their licentiousness. They should remember that they belong under Moses.

For they are not people who can grasp our doctrine. They go along so securely and think they have no need of the Gospel, or that they know it well enough; but it is only for those who thus dispute with the law because of their sins and the wrath of God, and are frightened by it and feel their hearts say to them: Woe is me! how have I lived? Row shall I stand before God? And thus they go about too timid and bashful, whereas others are too hard and presumptuous, so that they neither feel nor care for any law nor

for their sins and distress. Hence to both it is unequally distributed, so that those who ought to have nothing to do with the law are the only ones to feel it and they have too much of it; but the others, who only ought to feel it, do not concern themselves about it at all; yes, the more you try to terrify them with the law and the wrath of God, the harder they become. Therefore they need another master, namely, the hangman and the sheriff to teach them; if they will not do good in God's name, that they may be obliged to do it in the name of some one else, and have no thanks for it, but receive hell-fire and all torments as their reward.

26. On the contrary, Christ, here and everywhere, as I have said, teaches us, who feel our sins and the burden of the law, and would gladly be Christians, both by his example and his sermons, to accustom ourselves to contend against it, and directs us from ourselves to himself, and not to give place to the devil, who by the law would invade the bride chamber of Christ, and sit in his place, that is, rob the conscience of its joy and comfort, in order that he may force man into despair, so as not to be able to lift up his head or heart to God. For this is called the Christian's art, who should learn and know more than the vulgar, profane crowd can know and understand, namely, that they are able to contend against and withstand the devil, when he attacks us and desires to dispute with us with the aid of Moses; so that we simply allow him no argument or conversation, but direct him from Moses to Christ and stay with the latter; for he only goes about cunningly to bring us from Christ under Moses; for he knows when he accomplishes this, he has the victory.

27. Wherefore be on your guard that you be not led from the way or be tempted out of your sphere; but, although he already sets forth many things from the law, which is also God's Word, which you are in duty bound to obey, you can answer him and say: Dost thou indeed not understand that I will now neither. know nor hear of any law? For we are now within a sphere and on ground, where there is no question as to what I shall do or leave undone. I already know well enough, that I have not done, nor do I do, what the law requires; but here is the question, how may I acquire a gracious God and the forgiveness of sins, and how shall I learn the article of faith concerning Christ? Here I will abide in the arms of Christ and hang about his neck, and creep into his baptism, God grant it, and let the law say and my heart feel what they may. If we can only keep this chief part pure, and this bulwark firm and well secured, then I will gladly do and suffer externally as much as is laid upon me.

28. Behold, whoever learns this art well is a truly perfect man, as Christ was, so far above all law that he might also call St. Peter a devil, the Pharisees fools and blind leaders, and stop the mouth of Moses and order him to keep quiet, and thus live entirely without any law, and yet fulfill all laws and be proud and firm against everything that would bind and lead him captive, and yet also of his own free self be serviceable and subject unto all men.

29. But here we are always deficient, that we can never properly learn this, for the devil lies in our path and leads us so far that we pervert it and are only too willing and modest to hear everything the law says and become frightened at it, when we should raise our head and neither hear nor follow it. Again, in external matters, we are only too liable to fall into license, when we should courageously keep down the body and exercise it with the law, that it may be compelled to suffer everything that causes it pain, because it still continually commits sin; yet, so that sin here remain without, where it should remain, and have its Moses to lay upon its back and oppress it. But internally no sin or law ought to reign, but Christ alone with pure grace, joy and consolation. Then all things would go right, and man would be prepared for every good work, both to do and suffer all things with joy, with a glad and willing heart, out of good, honest faith in the grace of God through Christ, [so that the conscience remain a master over all laws, and the flesh be subject to all laws.]

30. Now, whoever can do such things, let him thank God, and see to it, that he be able to do it only not too well or loudly boast that he has great skill. For I, and those like me, can not yet accomplish it as we should, although we have indeed tried it most and practiced it the longest; for it is, as I have said, a skill that no one possesses but Christians, all of whom must remain scholars and learn it all their lives; except only those other secure spirits, who pretend that they alone know everything, and yet with such pretended skill they know nothing at all, and thereby have departed farthest from it. There is not a more vexatious thing, nor a greater affliction or harm that can happen to Christendom than that everything becomes full of factions and sects through such sophists; while they are only people who serve neither God nor the world, and hear rightly neither the law nor the Gospel, but securely despise the former and become disgusted with the latter, and are always seeking some other doctrine. But we do not preach in their behalf, for they are unworthy of it, and are punished by God so that they can never learn it or derive any benefit from it, although they hear it;

also, that we nevertheless only retain it and that they take nothing of it from us, except that they hear only an empty sound and noise of it.

This is the first part which Christ here teaches by his own example; [how we should keep our conscience free from all disputations of the law and from all the terrors of the wrath of God and of sin]. Now let us examine this beautiful sermon of the Lord, where he begins and says:

PART II.

> "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?"

31. Christ the Lord is not only firm, in that he refuses to obey their doctrine and despotism, but also shows good reasons for doing so, and with great and fine skill overthrows their objections and stops their mouths, so that they have nothing to say against it, yes, he circumvents them by their own actions and example, and forces them in their very hearts to be ashamed of themselves, that they demanded such things of him and blame him in such weighty matters, which they themselves do in much more trifling things, and wish to do them even with honor.

32. For how could he answer them better than to say: You great masters and dear sophists, would you order and teach me that I should thrust from me poor sinners who desire me and come unto me to hear my words? While even you yourselves for the sake of one lost sheep do much more, when among a hundred you miss a single one, you leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, that is, in the field with the shepherds, standing all alone, and run after the one of the hundred and have no rest until you find it, and this you call a good and praiseworthy deed, and if any one would reprove you for it, you would consider him mad and foolish. And should not I, the Savior of souls, do the same for men as you do for a sheep, although there is no comparison whatever between a soul and everything else that lives and moves of all the creatures on the earth. Then should you not in your hearts be ashamed of yourselves, to boss and reprove me in a work which is infinitely better than the work you yourselves praise and are compelled to praise? So, if you reprove me, you must first condemn yourselves.

33. This is called giving a good answer, and in all honor putting them to silence, while he gives sufficient reasons why he does not at all need their great authority, yea, he will not, neither should he, endure it. And so they run on as is their nature, for they obtain thus nothing but their own sins and shame. For it is truly a shame to all masters, and an insufferable outrage, for them to attempt to dictate to him, who is appointed of God Lord over all. But it ought to be as I said, whoever desires to direct and judge a Christian, and lead him away from his baptism and the article of faith in Christ, and to govern him by his wisdom and laws, does not only make a fool of himself, but also causes abomination and murder; for he defiles God's temple and sanctuary, and with a devilish outrage invades his kingdom, where he alone should reign through his Holy Spirit. Wherefore he fairly and justly deserves that God should also put him to sin and shame before all the world, because he wants to be a master in the devil's name, whereas Christ alone is master, and with his head he runs against him who is too high and wise for him.

34. Therefore it is not a good thing to trifle with Christians, for they are living saints, who are undisturbed before all the world only- because of their man whose name is Christ; for men gain nothing in him at any rate, as he will not suffer others to teach and rule him. So also a Christian can and should not suffer it, for if he suffers it and gives place and yields to suggestions of this kind, where one would blame and master Christ in him, or attack his faith with the law and doctrine of works, then he is lost and fallen from Christ. Therefore let us only hold firmly to him, and care not if the whole world outwits and masters us. For when we abide in him and hold fast to the true sense of this article of faith, we will easily overcome all such fanatics and put them to shame. For this Christ shall and will remain uncorrected and without a master, but he alone will rule and reform the whole world, so that they shall either by grace acknowledge him as their Lord and Master, and themselves as fools, or without grace be exposed to shame and utterly perish.

35. But, as I have said, this sermon is much too good, sweet and comforting for the coarse, rough crowd, and the mad, knotty mob, and so we do not preach it to them that they may know it; but only to those who are in the terrors and anxiety of conscience, or in the danger and toils of death, and when the devil disputes with them about their sins, to drive them into melancholy and despair. To those this lovely picture must be presented, that they may become comforted and joyful. But the rest, who

already live in drunkenness and know but very little of melancholy and spiritual sorrow, are to be diverted to Moses and mister hangman and his servants, and afterwards to the devil. For it is painted so wry friendly and much better than any man can paint it, and no one is so eloquent as to outline it or equal it with words, but as much as possible it must be grasped by faith in the heart. However, we must notice a little of it, so as to give an occasion to meditate upon it.

36. Christ says I have a hundred sheep, that is, the little flock of entire Christendom, from which number one is lost and fallen from the communion of Christians. If you would know how it is with my heart, only truly describe such a shepherd and his lost sheep!

37. For while the shepherd is merely a man and tends the dumb animals, created to be slaughtered and killed, yet he has such a sympathetic heart for his lost sheep, that he is in as great anxiety to find the sheep as it is to find its shepherd. For as soon as the sheep knows, as it does by instinct, that he is its shepherd, it is not at all afraid, but runs up to him with all confidence, and walks along before him in perfect trust. Yes, as soon as it only hears his voice, it bleats and runs after. him, and has no rest until it comes to him. And thus there is of course the purest friendship and love between them both, and they have toward each other only one heart and one mind; so that if the lamb could speak and pour out its heart, it would desire nothing but its shepherd. Again, the shepherd has no other cares and anxieties than how he may again find his precious pet, that has gone from him and strayed away. He makes haste, and sends out servants wherever he thinks it may be found, and never ceases until he has found it and brought it home. For he knows well enough what a poor animal it is, as it can live only by the help and under the protection of its shepherd, and can not at all care for itself, but is wholly lost and must perish, if deprived of its shepherd, and besides it is naturally fearful and inclined to stray; and as soon as it leaves the way and loses the shepherd, it is at once discomfited and can not rest, although it comes among other shepherds and sheep, and the stranger calls it; yet it runs in its fright through briers and water and everything before it until it falls a prey to the wolf or otherwise perishes.

38. But still it has in it the virtue and good nature, that it holds with all diligence to its shepherd and knows his voice so well, and when it hears it, it runs immediately to him, and will not permit itself to be taken from him, though all the world may call and coax. And though it be already lost or

gone astray, still it has the hope as much as instinct gives it, if it can only once again hear its shepherd, it would be cheerful and void of all care. Thus the shepherd is not for the purpose, when he finds it again, to be angry' at it and thrust it away, or to cast it into the jaws of the wolf; but all his cares and thoughts are, only to allure it in the most friendly manner and treat it in the tenderest way, he takes it upon his shoulders, holds and carries it, until he again brings it home.

39. The picture painted before us by this creature of God is, how Christ shows his disposition toward us, what he will do for us and what we may expect from him. For, as all this is true in nature, much more is it true in the kingdom of Christ, which is a kingdom of grace, pure love and consolation. Wherefore keep in mind this sheep that belongs to the shepherd, then you will also find, with how much more and greater affection he takes it to himself and how friendly and perfectly and heartily he cares for it, to bring it back. By this he would set forth and indeed pour out his inexhaustible love and ardent desire toward poor, sinful, frightened and weak consciences, which are his true sheep.

40. For when a man has lost this shepherd and does not hear his voice, it is with him exactly as with the lost sheep, which always wanders ever farther and farther from him. And though he even be allured and called by strange doctrines to run over to them and think it is coming to its shepherd, yet it does not find him, but always runs from one corner to another, and the longer it runs the farther it goes astray, and it has no comfort nor help, until it again hears the voice of its true Shepherd ringing in its ears. As also experience plainly shows us, and every one can experience it in his own heart. For if the second article of the creed concerning Christ be taken away or not taught, then here comes a factious spirit, there a fanatic, where one perverts the sacrament of the altar, the other baptism, and one preaches this, the other that, concerning strange holiness of life, and each one entices the poor sheep to himself, and pretends to be the Shepherd, by which the sheep strays more and more, until it loses the way altogether.

41. Moreover, the devil also joins in with his own thoughts, which he shoots into the heart: Ah, if you had done this and that, or not done it! by which the heart becomes only more fickle and erring, that it does not know whither to go. This certainly takes place when Christ is removed out of sight, and the article of faith concerning him is not taught. It matters not how they teach, advise and admonish, it will only be worse and approach

nearer destruction, unless the true Shepherd with his own voice comes again to him.

42. Therefore we should now learn rightly to know and recognize Christ our Lord, that we may not regard him as a tyrant or an angry judge, as hitherto he has been preached to us, and as the devil always presents him to the heart, as one standing behind us with a sword. But as the little lamb naturally beholds. its shepherd, not at all as one who would frighten, hunt and strike it down, but as soon as it first sees him, it becomes happy and obtains a hope as though it received help already, and needs no more to fear or care, and runs straight up to him with all confidence.

43. Thus too, if our confidence is to begin, and we become strengthened and comforted, we must well learn the voice of our Shepherd, and let all other voices go, who only lead us astray, and chase and drive us hither and thither. We must hear and grasp only that article which presents Christ to us in the most friendly and comforting manner possible. So that we can say with all confidence: My Lord ,Jesus Christ is truly the only Shepherd, and I, alas, the lost sheep, which has strayed into the wilderness, and I am anxious and fearful, and would gladly be good, and have a gracious God and peace of conscience, but here I am told that He is as anxious for me as I am for him. I am anxious and in pain about how I shall come to him to secure help, But he is in anxiety and worry and desires nothing else than to bring me again to himself.

44. Behold, if we could thus portray his heart, and press it into our own heart, that he has such a gushing desire, anxiety and longing for us, then we could not dread or fear him, but would joyfully run up to him and abide with him alone, and hear no other doctrine or teacher. For wherever a different doctrine comes, be it of Moses or others, it will certainly accomplish nothing, except only to hunt us down and torment us, so that we can find neither rest nor peace. Wherefore Christ also says, <40112829>Matthew 11:28-29: “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest for your souls.” As though he would say: Run about and seek wherever you will, hear and learn everything that man can preach, yet you will find no rest nor peace of heart except in me alone.

45. We will gladly permit the preaching of good works, the ten commandments and all other moral teaching; but to preach to the

conscience bound in torment and terror on account of its sins, there shall positively be no other word preached except the Word of Christ. For this is that poor lost sheep, which neither shall nor can have and suffer any master, except this its only Shepherd, who does not deal with it by compulsions and the requirements of the law, but in the sweetest and tenderest manner, and takes upon himself the dear sheep with all its distress, sins and anxiety, and himself does what the sheep should' do, as we shall hear further.

46. But, as I have sufficiently said before, we must well distinguish here between two kinds of preaching, or the voice of Moses and the voice of Christ, that by no means you may permit any Moses to come to the lost sheep, though his preaching be ever so excellent. For if these things be confused and we attempt to comfort the troubled conscience with the law thus: Be of good cheer, you have not committed murder nor adultery and done any other outrage, or you have indeed meant it all good! This also is comfort, but it will not last long nor hold out against the cuffs of the devil. For this is nothing more nor less than a consolation with yourself, by which the poor sheep is not benefited, for it remains astray and lost in spite of this, and it can not help itself or come to its Shepherd.

47. However, if he is to be helped, he must be shown the true Shepherd, who comes and seeks him to bring him home, and let his voice be heard, then he can receive true comfort, so that he dare answer Moses and say: I now no longer care either for thy comfort or terror, and you may make me just as bad as you can, you may make me a murderer time and again, and say I have hanged my father and mother; but now, because I am in anxiety and terror before the wrath of God and eternal condemnation, I will neither hear nor Obey thee. For I myself feel and confess, that I am, alas, a poor lost sheep; but this is my salvation and comfort in which I triumph, that I have the Shepherd who himself seeks me, his lost sheep, and carries me on his shoulders. Let us now discuss this, and not how good or bad I am, but. how I am to come to Christ.

48. Therefore, all preaching must be adapted to the capacity of the hearers. For I have said that this doctrine is not suited to a carnal and hardened man, even as it does not profit to give a hardy thresher sugar and costly delicacies, which are intended for the sick, but give him a good piece of hard bread and cheese and a drink of water. But other soft and delicate food reserve for the sick and young children, who cannot digest anything

hard. Thus you must also observe here how rightly to divide and give each one his proper portion, like a prudent householder. Likewise, that you hold fast to the preaching of Moses and the law, until you find hard and vicious people, who live secure and without fear. These you must permit to eat only the coarse food of common laborers, that is, to hear the angry Moses, who thunders and flashes from Mount Sinai, who destroys the children of Israel and slays them in the desert, and drowns King Pharaoh in the Red Sea.

49. But wherever there are troubled, weak hearts and consciences, which have now become lost sheep, there keep silent about Moses and all the works of God, done under the law, and speak only of the works done by Christ in the time of grace, and well impress the poor conscience how he shows himself toward the lost sheep; namely, that he is the dear, good Shepherd, who is so anxious and concerned about the sheep that he drops everything and leaves all lay, only that he may find it again, and never ceases until he brings it home. For it grieves him that a man should remain in sin, fear and tremble; and he cannot endure it, that he remains there and perishes. But he calls to thee with his Gospel in the most friendly manner, that you should only come to him, and be taken up and carried on his shoulders, and remain his dear sheep.

50. But that multitude must not be called the lost sheep, which lives securely and riotously, and do not concern themselves whether God above is angry or laughs, for it is a wild goat that will not be either led or protected. But those are called the stray, lost sheep, whose sins oppress them and who struggle in the conflict of faith, where there is no danger of losing Moses but Christ and his chief article of faith, that is, where the conscience is in anxiety and worry as to whether God is merciful to him? This is the true sheep which sighs and cries for its Shepherd, and would be glad for help, as David says, Psalm 119:176: “I am gone astray like a lost sheep, seek thy servant,” etc. To those the sugar and this friendly sweet refreshment tastes good, by which the heart is revived that it may not despair, but that it may raise itself up again by such consolation, not through Moses but in Christ; not in order to make Moses his friend or be able to quiet his voice, but because he has a gracious God in his Lord and Christ. God grant it. Let Moses abide with his comfort where he can.

51. Although it is also a fine thing and should be so, that a man should not live contrary to the law, rob, steal, murder, or do his neighbor wrong and

cause him pain; yet such a life does not give the heart true comfort, but only tickles the skin, which does not enter the heart nor lasts. For when the devil comes and seizes the heart, he takes away all such comfort, and although you have even done right, yet he of course prefers tenfold against it, where you did the contrary. Yea, in the very best works he can easily find much uncleanness, and turn everything to sin. Therefore nothing can be built on such comfort, but only courageously cast it away, and say: God grant, whether I be good or not, this I will reserve for its proper place, when we come to teach and treat of works; but in this circle in which I now stand, it avails nothing to treat of my works and goodness, but of Christ and his works which he has done for me as his lost sheep. If now you ask whether I am good, I will simply answer: knee, and I do not want to be in this circle of good people.

52. But if you ask whether Christ is good, then without hesitation I can say yes, and present him as my righteousness, and defiantly appeal to him. For in him I have been baptized, and I have the seal and document here in the Gospel, that I am his dear sheep, and he is my good and pious Shepherd who seeks his lost sheep, and deals with it entirely without the law, demands nothing of me, neither drives, threats nor frightens, but shows me pure sweet grace, and humbles himself beneath me and takes me upon himself, that I may only lie on his back and be carried. Why should I then fear the terrors and thunderings of Moses, or the devil besides, because I am in the protection of that man who gives me his holiness and everything he has, to possess it as my own, and who carries and holds me so that I cannot be lost, because I remain a sheep and do not deny the Shepherd or maliciously fall from him.

53. Thus you have this picture presented in the most lovely manner it is possible to present it. But all this is done only on account of faith. For the picture is indeed fine and full of comfort, and is the truth itself. But it is wanting in this, that it is not felt in experience as it should be. For while the sheep runs astray, that is, when man feels his sins and they oppress him, and he does not know where to stand, and the devil terrifies him; then only the contrary takes place, and he cannot grasp that it is true, for all that he has here heard entirely departs through his present feelings and experience. For the devil has so perverted his vision that he sees nothing but God’s wrath and indignation, b v which his heart is so burdened that he cannot raise himself above it or turn his eyes from it, for he has so deeply sunk into it that he sees nothing else even in Christ than an angry Judge, as he

has been hitherto described and forced into all hearts by the scandalous Papists as sitting alone on the rainbow with a sword in his mouth.

54. For the real art and roguery of the devil, which he practices on the poor wandering sheep, are that he perverts this picture and makes a continual bawling in his presence, that he can no more recognize his Shepherd, so that in Christ's name he might lead the man subject to Moses, as he disputes about Christ just as he did before about Moses, so that he indeed needs a strong faith that it is true, and a man first of all must contend against himself on this account. For his own feeling is powerful in itself, and the devil magnifies sin and terror so greatly, that nerve and bone, and the heart in the body, could fail.

55. Therefore it is not so easily learned as some imagine. When all is peace it is easily believed that Christ is sweet and amiable, but when anxiety and terror break forth and overwhelm the heart, then man is blind and wandering, and will judge only according to his heart and feelings, to which he clings and confirms himself in his error, for he is held captive in it, and cannot think otherwise but that it is as he feels it, and yet it is not true.

56. Now this would be an art, were he able to say to his own heart: If you acknowledge yourself to be a lost sheep, you speak the truth; but that you would on this account flee from Christ, and imagine him to be a man who would hunt you down and frighten you, this is the work of the sorry devil himself. For if you rightly behold and confess him as your true Shepherd, you would neither be afraid nor frightened at him, but you would run up to him with joy and confidence. For he is not present here to condemn thee, but he comes to seek thee, to carry you on his back, to help and deliver you from sin, error, the power of the devil and every misfortune.

If you now feel that you are a sinner and have deserved the wrath of God, then you should just on this account the more earnestly cry and run to your dear Shepherd, that he might deliver you, and you should not imagine him to be anything else than the sheep does its shepherd, which cannot fear him, but is glad and happy as soon as it sees and hears him, although it has strayed away from him, and deserved on this account to fear him. But it knows full well that he bears no anger or indignation against such a sheep, and can expect nothing of him but love and every good thing.

57. Hence everything here depends only upon this, that you rightly learn to look upon Christ according to the Word, and not according to your own

thoughts and feelings, for human thoughts are frauds and lies, but his Word is true and cannot lie. For he has even proved it by living deeds and examples, and daily proves it still throughout the whole of Christendom. Wherefore we must only press the Word (,lose to our hearts, and knit ourselves into it and learn the art to reprove our own heart with its lies, and set this article of faith against it. For this alone must remain true, and everything opposed to it, must be false and a pack of lies. But this is an art which I cannot master, and much less can other vain spirits, who boast so much of it, as though they knew it all, if they have only heard it but once, and yet they never taste or experience anything of it. For it is an easy matter to speak and preach about it; but how difficult it is to prove it in reality, which those thoroughly experience, who are earnestly concerned about it.

58. Now this is the first description of the lovely Christ, set forth by himself in this Gospel, that he pours out all his heart and is so anxious for the sheep, that he goes after it alone, leaving the ninety and nine; not to frighten or strike it, but to help it and bring it home again, and to rejoice the wretched and sorrowful heart and conscience by his sweet and friendly voice, so that on both sides there is nothing but hearty love and joy for each other, that you can see what great love and pleasure you thereby afford him, when you cleave to him with the whole heart and look to him for every good thing.

59. You see in the second place how he pours out his joy and unspeakable goodness by external signs and gestures of every kind, and how, when he has found the sheep, he shows himself so friendly, for he does not deal with it at all according to his own law or force, to which indeed he has a right, to drive it before him like the other sheep, and leave it go alone. On the contrary he lays hold and puts it on his shoulders and carries it himself the whole way through the wilderness, takes all the labor and trouble upon himself only in order that the sheep may have rest and a home, and he does it gladly and heartily, for he is full of pure joy, only because he once more has it in his care. And observe also how well it is with the sheep, how it lies in all peace and safety upon the shoulders of its Shepherd, and how well pleased it is that it lies so softly and does not need to travel, is safe and without care, both from dogs and wolves, that is, from all error and lies, danger and destruction. This is indeed a friendly painting, excellent, lovely and refreshing to behold.

60. For just so Christ our Lord does when he delivers us, which he once did bodily by his sufferings and death, but now he continually does in power and spirit by his Word. In this way he lays us on his shoulders, carries and defends us, that we may be safe from all danger of sin, of death and the devil; although they even terrify us, and act as if they would tear us away and devour us. For being thus carried is our salvation, and we remain safe from every peril and need fear nothing; just like the precious lamb that lays on the shoulders of the Shepherd will not let itself be disturbed, although the dogs already like fiends bark, and the wolf lurks abrupt, while it hangs its head without any care and sweetly sleeps.

So we do also, if we stand and abide in this article of faith: I believe in Jesus Christ, our Lord, who suffered, died and rose again for us, etc. , then we need not worry about being lost, or that the devil can devour us, though he even opens his jaws ever so wide. For we are not then on our own way. nor do we walk with our own feet, but hang about the neck of our dear Shepherd and lay upon his back, where we are entirely safe. For although sin, death and hell appear ever so wicked and terrible, they cannot devour him; otherwise we poor sheep would too soon be lost and destroyed.

61. For even as the sheep cannot protect or provide for itself that it go not astray, unless the shepherd continually directs and leads it in the way; and when it has strayed and is lost, it cannot of itself find the right way or come to its shepherd, but the shepherd himself must go after it, and seek it until he find it, and when he has found it, he holds and bears it upon his back, that it may no more be frightened away from him, hunted or seized by the wolf. So we too cannot either help or advise ourselves, that we may obtain rest and peace of conscience, and escape the devil, death and hell, unless Christ himself brings us again and calls us to himself by his Word. And when we come to him and are in a state of faith, even then we are not able to keep ourselves in faith or-be steadfast, unless he himself by his Word and power holds and carries us, because the devil every way and without ceasing watches for us, and lurks round about us like a roaring lion, as St. Peter in ‹1 Peter 5:8› says, to devour us. So that here it avails nothing whatever to boast of our free will and strength, either to begin or continue our return to the Shepherd, and to abide with him, but Christ alone, our Shepherd, must do everything.

62. But now we are certain of this, that as long as we lie around the neck of Christ, we shall be safe from all terror and misfortune. For he will certainly not permit us to be torn from Ms neck, nor will he cast us off, because he is so happy and of good cheer that he once again has his sheep, and can bring it back to the rest of the flock. In short, there is nothing here of terror, driving and commanding, but a simple friendly carrying and a mere life of grace, by which he cares for his sheep in the tenderest manner. On the contrary, Moses, not like a shepherd of poor, weak sheep, but of rough, strong cattle, with Ms staff and rod drives his herd before him a three days' journey into the wilderness, Exodus 3:1, until they become weary; for such treatment is proper for hardened and proud people.

63. Even we also, when we come under Moses, namely, according to the flesh and the external life, must then go ourselves and do what the law demands. But according to our faith we must not suffer any work to be forced upon us or required of us, but only permit ourselves to be carried and raised up most tenderly, not on horse and chariot, but on his own back and shoulders. Which, as I said, is done, when he permits his Word to be preached unto us, that he died for us, and bore our sins in his own body on the cross, and put the devil with death and sin under his feet, and has led us unto eternal life, and always carries us as long as we live, so that we need not look to our life, how good and strong we are, but only lie upon his shoulders. For in this circle or article of faith we need not be troubled about any sin, death or life, but we have all things in Christ who carries and defends us.

64. Now he is not satisfied with the two parts, that he so lovingly seeks the lost sheep, and carries it so gently and with joy; but also when he brings it home he appoints a special feast and season of joy, and calls together his friends and neighbors that they may rejoice with him. Yea, he makes such a great jubilee, that God in heaven together with all the heavenly hosts and all creatures rejoice over one sinner that repenteth. By this he shows and explains who it is that is called a lost sheep, namely, the sinner who repents, that is, who feels his sins and is heartily sorry on account of them, and would gladly be free from them and come to Christ and amend his life, which is called having a miserable, sorrowful heart and an afflicted conscience, which the devil attacks, that it might perish with sorrow and sadness. For Christ is such a man who seeks and carries no sheep except that which is lost and knows no refuge or help of its own.

65. And now consider, how could he preach still more friendly and comfortingly, or what more should he do to make.: the heart joyful, and awaken a strong confidence in him? Since we see such a Shepherd, we miserable sinners are painted forth by him, who so unwillingly loses his sheep and so anxiously seeks it, and when he has found it carries it with all joy, and spreads forth such joy that all the angels and saints in heaven, yea, and all creatures rejoice and smile over us so friendly, that even the sun must shine much more lovely. For as it is natural that when a man is sorrowful, the sun and everything looks dark to him; and again when the heart is happy, then man appears twice as joyful, and everything looks to him lighter and brighter.

66. Now he who can firmly believe this, shall also receive true consolation and joy in and through Christ the Lord, because he has here the certain promise, that if he cleave thus unto Christ, and permit himself to be carried on his shoulders, that he is a dear guest in the kingdom of heaven, and will be received with great joy.

67. But we have altogether a different feeling in the sorrow and melancholy of the conscience, when the heart cannot think otherwise than that every angel stands behind us with a drawn sword, so that we can have no good cheer either from God or angels, that even some cannot behold any creature with joy, and fear the friendly sun itself, yea, every leaf that stirs. All which arises from tormenting and consuming themselves with their own thoughts, from which they would gladly disentangle themselves, and labor so much and feel so good that they need not fear; but by this “,-hey only make the evil worse.

68. But if you desire to possess true comfort and joy in your soul, then only learn to impress this lovely picture and word of this Gospel in your heart, that you may seek it where it is to be found, namely, in Christ, and nowhere else. For in this man you will find all things, if you only remain under his protection and lie still upon his shoulders. But whatever joy may be sought outside of him, never enters the heart, even if you took to your aid all creatures, and had in one place the joy and pleasure of the whole world.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

This sermon appeared in separate pamphlet form in 1523 under the title: “A sermon preached by Martin Luther on the Gospel, Luke VI. Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful. Wittenberg.”

Text. [4166]Luke 6:36-42. Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful. And judge not, and ye shall not be judged: and condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned’ forgive; and ye shall be forgiven; give, and it shall be given unto you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom, For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.

And he spake also a parable unto them, Can the blind guide the blind? shall they not both fall into a pit? The disciple is not above his teacher: but every one when he is perfected shall be as his teacher. And why beholdest there the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me east out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Their hypocrite, east out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother’s eye.

A LESSON IN MERCY. THE MOTE AND THE BEAM.

I. FAITH AND WORKS. 1-9.

II. MERCY IN GENERAL. 10-22.

III. THREE PARTS OF MERCY.

A. In General. 23-24.

B. In Detail. 25-35.

1. First Part. 25-30.

2. Second Part. 31-32.

3. Third Part. 33-35.

1. This Gospel describes the works of love to our neighbor in temporal things. The Lord here describes these in few words, for he had just said, we should love our enemies, do good to them that hate us, bless them that curse us, pray for them that despitefully use us; if they smite us on one cheek, we should offer also the other; and from him that taketh away thy cloak withhold not thy coat also. All this he here condemns in a short conclusion, and in summing up all, says: "Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful." Here you see described as in a nutshell all the good works we are to do to one another, as our heavenly Father has done to us and still does without ceasing.

2. You have often heard that we need not do good works to God, but to our neighbor. We cannot make God stronger nor richer by our works, but we can make our neighbor stronger and richer with them; he is in need of them, and hence they should be directed to him and not to God. This you have often heard and you have it now in your ears; I would to God, that it might come also into your hands and feet.

3. Therefore observe here what a perversion it is for man to exercise himself in doing works to God, which should be done to his neighbor; and then centers his faith in men and saints, which he should center alone in God. Turn this around, and then it is right, thus: faith must belong alone to God, whoever receives the divine works, God alone does them, and the same works of God we receive alone through faith. Then we should apply ourselves to our neighbor and arrange all our affairs to the end that they serve our neighbor. Before God all should be done in pure faith alone. The reason of this is because no one can help us but God, and what we have in body and soul we have alone from God, and in him alone should we anchor our heart.

4. Now, they turn it around thus, so that they center faith, which is due to God, upon themselves and other people and they fall down before their own devised idols, and what the great masters have invented, and place their confidence in them. Is not that very satan and death? as God in Jeremiah 2:13f. says: "My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Again he says in verse 35 to the

people: Thou sayest, I shall turn my anger from thee, thou hast not sinned. “Behold, I will enter into judgment with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned.”

5. First he says, that the bride has become a harlot and has turned from God; the living fountain from which flow life, salvation and all good, they have forsaken. Secondly, they turn to their own invention, and make their own fountain, in which there is no water. Thus also the Papists build upon their own inventions, saying mass, fasting, praying and the like; they indeed appear very much as though they were a fountain, as though they would draw from it life and salvation, yet it cannot hold any water; and they forsake God, the living fountain.

6. In this manner God says: They boldly rise up against me; I shall not be angry with them, they insist their ways and doings are right and enter into judgment with me. Behold, this is their other sin, that they are determined to defend their own doings. Therefore God says: I will enter into judgment with you and show you, how base you have become, in that you have continually gone your own way.

7. See, thus faith belongs to God alone and it should acquire for us from God alone what we need in temporal and spiritual matters; and it should acquire all in a way that it does not think it has merited it. This same faith should later again flow forth from our heart’s depths to our neighbor freely and unhindered in good works; not that we wish to rest our salvation in them; for God will not have that, but wishes the conscience to rest in himself alone. Just like a bride must cleave to the bridegroom alone, and to no one else, so does God require also from us that we confide only in him.

8. This Luke explains when he says: “Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful.” Here my conscience must be disposed toward God as a gracious, merciful father, and in harmony with this, go out to my neighbor and be also merciful to him. I must bring faith into my heart and up to God; and works out of my heart down to my neighbor. Thus Abraham did, when he went up on Mount Moriah to God, he left his servants and ass down at the foot of the mountain and took Isaac alone with him, Genesis 22:5. So should we also do: when we wish to ascend to God, we should come with Isaac alone, that is, with Christ through faith; the servants and ass, that is, our works, we should leave below.

9. Now this has been said of faith and works as an introduction to our Gospel lesson, namely, that the motion of faith is inward and upward, of works outward and downward. For thus are we righteous before God and men, in that we honor God and look direct to him and believe according to his Word, and in love do sufficient for our neighbor. Let us now consider the words of today's Gospel in their order.

"Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful."

10. Now how is God our heavenly Father merciful? Thus, in that he gives us all things, natural and spiritual, temporal and eternal, gratuitously and out of pure goodness. For should he give unto us out of and according to our merits, he would have to give us only hell-fire and eternal condemnation. Therefore what he gives us in our possessions and honor, is given out of pure mercy. He sees that we are captives of death; but he is merciful and gives us life. He sees that we are the children of hell; but he is merciful and gives us heaven. He sees that we are poor, naked and exposed, hungry and thirsty; but he is merciful, and clothes, feeds and gives us to drink, and satisfies us with all good things. Thus, whatever we have for the body or spirit, he gives us out of mercy, and pours his blessings over us and into us. Therefore Christ says here: Imitate your Father and be also merciful, as he is merciful.

11. Now this is not a common mercy, nor one that reason teaches. For that is selfish: it gives to the great and learned and those who merit it; loves those, who are beautiful; gives to those from whom it has some benefit or advantage. That is a political, beggarly, shaggy, piece-meal mercy. For if I give to him, who merited it, or if I regard beauty and friendship, then it is duty and debt and not mercy. This is also what the Lord meant, when he just before this Gospel in <4052>Luke 6:32-34 says: "And if ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for even sinners love those that love them. And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? for even sinners do the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? even sinners lend to sinners, to receive again as much." However, Christian mercy should not seek its own; but it should be thus: it must be round, and open its eyes and look at all alike, friend and foe, as our heavenly Father does.

12. And where this mercy is not, there is also no faith. For if your heart is in the state of faith that you know your God has revealed himself to you to be so good and merciful, without thy merit, and purely gratuitously, while

you were still his enemy and a child of eternal wrath; if you believe this, you cannot refrain from showing yourself so to your neighbor; and do all out of love to God and for the welfare of your neighbor. Therefore, see to it that you make no distinction between friend and foe, the worthy and the unworthy; for you see that all who were here mentioned, have merited from us something different than that we should love and do them good. And the Lord also teaches this, when in <4065>Luke 6:35 he says: “But love your enemies, and do good unto them, and lend, never despairing; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be sons of the Most High: for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil.” Thus we have considered the first part of this Gospel.

13. Further one may say here: Have you not now taught that our works avail nothing before God in paying him for anything: how is it then that here the very contrary stands written, as Christ says: “Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful. And judge not, and ye shall not be judged: and condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.” All these sayings sound as though we should appear before God with our works and merit by virtue of them God’s mercy and forgiveness; although you have nevertheless heard that faith does all.

14. Now note well, St. Paul and the holy Scriptures here and there teach this; for they emphasize that man must believe and appear before God with pure faith alone. Therefore the sayings, as they are here, are to be understood that works are only the test and confirmation of faith, so that if I believe, I must be merciful, not judge, not condemn, give and forgive my neighbor. <0122>Genesis 22:5f. is an example of this. What did Abraham, when he was called to offer his son? He was obedient to the commandment, and was about to sacrifice his son, and drew the sword to do it. What happened? The angel of Jehovah restrained him and said unto him: “Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.”

15. Thus here also; we must first receive before we give; before we can do acts of mercy, we must receive from God mercy. We do not lay the first stone; the sheep does not seek the shepherd, but the shepherd the sheep; therefore it is also with our works, that we obtain nothing by them from God, but that we acquire all that we do acquire without any merit on our part. Thus in the prophet <2301>Isaiah 65:1, God says: “I am inquired of by

them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not." And at the end of the same chapter he says: "And it shall come to pass that, before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." For before we seek him, he finds us; before we ask for him, he has us. The same Paul says to the <4522>Romans 3:22-26: "There is no distinction; for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season' that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus." And in the following chapter, <4504>Romans 4:4-5. he says:

"Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness." "For if it be by grace it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace," as Paul writes later in <4506>Romans 11:6.

16. In the second place the works are a sure sign and like a seal stamped on a letter, by which I am assured that my faith is right. The reason is: Do I feel in my heart, that my works flow forth out of love, then I am assured that my faith is genuine. If I forgive, then my forgiving assures me that my faith is genuine, and it seals and proves my faith, that God also has forgiven me and daily forgives me; but if I do not forgive, then may I at once conclude that I am lacking in faith. So it was also with Abraham, his works made known to him his faith. God well knew that Abraham believed; but he had to know and prove it.

17. Therefore the works are only continual spontaneous fruits and proofs of such faith. For of what use were it to me, if I had already strong faith and did not know it? As, if I had a chest full of gold and knew it not, it would be of no use to me; but when someone makes it known to me, he then does me as great a service as if he donated it to me. Just so, if I have faith, and know it not, it is of no use to me. Therefore faith must blossom forth and become known to me through the works following faith and these are then signs and seals that faith is present in my heart. St. Peter also teaches the same when in <6010>2 Peter 1:10-11 he conclusively says of the works of love and the virtues of faith: "Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things,

ye shall never stumble: for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” He does not say, do good works that you may be called; but that you may make your calling and election sure, to your own satisfaction.

18. Therefore the Scriptures guard you well from blundering into them and fortifying your works by such passages. For works are rejected in Scripture, that we should not think of becoming righteous through them; but they are honored and praised in Scripture in that they are needed by our neighbor and are signs and fruits of our faith.

19. See, I had to make this explanation in order that I might not strengthen the interpretations of the Papists, all of whom err in their understanding of this Gospel. Now, therefore God often places such passages against one another, as we and reason are apt to imagine, in order to exercise us in reading the Scriptures, and that we may not think we know the whole Scriptures, when we hardly know a passage. Some passages convey the spirit and teaching, how we are to appear in God’s presence, with nothing but our faith; as the passage: “Being justified freely (undeservedly, without merit, gratuitously, Ed.) by his grace.” Then later in order that the body outwardly might not lie around lazy and become sluggish, we have also passages, which direct and exercise the body; as those above. “Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven; give, and it shall be given unto you;” and the passages in <4154>Matthew 25:42f. , where our Lord Christ says, he will require works of us on the day of judgment, when he will say to the condemned: “I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not,” and so on. These passages the ignorant and fickle spirits wish to cram together and murder, and construe everything to refer to works; and that is wrong. But those who are spiritual refer them only to their body and stand before God also only in spirit: that is right and also necessary; for man is made up of two parts, spirit and flesh. Therefore some passages refer to naked faith in the spirit, others to naked works done to the body; for a passage of Scripture cannot refer at the same time to the spirit and also to the body.

20. Here we should also speak on the attitude we are to take to our neighbor with respect to our temporal possessions. With regard to his possessions one should act thus: he should part with some to others, should loan and give to his neighbor, where and when he will. And for

doing this we have rigid commandments and not only words of advice, as they explain them who teach, that whoever wishes to be perfect should do them. Consequently those wishing to live thus, have retired into monasteries and have desired to become perfect. Hence all monasteries are founded upon the filth of the devil. For there are no people more avaricious and less benevolent than just those in the monasteries. Now, if one wishes to be a Christian, he should loan to others, to the extent of his ability, freely without any writing. Again, if we see one has nothing with which to pay us back, we should freely donate it to him and cancel the debt, as Nehemiah did, as is recorded in the fifth chapter of II Esdras (Nehemiah 5). For God has given this to you, he can indeed give you more, if you believe differently. Further, if one takes anything from us, we are not to demand it to be returned; but our neighbor is to intercede for us and help to restrain injustice and to enter a complaint against the authorities, in order that we may not suffer too much.

21. Now observe the monks and priests have entirely and completely twisted these works, that they should be only advisable. And in this way they have drawn all other persons from them, who then, having done no Christian work during their whole lives, provide for the saying of masses or leave other legacies when they are about to die, by which all is fulfilled and accomplished. But you hear now: If we wish to be Christians, we must loan, give and part with our possessions, or we will be deficient in our faith.

22. Therefore thoroughly ponder and grasp this Gospel, in order that you may not deal with God in any other way than through naked faith and let good works gush from such faith that they may serve only your neighbor. This has been said of the first part of our Gospel text. Now. let us see what follows further, since the Lord himself explains what kind of mercy he means. He says:

> "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: and condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: give, and it shall be given unto you."

23. Here the Lord divides mercy into thee parts, that we may know what mercy is which we are to exercise toward our neighbor. First, we are not to judge or condemn; second, we are to forgive our neighbor, if he has offended us; third, you are to come to the help of the needy: this is what the word "mercy" means, when used in the Scriptures.

24. And all this must flow out of an upright faith so that it be done without hypocrisy and without guile, and that we may have no respect of persons. For if you would wish them well, who wish you well; or benefit those, who benefit you; or harm those, who harm you, that would be a great error. But you should do to him as Christ here just preceding our Gospel text says: You should imitate your heavenly Father and love your enemies, do good to those who do harm to you, forgive him who offends, you, loan to him who is in need, and so on, as you have heard.

25. Now, to speak of the first part, how we should not judge nor condemn, we remark that God has appointed the sword of the state to punish public crime, only that care must be taken that it be not used contrary to God's precept and command, for example, that we do not murder one when he is innocent. For when the judge does injustice, he is at the same time as much a murderer as others. Of this judgment the Lord here does not speak; he has in mind Luke 12:14, where he said to him who wished he should say to his brother that he should divide the inheritance with him: "Who made me a judge or a divider over you." For Christ's kingdom is not concerned about outward matters.

26. But the Lord speaks here of another judgment, namely, that one esteems another good or bad because of that which one does not see on the outside, which judgment belongs to God alone. For it can happen that you see your neighbor sin to-day whom God receives to-morrow. You can indeed also be pious in your own eyes and not think of your own sins. Such judging Christ has forbidden, for no love or unity can be where people thus judge and condemn. To judge or condemn one another is nothing but to have a beam in your own eye; as all hypocrites have in their eyes. For those who regard themselves righteous, take offense at their brethren; whatever they do displeases them, and they will not behold their own sins.

But it so happens that you will not discover the beam in your own eye, if you behold continually the sins of others, and thus fall under the judgment of God. From this it follows then, that you, who judge another, art a greater sinner before God, then the lowest villain or the worst harlot, for God alone knows who shall be saved or condemned; all sin is nothing compared to your judging.

27. The same hypocrites are adepts in rejoicing over and taking pleasure in having an opportunity to gossip about the fall and crime of a neighbor, and to stir up his filth. And what other persons do, they always construe in the

worst light, and no one can do anything to please them; and although they themselves cannot at once do this, they nevertheless gladly hear others speak of it. If you were a godly person you should cover up and help to quiet such things, as much as it may be possible for you. And it generally happens that the worst harlots, even according to the flesh, also judge and pass sentence; yea, they judge not only human beings, but also God himself.

28. Therefore, is thy brother a sinner, then cover his sin and pray for him. Dost thou publish his sins, then truly thou art not a child of your merciful Father; for otherwise thou wouldst be also as he, merciful. It is certainly true that we cannot show as great mercy to our neighbor, as God has to us; but it is the true work of the devil that we do the very opposite of mercy, which is a sure sign that there is not a grain of mercy in us. All this is the meaning of the text of this Gospel, when it says:

> "Can the blind guide the blind? shall they not both fall into a pit? The disciple is not above his teacher: but every one when he is perfected shall be as his teacher. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me cast out the mote that is in thy eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye."

29. As if the Lord would say: You think thy Brother is blind and will punish him, that is, you wish to guide others and you are blind yourself. You hold him as a sinner and think you are righteous. What difference is that than that your heart is so disposed as to think you are better than he? This means nothing more nor less than that you wish to guide others, and?t you are blind yourself; and whoever follows you will fall into the ditch with you. Concerning characters who imagine they are better than others and would that the people followed them more than the Word of God, Paul says to the Romans 2:17:23: "But if thou bearest the name of a Jew, and restest upon the law, and gloriest in God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them that are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth; thou therefore that teachest

another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou rob temples? thou who gloriest in the law, through thy transgression of the law dishonorest thou God?" Therefore he says also at the beginning of the same chapter to the hypocrites: "Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost practice the same things. And we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that practice such things. And reckonest thou this, O man, who judgest them that practice such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?"

30. I call that telling the truth to the hypocrites who understand to show others the way, which they themselves do not know, and guide others along with themselves into the ditch. Therefore the Lord says: "The disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is perfected shall be as his teacher." It is a common proverb to say: I cannot learn more from my teacher, than he knows. Why did the Lord utter this saying? Because of two kinds of teachers: the first is blind; if I follow him, then I also will be blind; if he falls into the ditch, so will I. The other teacher is the merciful Father, from whom we should learn mercy; follow we him, then we also will be merciful, even as he is merciful; and if we were merciful all the time, then we would be perfect, even as he is perfect; but that does not fully take place while we are here in this life.

31. The second part of mercy is that we are to forgive those who offend us. A Christian can never be so greatly offended, that he should not forgive, not only seven times, but seventy times seven, as the Lord spake to Peter in <40 18 22>Matthew 18:22. Therefore God also forgives a Christian his sins or infirmities, so that he may forgive others their infirmities. This Christ pictured just before in a beautiful parable, which he closed with the words: "So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not everyone his brother from your hearts."

32. And we pray for this also daily in the Lord's Prayer, when we pray the petition and say: Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. Is not that something great, when I a poor sinner forgive my neighbor his sins or failings, that God will forgive me also my sins and infirmities? Had one

murdered my father, what would that be compared to my sin, with which I have offended and provoke God to anger.

33. The third element that belongs to mercy is, that we should give to the poor and needy and come to their help. Concerning this John in his first Epistle, <61317>1 John 3:17, says: “But whoso hath the world’s goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, doth the love of God abide in him?” For where the love of God is, it must manifest itself. To this the saying of Christ in <40507>Matthew 5:7 refers: “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.” Therefore the Lord adds here in our Gospel a promise, and says: “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom.” And he further says: “For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.”

34. This is sufficient for the present on the three parts of the mercy we are to show to our neighbor. To this end should the saying of Christ in <40712>Matthew 7:12 especially stir us. After he spoke so much about Christian love and how we should show our brother such love, he concludes and says: “All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets.” Now everyone is always so disposed, if he be sick, that he wishes the whole world would come to his help. Am I a poor sinner, steeped in shame, have I a heavy afflicted conscience: then I ought to wish for the whole world to comfort and help me, and cover my sins and my shame. Just such should my attitude be to my neighbor, not to judge and condemn, forgive his failings, help him, counsel, loan and give to him as I would that others should do to me, if I were overwhelmed with anxiety and want, with misery and poverty.

35. And just in this way does the world take knowledge of Christians, how they live among themselves and show one another such acts of mercy. This the Lord Christ also taught his disciples in the Lord’s Supper when in <431334>John 13:34-35 he said: “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” Such is the explanation of this Gospel; let us pray to God for his grace.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

SECOND SERMON. [4066]LUKE 6:36-42.

This sermon appeared in 1535 under the title: “A Beautiful Christian consolation in all kinds of suffering and trial from the 8th chapter of Romans, with the explanation of the Gospel for the Fourth Sunday after Trinity. Preached by Dr. Martin Luther.”

THE RIGHT CONDUCT TO ONE’S ENEMIES.

1. Beloved Friends! Upon this Gospel a great deal might be said, but at present we will not consider it all, lest we overload ourselves and retain nothing. You have heard in the text how our dear Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, holds up to us the works of mercy, how we should be merciful; not to judge nor to condemn but gladly forgive everyone and in like manner willingly give and help all, as there is need. If we do this, he says, there shall be given to us again good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over. But if we will not do this, with the same measure we mete to others it shall be measured to us again. By this he would earnestly forbid his Christians to condemn anyone, to judge or avenge themselves, or to take from anyone, but rather to give and forgive.

For a better understanding of this Gospel, we must in the first place reply to our adversaries, who hold up this text against us as a strong, firm ground of their doctrine, that a man can by works obtain forgiveness of sins and eternal life, and boast of it as though they already had surely gained the victory. They say: Here indeed it stands clearly written: “Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven; give, and it shall be given to you again.” What can a man bring up against such clear passages? Therefore, it certainly follows from this, that a man can obtain forgiveness of sins by good works. Thus, by these and similar passages concerning works, they wish to prove that we are justified and saved by our own merit; and denounce and condemn us as heretics, because we teach that we are saved only through faith in Jesus Christ, who has been crucified and died for us,

who gave his body and shed his blood for us for the forgiveness of sins. Thus they make Christ entirely unprofitable for us, and call the doctrine of faith simply an error and falsehood. Here we see how the blind lead the blind.

2. Well, we allow them to proceed, because they want to be blind and hardened. But if they were in earnest to know the truth, they could plainly see from this Gospel to what such passages, to which they so firmly hold, properly refer, and how they should be interpreted. For this Gospel evidently and plainly says, that Christ does not speak to those who shall first obtain grace, but to his disciples, who already are children of grace and justified, and are also sent out by him, that they should preach to others such grace and salvation; from which it clearly follows that they already have forgiveness of sins, and are pious and justified, and are not first to obtain salvation through works. I say, he speaks to those, and instructs them how they shall conduct themselves toward their enemies, namely, when they are persecuted by them, that they should not persecute them in return, but should patiently suffer all these things, and do them good for evil.

3. Hence it is not meant, that by such works as are here enumerated they should first obtain forgiveness of sins and the righteousness that avails before God; but Christ speaks plainly and simply to his disciples whom he had chosen and called Apostles, as St. Luke shows preceding this Gospel. Christ teaches them how they shall conduct themselves when they preach, as though he would say: You dear disciples, I send you as sheep among wolves, and commend this office unto you to preach, and others shall hear your preaching, accept and believe it. And you will be so received that the world will be offended at you and regard you as enemies, and you will find just as much friendship and love in it, as sheep among wolves. For it will become wholly mad and foolish at your preaching, and will by no means tolerate it.

Therefore see to it that you lead a better life and conversation than your enemies, who will practice upon you all kinds of unmerciful deeds by judging and condemning you. Moreover they will not only not forgive you any sin, but will proclaim your best works and deeds of mercy as the greatest sins. Again, they will not only not give you anything, but they will also hunt down that which is your own, and will take and keep it by violence. Thus they will treat you. But beware, that you be not like them;

on the other hand where they judge, judge not; where they condemn, bless; where they take revenge, forgive; when they take, give. For immediately before, the Lord teaches the very same when he says: Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you.

4. In this manner St. Paul also admonishes the Christians at Rome (⁴⁵Romans 12:18-19): “If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men. Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God.” Christ here teaches the very same when he says: Be merciful, judge not, condemn not, avenge not yourselves, give unto and assist everyone, in order that you may not become equally as bad as your enemies; but rather that they may be prevailed upon by your kind and friendly conversation, to give you a good testimony, and finally be compelled to say conscientiously: Behold, we judge and condemn these people, and carry out all our maliciousness against them; against this they neither defend or avenge themselves, but suffer it all patiently, and besides, they overcome evil with good, Surely, they cannot be bad people, because they have so much patience, and reward evil with good; I myself, will also hold to them, because they do no one any harm, although they have good reasons for so doing.

5. From this one can easily see that Christ does not here teach us to become pious and just through our works, but admonishes those who were already pious and just, that they be merciful like their Father in heaven, so that the heathen may thereby become better, and that thus unbelievers may be kindly enticed to become converted and edified, not only by preaching, but also by the merciful and blameless lives and good conduct of the good and just.

6. In the same sense St. Paul also teaches in ⁴⁶1 Corinthians 7:13: And the woman that hath an unbelieving husband, and he is content to dwell with her, let her not leave her husband, as long as he will permit her to remain a Christian. Because it can so happen that the man may be influenced by the virtue of his Christian wife to become converted and say: I see by my wife, that Christians are good people; therefore I also want to be a Christian. Thus we also read of St. Monica, the mother of St. Augustine, who had a strange and wonderful husband, who besides was also a heathen. But what did she do? She so conducted herself toward him that he did her no wrong. Other Christian wives were very much

astonished at this, and went to her and complained about their husbands, that they could not do anything to please them, although they were Christians, and yet they were scolded and beaten by them; therefore they questioned her how she treated her husband, who, as every one knew, was not only a wonderful man, but a heathen also, and yet he never beat her. Such favor they could not expect from their husbands, although they were not heathen, but Christians.

7. Kindhearted Monica answered them and said: I fear you give your husbands cause for doing this. If you were subject to them and would not clamor back, or especially when they begin to be strangely cruel, if you would not answer back, but be patient, submit and obey them, and with friendly words appease them, you would, of course, not be beaten. For thus I am accustomed to treat my husband; when my lord scolds, I pray; is he angry, I avoid him, or return kind words; in this way I have not only put down his anger, but I have also brought him so far, that he is converted and has become a Christian. Behold, the beautiful fruit that followed this conduct, because kind Monica was merciful toward her husband, and did not condemn and judge him. Thus it can often take place, as St. Paul says, that an unbelieving husband or wife, may become converted through the one who believes.

8. Thus, says Christ here, should you Christians also do, because you are children of grace and peace, not of anger and discord, and are also called to inherit the blessing. Therefore you should also bring the blessing among the people, first by your preaching and public confession, and after that also by your good outward conduct, so that when the unbelievers judge and condemn you, treat you unmercifully and rob you, you will be merciful to them, and not avenge yourselves, but give and forgive, and besides help, love and bless them, and speak the best things of them before God and the world; that they may also observe by your good conduct that you are pious and blameless people, who do not only suffer evil, but also return good for evil. By this you will obtain a good name among the heathen, and be estimable and honorable in my sight, who art your Lord and God.

9. Thus you see that this text does not at all permit us to conclude from it that forgiveness of sins is obtained by works; for Christ here speaks to those who are already children of grace, and does not instruct them how to obtain by works, as the Papists dream, the forgiveness of sins, which they already had by grace; however, he here teaches them how they are to

conduct themselves, when they go forth and preach, toward the people who persecute, judge, condemn them, and afflict them with all kinds of torment and misfortune; that they immediately do the contrary, not judge, nor condemn, but forgive and give; and then they shall also be neither judged nor condemned before God or the world. And even though the world judge them, still God will not condemn them, as it is said in <19B73>Psalm 37:13-40. So it shall also be forgiven and given them again.

10. Thus Christ admonishes his disciples with these words, that they diligently perform the duties of their office and preach with courage, let it offend whom it may, and that nothing whatever may lead them astray, even though all the world revile and curse; let them only freely continue and they shall be richly rewarded; for it is already determined in heaven that there shall be given unto them full measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over.

11. From all this it is certainly clear, that Christ does not here speak of that righteousness, of how a man becomes just before God, which takes place alone through faith in Jesus Christ, but teaches his disciples how to lead a good life here on earth among unbelievers, by which they may be of great benefit to those who judge and condemn them. When they do such things, it shall be rewarded unto them again both here and hereafter; not that they thereby merit the forgiveness of sins; for no work, be it ever so good, is able to accomplish this; but when they on this account suffer or lose anything, it shall be returned to them even here in this life an hundred fold, as is written in <41030>Mark 10:30, and in the life to come they will be more gloriously arrayed and adorned than other saints. Why? Because they have suffered and done more for Christ's sake than others. For Daniel the prophet says, <27203>Daniel 12:3, that the teachers shall shine as the brightness of the firmament after the resurrection of the dead, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever. And St. Paul in <46541>1 Corinthians 15:41 says: "For one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead."

12. The Lord further says: When you fail to do thus, but return evil for evil, it shall be measured to you again, "for with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again." For by thus judging and condemning those who judge and condemn you, you sufficiently show that you are not my true disciples, and have not yet the forgiveness of sins, or else you would do what I have commanded you. From which it follows further that

your faith is not right. So with you it will be changed, and you will hear from me that you have no faith and are false Christians.

13. This is sufficiently proved, because you still judge one another, and one does not assist the other. This my Christians will not do. Therefore your sins will remain upon you, and will only become greater, as is shown in the parable of the wicked servant who owed his Lord ten thousand talents and could not pay it; the Lord forgave him the debt out of pure grace. But as he would not forgive his fellow servant the very little debt, he again fell into his own former debt, which was forgiven him and brought down upon himself the great wrath of his Lord, who delivered him over to the tormentors. 40183Matthew 18:34.

14. Thus our dear Lord would here kindly and lovingly invite us to do good works and lead a Christian life also among our enemies. But when we fail to do this he threatens us, that he would not regard us as Christians. For such works are as a sign or confession that we are true Christians. In addition to this, other people will be made better by such works, and so will we ourselves who do them, as St. Peter says, we make our calling and election sure thereby, and become richer in faith.

15. To this friendly admonition of Christ our Lord we Christians and especially we ministers should diligently give due heed, for we also have at the present day adversaries of our faith and doctrine, who are great and powerful, ‘kings, princes, lords, Pope and bishops. To these our enemies according to this doctrine of Christ we show all mercy, and are not willing that a hair of their heads should be injured, or that they should be robbed of a cent. But this we wish them from our heart, that they may learn to know their errors and sins, and commit themselves to the grace of God and believe the Gospel. On this account they judge, condemn and persecute us, rob us of honor, goods, body and life, as though we were the worst rogues that tread the earth. Such things we do not to them in return, God be praised! but show them all love and kindness, and would willingly help them, if they would only permit it.

16. Yes, they say, you revile us nevertheless, both in writing and preaching, and condemn us as heretics, and will not permit us to be the Christian Church. Is such reproof and condemnation mercy? We answer: This is quite a different matter. Christ in this Gospel speaks of those who shall suffer injustice. And it would not be right to apply this to those who by virtue of their office are required to reprove what is wrong. For those who

have the office to judge and condemn, do no wrong thereby, in so doing. For as little as it agrees or is valid for a child to say to its father when he would punish it; father, be merciful, and God will then also be merciful to thee; so little is it valid against those who have the office of reproof. For it would be very inappropriate for a thief or evil doer to say to the officer of the law: Dear sir, forgive and do not judge me, and then our Lord God will again forgive thee. No, my dear fellow, the officer of the law by virtue of his office will thus answer and say: It is not necessary that I should forgive you. I do what is right, and doing right needs no forgiveness, but is praiseworthy. Thus also when father and mother punish their children, they do right, for this is called true punishment, when the office requires it. But beware, that you do not revenge yourself against him who must punish you, even if at times he treats you unjustly.

17. Wherefore it is not appropriate to twist this text, as though the Lord speaks of those who have the authority to punish the wrong, as ministers and all persons in authority, fathers, mothers, princes, lords, and finally also the executioner, who should not say to the evil doer, to whom he must administer justice, as however they are accustomed to do: “Dear Sir, forgive me, what I do to you today,” for why should he say this? As he does right, he needs no forgiveness, which pertains alone to sin and wrong; for. his office is to punish wrong. Just as it would be wrong if a father would say to his son when he would punish him: Dear son, forgive me, that I punish you. No, he does right, therefore the son should bear it, for thus God will have it.

18. Thus St. Paul says, 40532 Corinthians 5:13: “For whether we are beside ourselves, it is unto God; or whether we are of sober mind, it is unto you.” In his first Epistle, Paul severely rebuked the Corinthians, which some thought was too severe; but he does not excuse himself in the least nor asks for grace, he simply says: If we rebuke too severely, it is unto God and we serve him; but if we are sober and deal gently, we do so for your good. He will not admit that he has done any sin at all, because he so severely rebukes them, but says he serves God by it, and if he has been too indulgent, he did it for their benefit. This is quite a poor answer to such a complaint as: Dear Paul, why do you strike us so hard? But as he fills the office of an Apostle, he gives no other answer but this: I rebuke and punish sin as I wish, I do right and serve God thereby; not on account of my person, but because God has so commanded and ordered it.

19. Thus also a judge can say, when by virtue of his office he sentences the evil doer unto death, that he serves God thereby. So also father and mother, when they punish their child as it has deserved, thus serve God; but if they, punish it somewhat milder than it deserves, it is for the good of the child.

20. We must make a distinction however, for it is vastly different when a person punishes who has the office to punish, and when one punishes who has not this office. An office, call it what you may, is ordained to punish sin; not to tolerate wrong, but protect the right. Therefore, because I and other ministers have this office, we do right, a work of mercy for the people, when we rebuke them, let whoever will do us good or evil for it.

21. Just as it is a great mercy not to allow young people to have their will and way, whether it be accomplished by threats or by the rod; it will still cost trouble and labor enough to oppose and prevent evil, even though we punish severely. If punishment were altogether omitted and mercy took the place of office, the country would be full of rogues, and the world become a mere den of murderers. Then one would say to another: If you steal from me, I will rob you; if you go with my wife, I will go with yours. No, this would never do; therefore the executioner is a very beneficial and even a merciful man, for he prevents the rogue from repeating his crime, and restrains others from committing crimes. He executes the one and thus threatens others that would do the like, that they may fear the sword and keep the peace. This is a magnificent grace and pure mercy.

22. Again, it is a great sin against mercy, yes a horrible murder, when a father allows his child to go unpunished; for this is just the same as though he killed it with his own hands; hence Solomon says, Proverbs 23:13, 14: “Withhold not correction from the child; for if thou beat him with the rod, he will not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.” That is, he will not die of your beating, but with the rod you cause him to live, and deliver his soul from death; for if you do not punish him, the executioner will, even unto death, by taking away his life. As Solomon would say: If you do not beat your son with the rod of life, in order that he may live, then you are a murderer; because you assist your child to become a rogue, so that the executioner must strike him with the rod of death. Therefore take in your hand the rod of life, and freely punish when necessary, that he may escape the rod of death. Then you will

perform a noble work of mercy to him, whereas if you let him have his own will, you become his murderer.

23. Therefore it is senseless for the Papists to cry: We of course teach others not to judge, nor condemn, but we ourselves do the contrary, punish, judge and condemn everyone. For as I said, what we do in this, we do by virtue of our office. Therefore our judging and punishing is of such a nature, that it only makes one better and harms no one. And we are obliged to do it on account of the command of Christ our Lord, Luke 24:47, that repentance and forgiveness of sins be preached in his name among all nations on earth; and John 16:8: “The Holy Spirit will reprove the world of sin.”

24. According to this command all the Apostles have first judged and reproved the world, and proclaimed God’s wrath against it; afterwards they preached forgiveness of sins in Christ’s name, as St. Paul does, Romans 1:3, and St. Peter, Acts 2:3-10, and Christ himself when he says, John 9:39: “For judgment came I into this world.” Those who have accepted this preaching and permit themselves to be judged and reproved by it, have received the comfort of the Gospel, that without merit, by God’s grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus they are justified and saved, Romans 3:24.

This judgment and reproof of Christ and the Apostles is not harmful, but beneficial, comfortable and wholesome. Moreover, those who have not allowed themselves to be reproved by these have remained in their sins, and have died and perished forever; and also, in time, have their cities, lands and kingdoms in which they have lived, been most woefully devastated and destroyed.

25. As therefore the Apostles have preached according to the command of Christ, so too must we do, and say that all men are conceived and born in sin and are by nature children of wrath, and on this account condemned, and can neither by their own or any other creature’s help, advice, work or merit, receive forgiveness of sins and be saved. This is to reprove, judge and condemn everybody, and yet we do this, not out of our own wantonness, or that we take pleasure in crying down men as sinners and godless; but out of Christ’s order and command. With this however we do not cease, but we again encourage and comfort those whom we have rebuked, and say that Jesus Christ has come into the world to save sinners,

so that all who believe in him, should not perish, but receive everlasting life.

26. Therefore God-fearing people accuse us of no fault in this; for they observe that we do not preach human nonsense like monks in their hoods, but proclaim the Gospel of Christ; they are glad therefore, and heartily thank God that they have lived to see the time when they can know the precious truth, and thereby obtain comfort for their consciences, and accept this our reproof and judgment as a great mercy. Again, the great and godless crowd scold and condemn us on account of this our reproof, as heretics and traitors, who disturb both the old faith and worship and also the worldly government and peace. We must bear this; yet our conscience gives us the testimony that they wrongfully accuse us, and besides we are comforted to know that we are not the first ones who have been thus slandered. St. Paul also had to hear from Jews and Gentiles, that he was a blasphemer and traitor. Yea, Christ himself was accused before Pilate for misleading the people and making them disobedient to the emperor, for which also he was crucified, With them we are glad to be cried down as heretics and traitors, until the time when our innocence shall come to light.

27. If now the wretched, hardened Papists were not such bitter enemies of the truth, and of us on account of the truth, they could observe by our life that we hold firmly to this admonition of Christ, be merciful; for God be praised, we have not thus far avenged ourselves against any man who has done us injury, we have not driven anyone from house and home, wife and child, we have cast no one into prison on account of his faith, much less have we beheaded, burnt at the stake or hung anyone for their faith, as the Papists have done, the tender saints, who have for the last few years shed much innocent blood, and still do not cease. But we have complied with this doctrine and admonition of Christ, and have honored their order and government and confirmed it with our doctrine as far as they are right, we have prayed and pleaded for them, privately and publicly, and have faithfully also admonished them in writings by virtue of our office which God has committed to our charge.

And for this our mercy we have received from them the reward, that they have put us under the ban, cursed and persecuted us, and driven many of our brethren from their possessions and murdered them. What more shall we do? Yet we must bear the name of being impatient, angry, spiteful, and revengeful people, who judge and condemn all the world. Well, we must

bear this disgrace before the world, until our dear Lord Jesus Christ, the just Judge, shall examine us and decide the matter; in the meantime we permit them evermore to lie, slander and persecute us; but they shall learn by experience when God's time comes, whom they have slandered and persecuted in us.

28. This much is said of the chief meaning of this Gospel, how we are to be merciful also toward our enemies. Now we should also apply it to our own lives, we who want to be Christians and brethren should practice this among ourselves; for it is very necessary also that this admonition be preached to us. Although we are all called Evangelical, I fear that the most of us are heathen under the Christian name. Well, what shall we do about it? We must allow the name to all, although few there be who bear it in truth. For St. Paul in <5302>2 Thessalonians 3:2 says: "For all have not faith"; and Christ himself complains, <4022>Matthew 22:14, that many are called but few are chosen. Now, those who are true Christians should with all diligence take this admonition of Christ to heart, that they may not only be friendly toward enemies, but also much more toward those called Christians.

29. Therefore let everyone who goes to the sacrament and pretends to be a Christian take heed to himself that he deceive not himself. For one can now well see what a scraping, grabbing and scratching there is even among those who want to be Christians, from the lowest to the highest stage of society. It is a sin and a shame to hear it. Nearly everyone falls into this shameful greed, and such a state may well be called a swine's life, for as the swine in the trough, whichever one is the strongest pushes the rest away, as though she wanted to devour all herself, just so it goes in the world today, and everyone goes securely forth, gives nothing whatever and takes all he can get, whether he gets it rightfully or wrongfully, so that the word give, which stands here in the Gospel, has almost disappeared, and instead robbery and theft in homes and in the market have everywhere come to take its place. What unfaithfulness prevails even among day laborers and house servants, how shamefully they earn their bread with malicious unfaithfulness, cheating and overcharging. They do not look upon it as stealing, and yet it is just as much stealing when they labor unfaithfully, as when they steal it out of our purse. This is the way servants and laborers do, and it matters not by what they are called.

30. But how will such people stand in that day when Christ shall ask them, whether they have done according to his admonition? For if Christians are to be merciful to their enemies as Christ here teaches, much more will it become them to show all love and friendship toward their brethren and Christian people; and as they are not to curse their enemies, much less should they curse their friends. Again, if they are not to avenge themselves on unbelievers, but give to them and do them good, much more should they show this kindness to the household of faith. Yes, turn the thing around to rob, to covet, and to take advantage of another wherever one can; this goes on yet in the world with violence. But the holy Gospel says: Give, and it shall be given unto you; if we do not hold ourselves to this rule, we shall hear the opposite: Steal and rob, and you shall be robbed and stolen from again.

31. But our Lord God is so full of resources that he can send misfortune upon a city or a country so that even after they have gathered and hoarded for a long time, some tramp brother or fellow pilgrim comes along, to whom one must give or he will take it himself by force. For it must surely come to this that if we willfully forget that word “give,” our Lord God will make out of it “take.” After such misfortune we strive with all diligence, for wherever the Lord says “give” there we only wish to make out of it “take.” Well then take, steal and rob as long as you will, what will it avail you; things will take a turn some day so that it will be taken from you again.

32. All history teaches us, that when a kingdom, a principality, or a city, has been exalted to the highest pitch and becomes rich, then comes a war, or some other misfortune, so that it again becomes poor. Thus it happens also to individual families and persons; when they rise suddenly and become powerful, they also immediately fall again. I have already observed several who sat amid great possessions, and yet in a short time were thoroughly ruined. Why is this? Because they did not want to give as Christ here admonishes, but much rather took from others, for this reason a change took place with them, that it was again taken from them; as also teaches experience, and the common proverb runs: Goods unjustly won, will not last to the third son, that he may enjoy it. Such things we see daily in all ranks of life; and if it does endure for a time and descends from father to son, yet it sinks with the third heir, for it is a cursed wealth, which has either been obtained by theft or greed.

33. By such daily experience the children of the world ought to become wise and think: Why scratch and scrape so long, you cannot rightfully possess goods obtained by stinginess after all, nor will it prosper in your hands, as you have time and again experienced from one or another.

34. But we Christians should be more influenced by what the Holy Scriptures teach about it. Thus David says, <19P3716>Psalm 37:16-18: “Better is a little that the righteous hath, than the abundance of many wicked,” and the reason immediately follows: “For the arm of the wicked shall be broken, and the Lord upholdeth the righteous. The Lord knoweth the days of the perfect; and their inheritance shall be forever.” As though he would say: Although a good man may have but little, if he only has it with God and honor, it will be dearer to him than all the treasures of the ungodly. For our Lord God will shower his blessings upon that little, so that it will last to children’s children to the thousandth generation. This is also apparent; for at the present time we find many old and honorable families in the cities, whose possessions have reached to several hundred generations, whereas with others it has disappeared with the third.

We should learn from this and similar passages, and hold to it because it is the truth, that it is better to have thirty dollars with God and honor, than three thousand won without God and with dishonor. For God blesses the little which the righteous have (says <19P3716>Psalm 37:16), so that he may not only possess it with a good conscience, but will also be to his benefit and he will use it so that God may be pleased with it. But the wealth that has been unjustly obtained, may be enjoyed for a time; yet because God’s blessing does not rest upon it, it wears away and loses itself, so that we cannot tell what has become of it; for it has been won by greed and wrong, and as they did not regard it as stealing for one to scrape all together and give nothing away, the rust is entered into it and eats it up, so that it cannot be seen that there ever was a penny there. As also the heathen have learned from experience and said: “By evil acquired, by evil it goes,” “As it is won, so it is gone.”

35. But why say more? One will not grow wise except by his own losses; we let our Lord God promise and threat in vain, but who asks about it? Though we preach ever so much, <20P1104>Proverbs 11:4: “Riches profit not in the day of wrath; but righteousness delivereth from death,” and <20P0528>Proverbs 5:28: “He that trusteth in his riches shall fall; but the righteous shall flourish as the green leaf;” everyone thinks the while: “Dear Sir, say

what you will, if I had money and goods, I would be free from all distress;” they simply make our Lord God a liar. But they will experience sooner than they wish, that they are deceived.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us fear and trust in God, and hereafter be merciful and kind, not only toward enemies as this Gospel teaches, but still more toward our friends and brethren; especially because we hear that our Lord is such an enemy to shameful covetousness, that he will blow upon such ill-gotten gain, so that it will vanish and fly away as the dust before the wind. The prophet <3016>Haggai 1:6, says of the miser, that he gathers into a bag with holes; as though he would say: Well, they may gather, but it will do them no good, because they want to get rich by greed even to the injury of others. And Solomon says: The godless man, when he has for a long time gathered wealth in heaps, has such a curse in his house, that he not only does not become better by his wealth, but it also disappears under his hands, as though the rust had devoured it.

36. Now dear friends, do not despise such a warning, but take it to yourselves, and if you have already been ensnared by this covetousness, turn again and reform. Formerly when one served the devil in popedom, everyone was merciful and kind, then they gave with both hands joyfully and with great devotion, to support the false worship of God. Now, when one should justly be kind and give, and show his thankfulness to God for the holy Gospel, everyone is about to perish with hunger, no one will give anything, but will only receive. Formerly every city according to its size, liberally supported several cloisters, not to mention mass-priests and rich monasteries. Now, when only two or three persons, who preach God’s Word, administer the sacraments, visit and comfort the sick in an honest and Christian manner and instruct the youth, are to be supported in one city, and that too not from their own but from property that came to us from the papacy, it is hard for everybody to give.

37. But thus it must be, that Jesus with Mary and Joseph should have no room in the inn at Bethlehem, but after all he finds a crib, and Mary and Joseph a stall, in which they miserably help themselves as best they may. And as they are not at home in Nazareth but in a strange place at an inconvenient time, in the midst of winter, and altogether forgotten in the stall by the people of Bethlehem, yet after all they do not perish with hunger. But before they should suffer hunger among their blood relations who care nothing for them, even the heathen must come from rich Arabia

and present the little child Jesus gold, frankincense and myrrh. Christians understand well enough what is meant.

38. Therefore let everyone be diligent to comply with this admonition, that he willingly give, if he desires that it shall be given unto him again. If he will not do this, Christ will most certainly keep his Word, that it shall not be given unto him again. And though he already has something, there shall not be given him grace enough to enjoy it, as has already been shown from Scripture passages, Now God does not only show us by his Word that our covetousness is displeasing to him, and that usurers shall not enjoy their goods, but proves it also by daily examples. I will relate one as a warning which has recently occurred, although some may be offended at it: It is not far from here to Wittenberg, as has been reported to me and have also myself made proper inquiries, there was a farmer, who all his life cheated and took advantage of the people in the market, as at present nearly all are accustomed to do, he went into his barn to look after his grain; then the devil set such a ghost before his eyes, that he found his barn empty, and could see no corn there. What happened? The miserable, stingy man becomes frightened, and thinks the corn was secretly stolen from his barn. He goes down to his wife and servants with great cries and lamentations and says all his grain has been stolen out of his barn. As the wife and servants go in to look after it, in the meantime the wretched man hangs himself for grief, and dies in the rope before they return again to him. And yet it was but the deception of the devil. For all the corn was still lying untouched on the floor. The devil by the decree of God had thus infatuated him, that he could not see even a single grain.

39. This I say, has taken place before our very doors, to frighten and warn us. What benefit did the poor man reap from it? What help are now his goods to him, which he had scraped together so long with care and labor? The devil wanted to kill him, therefore he so blindfolded him that he could not see his own corn, and thus he gave him a cause, to hang himself for grief. This is I think a curse, which came upon ill-gotten goods, that he should not only not enjoy it, but even not behold it, and thereby lose both body and soul. More similar histories have appeared, as you at other times have heard from me; and it is good not to forget them, there may yet be some who will be reformed by them. The wretched man who so miserably hung himself will find his sentence. But we tell it you as a warning. If you will not receive it, but despise it, you do not despise me who told it you, but the Lord Christ, who tells it to you through me. But if you receive it

and do better, I will give you no reward, for I cannot reward the works of a Christian. But he who here says: Give and it shall be given to you, will richly reward it. Whoever will, let him accept, and whoever will not, can let it alone. This text will not become false on that account. For although not all are punished like this man, yet everyone who despises this admonition of Christ, will find his condemnation on the last day. And it is indeed to be wondered at, that we willingly and with great care, weariness and labor, for the stingy man's stinginess becomes very hard, <5060>1 Timothy 6:10, should bring into our own house first our own injury and curse, whereas with lighter labor and a more joyful courage, if we according to the doctrine of Christ would give and help our neighbor, could well be rich. For he who said, Give, and it will be given you, will certainly keep his Word, and give again to those who obey his admonition, and that abundantly; for he says: A full, pressed down, shaken together, and overrunning measure shall be given to you again.

40. Were it not better, you had but little with God and honor, and give and help the needy according to your ability, and have thereby a good conscience and the glorious comfort that God will bless and increase your humble store, than that you should, with care and restlessness and with an evil conscience, have great possessions, which you not only cannot enjoy, but cannot even be master of, for a miser is mammon's servant and a captive. And yet, you do not only know from God's Word, although you will not believe it, but also from daily experience, that it will do your children or heirs no good, but by the very consumption of it they shall become poor.

41. What have you of it at last, O wretched man, when you have so long scraped and scratched together, except that you have made your life very toilsome in sins, and the devil, when your last hour comes, will drag you into the abyss of hell, and so you will not only shamefully lose your money and goods, which in this life you never could enjoy, but besides you also wretchedly lose both body and soul, and upon all this with your condemned treasures you bring down God's displeasure and curse upon your children and heirs, who have become no better than yourself, but fall into poverty and into all distress and misfortune. Very well, he that will hear, let him hear. For everyone must bear his own burden, as St. Paul says, <4805>Galatians 6:5: I believe it also. Therefore you who will not hear, answer for yourselves. This is enough of this Gospel for a small admonition. God grant, that in some of you it may bring forth fruit! Amen.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

This sermon appeared in pamphlet or tract form in four different editions in 1522 and 1523, also in the two collections of 14 and 27 sermons of 1523 and was one of the “Three Beautiful Sermons Preached by Dr. Martin Luther at Wittenberg,” 1523. Two of the pamphlet editions bear the title: “A Sermon on St. Peter and St. Paul concerning Trusting in God, etc.”

> *Text. <4201>Luke 5:1-11. Now it came to pass, while the multitude pressed upon him and heard the word of God, that he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret; and he saw two boats standing by the lake: but the fishermen had gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the boats, which was Simon’s, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the multitudes out of the boat. And when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answered and said, Master, we toiled all night, and took nothing: but at thy word I will let down the nets. And when they had dante this, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes; and their nets were breaking; and they beckoned unto their partners in the other boat, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But Simon Peter, when he saw it, fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, 0 Lord. For he was amazed, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken; and so were also James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they bad brought their boats to land, they left all, and followed hint.*

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SUMMARY OF THIS GOSPEL,:

1. Christ fishes with the Word, and he makes his disciples such fishermen.

2. There are here two ships. One signifies the Jews, into which Christ the Lord enters, as he was a servant of the circumcision, as St. Paul calls him in Romans 15:8. The other refers to the Gentiles, to whom the wink is given that they should come and help the first in order that both might be filled.

3. In vain we teach the law, human ordinances and our own devices the whole night in the dark, only to the end that the weak conscience may be smitten with anguish and martyred. But without the Word of Christ, which is light, one never catches anything. Therefore Peter says here: Lord, upon thy Word I will let down the net. If you will preach, then you must have the Word of Christ and you must also be sent by Christ.

4. Here you observe, Christ provides also for the needs of the bodies of his followers.

PETER'S MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.

1. This Gospel is easy for those to understand who believe, and it presents to us two thoughts, namely: Faith in its relation to temporal blessings, and faith in its relation to eternal blessings.

PART I. FAITH IN ITS RELATION TO TEMPORAL BLESSINGS.

2. In the first place Christ shows that those who believe on him will certainly have sufficient also for this present life. And this he does in that he gives Peter and his partners such a great multitude of fishes, more than they had any reason to expect; also, in that Christ also provides for the feeding of our stomachs, if it were not only for our cursed unbelief. For

behold Peter and look deep into his heart and you will find, that he had no idea that he should catch so many fishes; then God came and drove the fish into the net, and more than all the disciples had desired.

3. Therefore this is an example that all who believe will have enough for their temporal needs; but those who do not believe can never get enough and have no rest in scheming how to secure riches, by which they fall into all kinds of vice. Then comes to pass what Paul in <5406>1 Timothy 6:6-10 says: “But godliness with contentment is great gain; for we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out; but having food and covering we shall be therewith content. But they that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

4. Now this passage of St. Paul shows clearly what follows our unbelief, namely, that he who strives after possessions and will become rich, must fall into the temptations and snares of the devil. These we cannot see, for they are spiritual. However if we could see the harm and ruin he does in spiritual things as he does in corporal things, then we would be good preachers. For we see publicly how an unbelieving man scrapes and does violence to everybody in order that he may scratch together something in which he may place his confidence, and say: Yea, now I have enough. Thus we see, what an avaricious, unfriendly thing unbelief is; for it is a benefit to no one, it sells no one anything unless it sees its own advantage in doing so.

5. For it has ever been a curse that we cannot trust God even for the daily food our stomachs crave, and that we continually think we are to die from hunger; and yet, we are to have enough, as Christ in <4025>Matthew 6:25f. says: “Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life? And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they

spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

6. Here you see how God cares for the birds and flowers, and adorns them so beautifully; much move will he give us what we need; and yet we cannot trust him. So successfully has the devil taken us captive by his snares. If one comes now so far that he is not satisfied and does not trust God, then love must at once cease, so that he does no one any good, but he scratches together everything only on his own heap.

7. And in this way the calling of the priests and monks arose; only in order that they might help themselves and feed their stomachs, and not being permitted to work they ran into the cloisters. And the proverb is true: Despair makes monks; yea, not only monks, but also priests, bishops and popes; for they do not trust God that he is able to feed and clothe them, and only think how they may fortify themselves against all want and poverty. All this is the life of unbelief. Then they go and keep strumpets or commit adultery, which are the fruits that follow unbelief; for they never trusted God, that he was able to sustain them, if they took unto themselves wives and remained out of the monasteries.

8. Now, here is an example that excites us to trust in God, and first for the needs of the stomach; since he cares for us also in temporal things. This we see here in the case of Peter, when he thus caught a great multitude of fishes, more than filled their boats. From this it is clearly shown God will forsake no one, each must have what he needs, if he trusts in God alone; as 1975Psalm 37:35 says' "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." There is no lack of provisions, only a lack of faith; before that should take place the angels would come and minister unto us. Therefore the fact that the people suffer now such need, is caused only by unbelief.

9. And although God is near us and will give us what we need, yet he requires on our part both work and hope, even if he delay for a time; therefore he gives Peter here a draught of fishes, and says:

"Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught."

10. As if the Lord would say: Let down the nets, and do the work that belongs to a fisherman, and let me care for the rest. The care or solicitude shall not be thine but mine, and the work thine. We however wish to turn this around for Christ: we want the care and let him have the work. Hence it is that everyone strives after usury, and hoards money so that they may never need to work.

11. Therefore if you wish to lead a truly Christian life, let thy God see to it how the fishes come into your net, and go and enter some calling in life that you may labor. But we all wish to fill such positions, where we do not need to labor; that has ever been the trick of the devil. And because of this we became monks and priests, only in order that we might live like noblemen and would not need to work. Moved by this mothers left their children go to school, in order that they might have good days and serve God. In this way it came so far that people did not know what good living was; and yet God commanded and took pleasure in it, that man should eat his bread in sweat; as he said to Adam: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," Genesis 3:19. And the deeper you stick in the law, the better it is. Therefore labor and believe, and let God rule unhindered.

12. If we Slovak of faith, and are to lean upon God and let him care for us, then they say: Yes, I must believe a long time before a roasted dove flies into my mouth, if I do not labor. Yes, it is true, you must toil, for you are commanded to do so: but let thy God provide for you. Believe and labor, then will not only a dove but a roasted goose fly into your mouth.

13. But to these belong also another part, namely, that we should hope, even if God does delay for a, time. Hence Christ here left them toil all the night without catching anything and it seemed he would permit them to die of hunger. Peter might have well thought since he fished so long and caught nothing: now God will let the stomach languish. But he despairs not, he continues to labor, and stands and hopes, God would give it to him although he might delay. Then God comes and gives him such a great multitude of fishes all at once, and more than he had been able to catch in eight days.

14. Therefore you must learn this part well, that you are to work and hope, even if God should delay a little and let you toil in your sweat, so that you imagine your labor is now lost. Then you must be wise and learn to know your God and to trust in him. Then he arrives and gives you more than you need, as he does here to Peter. Therefore if God has already delayed, only remember in the example of Peter there was also a little delay and yet it richly came. Thus it strikes in the time of his good pleasure; therefore do not despair, but hope and then thy works will be golden and pleasing to him; and then hope waits patiently, when God withdraws from us and does not do at once what we earnestly wish. Therefore he must make an appendix and hang on it a costly stone that thy works may become important. This precious stone is faith; but the works of unbelievers are stubble, for they are not built upon faith. This is the first part of our Gospel, now follows the second.

PART II. FAITH IN ITS RELATION TO ETERNAL BLESSINGS.

15. After the disciples caught the fishes and tasted the fruit of faith, their faith increased and grew. Now, we must first come to the point that we can commit unto God the care of our stomachs. For whoever cannot entrust that to God, can never commit unto him his soul. But this is only the faith of the child, where we learn to go to the public bank and continue to suck our mother's breast. Yet, by this we must learn to confide our soul to God for his keeping. This to-day's Gospel aims to do, when it says:

> But Simon Peter, when he saw it, fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was amazed, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken.

16. Let Peter here be a figure of those who should believe in the eternal possessions, and substitute for him the conscience, that now waits and looks for temporal blessings and possessions. A sinful conscience by reason of its nature is apt to do just as Peter does here, flee from its Savior, and think: O, God, I am not worthy to be saved and sit among the saints and angels! Oh, that treasure is far too high for me'. Here the narrow small conscience cannot grasp these great treasures, but thinks: Yes, if I were as

St. Peter and Paul, then I might believe it. This is foolish; for should you wish to establish yourself upon your holiness, then you would build on the sand. No, not so; but do like St. Peter. For in that he considered himself so unworthy, then he became first worthy. And just because you are a sinful person, you must trust. Here you must open wide your conscience and greatly expand your heart, in order that grace may flow freely into them.

17. If you have now learned to know God, then refuse him nothing whatever; that is, if we behold the great treasures, then we should not despair. It is proper that we know ourselves, and the more thoroughly we do this the better; but you must not reject grace because of your sins. For if you find that your conscience struggles and would drive you to despair, then you are most comfortable and fortunate; then you will find the consolation in your conscience, and say like <3307:18> Micah 7:18-19: "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and casts their sins into the sea and drowns them?" All gods that do not take away sin are idols. Therefore Micah well says, that there is no God like our God; for other gods wish to discover righteousness, but our God brings it; God the Lord brings it and does not discover it. Therefore you must not despair, although your conscience struggles and feels its sins; for the more disgraced you are, the quicker God imparts grace.

18. Now the great multitude of people go and dress themselves like the kitten does, and think God will then accept them. No, the Scriptures praise God that he takes away sins and casts them into the ocean. We cannot help our sins by our works nor become righteous by means of any power within ourselves: God, and no one else, will do that, without merit and without works, out of pure grace; as in <2343:22> Isaiah 43:22 he says: "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake: and I will not remember thy sins." And thus it must be, or you will never obtain a cheerful conscience. Therefore when Peter said, "I am a sinful man," he did right. It is true he had indeed cause to fear and humble himself; but he was constrained not to reject God, but to accept him.

19. Therefore, if I feel my sins and become like St. Peter, and would run away from God; then I must first turn and approach nearer and nearer to him. For if God had fled and had not desired to take away your sins, he would not have come to you and run after you. Therefore the more you feel that you are a sinful man and the more you wish to flee from God, the more you should press forward to him; mark that well. For as St. Peter

does here, so do all consciences, that are terrified before their sins, they wish to flee from God and seek another idol. Then do not desist, but approach God with fresh confidence and hold to him. On the other hand, if we flee from him and seek work righteousness and obtain help from another God, and afterwards come to the true God; then we will find him just like the foolish virgins, to whom, while they went to buy oil, the door was closed. <40250>Matthew 25:10.

20. But what did Christ do, when Peter humbled himself and in the face of great fear and terror he asked the Lord to depart from him? Did he let him stick in his despair? No, but he came to him, comforted him and said:

"Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men."

21. These are evangelical or Gospel words, that comfort weak hearts. And just in this way God makes our work and temptation golden before our eyes. Therefore observe now, how God provides for our bodies, in that he here gives Peter a great multitude of fishes, when he would have had enough with two, and in like manner satisfies and enriches him spiritually, so that he could from his fullness impart to others, and thus he made him a natural and a spiritual fisherman; a natural fisherman in that he caught a great multitude of fishes which he could sell; a spiritual fisherman in that he should henceforth catch men; for he had now the Gospel, by which he should gather the people and enlarge the kingdom of Christ.

22. Behold, thus it comes to pass: If one believes, God gives him so much that he is able to help all people, outwardly with his property and gifts; and from within he breaks forth, teaches others and makes them inwardly rich also, for such a person cannot keep silent, he must declare to others what he experienced; as <19510>Psalm 51:10-13 says:

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." Also in another Psalm, 116:20, David says: "I believe, for I will speak." This comes to pass thus: If I believe, I know God and then I see what other people lack, and go and preach to them the Gospel.

23. Thus we see in this Gospel how God cares for his own and how he sustains them temporally and spiritually both in body and soul. But where

for the time there is need, it is certainly because of our unbelief or because we lately first began to believe. For when faith is still new and small, its blessings at the time are small and insignificant, to the end that we should learn to know and trust God. But if we are come to the point that we freely trust God, then we will be in want of nothing, for God then fills us with temporal and spiritual blessings, and with such superabundant treasures, so that we are able to help all people. That is called making the poor people rich and feeding the hungry. This is sufficient on to-day’s Gospel.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

SECOND SERMON: LUKE 5:1-11.

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PETER'S DRAUGHT OF FISHES, OR CONCERNING FAITH, THE CARE OF GOD, THE LABOR IN OUR DAILY OCCUPATION, AND THE NEED AND CONFLICT OF CONSCIENCE; AND THE SPIRITUAL MEANING OF THIS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.

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PART I.

CONCERNING FAITH, THE CARE OF GOD, AND OUR DAILY OCCUPATION.

1. This Gospel brings before us two parts, in which it exhorts to faith and strengthens faith. In the first part it shows that Christ cares for those who believe in him, so that they are abundantly supplied against temporal and bodily needs. In the second part it shows that he will help them still more against spiritual needs, thus in reality proving the truth of what St. Paul says in <5408>1 Timothy 4:8: “Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come.” The Scriptures are everywhere full of these two kinds of promises.

2. To faith he assures temporal and bodily help by giving to Peter and his partners so great a draught of fishes after they had vainly toiled all night and caught nothing, and now could have no expectation or hope of taking anything. But herein he adheres to the rule and order which he himself has given and taught in <4063>Matthew 6:33: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” He here acts according to this saying and shows its truth by example and experience, inasmuch as the people press upon him in crowds, first to hear his words, and to such an extent that, in order to preach to them, he sets out from land in one of the boats. But when he has taught them he proceeds further to provide for their bodily needs, inasmuch as they are in distress and want.

3. Although it is not indeed the purpose of Christ’s coming or preaching to foster and provide for the body, yet he is not unmindful of it when the first thing sought is his kingdom. He therefore takes upon himself the distress of these poor fishermen who, through all this night, and with all their efforts and toil, have caught nothing. However, as they have lent him their boat to preach, and have listened to him, he, without any thought on their part, and before they have uttered any prayer, provides for them a draught of fishes so great that they are thereby enabled fully to learn and clearly to understand that in him they have a Master who cares for them and will not forsake them, provided they abide in his Word and remain his disciples.

4. He would that his Church, or believing people, should be comforted by the fact that he provides for them, and that somewhere on earth they shall find bread and an abiding place, even though they are everywhere so persecuted and scattered, that their place and provision in the world must be uncertain. We find this set forth, not only in the present instance, and in others like it, but in many a beautiful passage, such as <19B410>Psalm 34:10: "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but they that seek Jehovah shall not want any good thing." And <19B318>Psalm 33:18-19: "Behold, the eye of Jehovah is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his loving kindness; to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine." And <200103>Proverbs 10:3: "Jehovah will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish," etc.

5. By this example he especially shows how it goes with those upon whom he is to bestow his gifts and assistance, and how he is accustomed to bestow these favors. It goes with them as it went with those fishermen, who labored all the night, yet had nothing for all their trouble and labor, and had nothing to hope for from human counsel or aid. Manifold tribulations, miseries and distress are the daily experience of all Christendom. If Christ is to help, there must be trials, trouble and toil, and it must come to this, that we despair of all human counsel, comfort and ability. Then he comes with his help, and shows that he still has the means of comfort, counsel, protection and deliverance, and that he is able to bestow all this when everything else has failed us, and when all that we have done or suffered, and still may be able to do, is nothing and in yam; yea, that in such need and weakness he gives and helps in richer measure than could be done by all human power, skill and aid.

6. On the other hand, by saying to his disciples: "Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught," Christ shows that he does not forbid work, or would have that neglected which we have been commanded to do. He thereby enjoins upon them to continue in their handicraft. The two things are thus well maintained over against each other, namely, that we must work, and that our work accomplishes nothing. For if toil and trouble could have accomplished anything, then would the disciples have accomplished it during the hours of the night; and all the more so then, as they had hopes of taking a greater number of fishes while the silence and darkness continued than when Christ, in broad daylight, commanded them to let down their nets. Nevertheless, at Christ's word, and at one draught, they drew them in full to overflowing.

7. From this every one may see and learn that no man lives by his labor or exertion, however great and unhampered this may be, but must live by God's blessing and grace. Let it remain at this, as the Germans say, that "God helps," or "God bestows his gifts over night," which saying has come down to us from pious men of old who realized its truth in their experience. Daily experience still shows that many a one toils, tooth and nail, in anxiety and hard work, who yet can scarcely earn his bread or get rid of his debts and poverty; whilst to another, who takes it easy and newer overexerts himself, everything comes and flows in so abundantly that we really must say: "All this comes from God's help and not from any man's labor." In <19C702>Psalm 127:2 we are told: "So he giveth it unto his beloved in sleep," as if the Psalmist would say: "It is in vain that you fret and plague yourself with cares and labor, day and night, in order to provide what is needed in the home. Much may be needed there; but it does not depend upon your hands and labor at all. Nothing will come of your effort unless God himself is the "House Father" and makes it possible for you to say: 'God bestows his gifts over night. ' Grain and all food from the earth, yea, all that a man has, or may acquire, must be given him of God."

8. Such favors he also bestows upon the godless and unbelieving, and upon them more than upon others. With temporal goods he fills to overflowing the house and home of many wicked men who never think of a God. And he does this, not by their exertion and labor, but by a simple act of blessing, as we are told concerning such men in <19174>Psalm 17:14: "Whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure." It is as if the Psalmist here said: "Deliver me from the men of this world who have their portion in this life, whose belly thou fillest with thy treasure," that is, with such goods as are divine and hidden treasures of thine own, concerning which no man knows whence they come, and over which he has no power, — treasures which he cannot provide for himself, but must be provided and bestowed by thee alone.

9. Hereby Christ would have Christians aroused and strengthened in faith, and protected against unbelief with its harmful fruits, such fruits, especially, as covetousness, and anxious cares for the body and the present life. These cling to man by nature like an inborn plague which, together with the lusts of unbelief, moves and rages against the Spirit, as St. Paul teaches in <480517>Galatians 5:17. Moreover, the devil seeks to hinder faith by his temptations and suggestions to mistrust and doubt God. This, too, the world does by its hatred, envy and persecution of the righteous, whose goods and honor and life it is after, and whom it would use as mats for its

feet. On the other hand (I say), we here perceive both the power and advantage of the faith which holds fast to Christ's Word and ventures thereon, as Peter does, saying: "Although we have toiled all night and taken nothing, yet at thy word I will let down the nets." It is this faith that so enlarges the draught of fishes as to fill the two boats; for without this the nets would not have been let down, nor would any fish have been caught.

10. Scripture, however, everywhere shows the harm that is done by the avarice and anxieties of unbelief. For unbelief can by no means obtain anything from God that would benefit, comfort or bless it, but so deprives itself of the divine benediction that it can have no satisfaction or joy in the temporal goods it desires, and can never possess a good and peaceful conscience. Hence it is that Christ, in <4013:22>Matthew 13:22, speaks of all anxiety, with regard to sustenance, as thorns, on account of which the Word of God cannot put forth its strength or its fruits. St. Paul expounds the meaning of the thorns in <5406:9>1 Timothy 6:9-10, saying: "They that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil; which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

11. Here compare the good things that faith brings and does, with the harm that is done by unbelief. For, in addition to this, that faith has the divine grace and blessing, it also has the promise that it shall be sufficiently supplied with all that it needs. It fills the heart with such goodness, peace and joy that it may well be called the root of all good things. Unbelief, on the other hand, with all its cares and covetousness, shall have this as its reward, that it is not bettered thereby, but must fall into all sorts of snares through many hurtful lusts and desires; and thus it attains to nothing in the end but eternal destruction. It is therefore nothing but the root whence all misfortunes spring.

12. These two things are clearly seen in the world. Those men are at rest and in peace who content themselves with the things that God provides. They journey onward cheerfully and courageously, whatever their calling may be. They have enough to live on, and all their necessities are so well supplied that they must say to themselves: "No evening yet have I gone hungry to sleep," although it appears as if affliction and want are at their

very doors, as, according to our text, was the case with Peter. They have this benefit from their confidence and faith in God, that they need not fret and wound themselves among the thorns (cares for the body), or be stung and injured by them, but can, so to speak, sit amid roses in a garden of pleasure. As Solomon says in <20155>Proverbs 15:15: “He that is of a cheerful heart hath a continual feast.”

The others, however, who plant themselves among the thorns of avarice, and seek after great possessions, must suffer the consequences of being stung and torn and must fall, not only into manifold temptations and dangers, (which would be a mercy, if it only remained at that), but also into snares wherein they are so thoroughly caught that they sink to a temporal destruction and eternal damnation from which they can never again escape.

13. Of this we see daily examples in those who boast of the Gospel and their Christianity. Everywhere we find robbery, oppression, assessment, usury, etc. , to such an extent that even God and conscience are set aside for the sake of a miserable penny. Then, as if such a fall were not deep enough, they harden themselves, and keep on their course defiantly and sacriligiously, until they sink so far as to become enemies of God’s Word, become blind and deaf, yea, become so unblessed and accursed that they are of no service in any station, and can do nothing that is wholesome and good or useful to the pleasure and improvement of others. All they can do is to cause and bring harm, misfortune and misery upon land and people.

14. All comes from this, as St. Paul says, that men are bent on being rich. For such covetousness and cares do assuredly keep company with a pride that makes men aim at being something great and powerful. Covetousness would appropriate everything to itself. It begins at first by saying: “Would that I had this house, this field, this castle, this village,” etc. Thus it grows greater and greater till it becomes a dragon’s tail that draws everything after it. And where covetousness has once become rooted there it daily brings forth cares of a hundred different kinds, as it seeks to obtain still more goods and gold. There the human heart boils and bubbles with countless insatiable lusts, and desires, that serve no other purpose than its own destruction, and spring from no other source than man’s fall from faith, and thence from one temptation and snare into another. It is a dreadful plague that has taken such thorough possession of men that, on account of it, they can do nothing good or useful in their station, and no longer ,an have any thought of serving God or man.

15. When one has scraped together a great deal, he has no less trouble in retaining and protecting it. He must then try to gain favor and friendship, and in all sorts of ways seek to prevent the loss of his property. In the meantime he brings upon himself hatred and envy and troubles of many kinds, from which he cannot escape; and thus, as St. Paul shows, there is nothing left but disturbance and sorrows of conscience, and a veritable hell, into which the man has cast himself. Upon the covetous man the plague and curse have already been pronounced that he shall never be satisfied, and, furthermore, that he must endure all sorts of misfortune and heart-griefs through the very things he has coveted to his everlasting destruction and damnation.

16. We see from daily experience what shameful and accursed vice covetousness is, and what harm it does, especially in high office, whether clerical or lay. If the money fiend has taken possession of a pastor's or preacher's heart, so that he, like the rest of the world, only aims at securing for himself great riches, then has he already, like Judas the traitor, fallen into the jaws of the devil, and is prepared, for a few pieces of silver, to betray Christ and his Word and his Church. Thus has the Pope, in order to secure and maintain his riches and dominion, introduced, in the name of God and the Church, all sorts of idolatries and abominations, and has openly led multitudes of souls to the devil, so filling men with the false terrors of his ban that no one dares to say a word against it.

17. How harmful it is in civil governments when lords and princes are dominated by this shameful vice, aiming to appropriate everything to themselves. Thereby they forget to exercise their princely office so as to be of help to the land and people over whom, for this purpose, they have been placed as lords, and thus they forfeit the commendation and love which, with all honor and praise, they should receive as the fathers of their people and country. They do not concern themselves about the spread of God's Word, the administration and support of churches and schools, the proper instruction of the people, or the maintenance of law and order among their subjects. They permit destitute pastors, with their children, widows and orphans, to suffer injustice, violence and want. In the meantime they go about with their tax lists, and only consider how they may collect money enough for their excessive expenditures and pomp. And when this does not suffice, they flay and tax their poor subjects to such an extent that they themselves fall into perplexities and difficulties which must bring poverty and ruin upon themselves, their land and their people. Or if, in their

avarice, they have already accumulated enough to make them think they are quite rich, then, in order to carry out their undertakings, they involve themselves in manifold strange dealings and affairs that finally, to their own punishment, they bring upon themselves great burdens and ruin.

18. What a dreadful disaster and ruin has been brought upon Germany merely by the shameful and accursed usury which has everywhere gotten the upper hand, so that there is no longer any check or restraint to it, especially as those who should check it are themselves mixed up in it. Nowadays every one who has the power, by means of his money, impoverishes his neighbors, and thereby sets God and conscience aside. Thus, with open eyes, and with an evil, self-accusing conscience, he speeds off to hell, burdened with the curse that has been pronounced upon the abominations of covetousness, — the curse, that he shall not himself enjoy such property in peace and tranquility as has been gained by usury, but either himself shall lose it by God's visitation or it shall not descend to his heirs. Upon such un-Christian doings must come the fearful wrath and punishment of God, which alas! we have long ago greatly deserved; and the time must come when he will turn us out of doors, together with the Turks and other terrible plagues, so that, since we would not heed his Word and admonition, he him. self may put a forcible end to this godless business.

19. This the believer avoids and escapes who, with good conscience and godly fear, occupies his station in life peacefully and quietly, and is satisfied with the things that God gives him. He does not expose himself to the dangers of temptation or snares. He is in no need of troubling himself with cares and anxieties, or of engaging with others in bickering and brawling disputes, quarrels, jealousies and hatreds. He is a man of fine, blessed and useful character, one who can be of service and assistance to many. He finds grace and favor with God and man that shall benefit and honor even his children's children.

20. The example before us in this Gospel should teach and admonish us that we may learn to believe, and thus experience through faith, that God cares for his children and provides for them to such an extent that they need not worry and condemn themselves with cares or covetousness. And yet, though cares and covetousness are forbidden, it should be borne in mind, as I have already said, that no one dare cease from labor. The world turns these two things upside down, as it usually does with all the words

and ordinances of God. To care and to strive for the obtaining of gold and goods is something it is determined to do. Such care, however, concerns God alone, and for himself alone has he reserved it. And yet the world is willing enough to let God attend to the work which it has been commanded to do; yea, all the aim of its cares and covetousness is to be set free from working in the sweat of its face. God wants just the opposite. He wants us to keep the work and to leave the care with him. By doing this we shall do our part, and, with moderate labor and no care, we shall soon come into possession of all we need.

21. When Christ wished to bestow his gift upon Peter and others he did not cause the fish to leap into the boat without labor or nets, as he very well might have done. But he commanded them to put out into the deep and let down their nets. That is, they should engage in the handicraft they understood and had learnt and were accustomed to, and should act as fishermen. Christ keeps aloof from the lazy, unfaithful idlers who will not do as they have been commanded, and will not keep their hands and feet from straying. Thus he teaches a twofold lesson, that he will not give us anything unless we work for it, and that the things we obtain do not come from our work, but only from God's help and blessing. You are to work, but you are not to depend upon that work, as if that which resulted therefrom were of your own accomplishment.

22. In short, our work produces and bestows nothing. Yet it is necessary as a means through which we may receive what God gives. The disciples must use their hands to let down the nets and to draw them in, if they wish to secure anything, and must be willing to do so. Yet they are obliged to acknowledge that their labor did not bring about the result, otherwise they would have succeeded, in the first place, without Christ. He therefore permits them to make a sufficient trial, and to discover by experience that the toil of this entire night has been in vain and to no purpose.

23. This he teaches us by daily experience in all sorts of affairs and doings and governments on earth. Very often he permits us to labor long and arduously and without results, till it becomes bitterly painful to us, and we are forced to complain with Peter: "We toiled all night, and took nothing." This he does that we may not venture to depend upon our labor, but may know that he must grant it success, and that we have not secured this through our own effort, skill or diligence.

24. What diligence, money and effort many a father and mother have bestowed in order to rear their son to honor and virtue, and that with a hope and confidence as great as if (to use a common expression) he were to become an angel. And yet he has become nothing but a notoriously willful and prodigal child. On the other hand, many a poor and forlorn orphan, upon whom very little effort and diligence have been expended, has grown up so surprisingly well-bred as to make us think that it just happened so, and did not depend upon any diligence or care of our own.

25. Of what do all civil governments more generally complain than of fruitless labors and efforts, even where their work is carried on energetically and in earnest, and where there are men who are willing and able to rule well, — men who are not lacking in wisdom, understanding, power and might? These are obliged to learn, after a long period of governing, that thereby they have not accomplished anything. How often it happens, indeed, that the best plans, the wisest counsels, and the brightest ideas prove to be the very worst, and result in nothing but harm and ruin. The very wisest rulers have always experienced and complained of this. And thus we may learn that God will not grant prosperity and success through human wisdom, plans and intrigues, if these are the things we depend upon.

26. Hence, if the world be willing to receive counsel from a plain and straightforward man, namely, from the Lord our God, who certainly has had some experience and understands the art of ruling, the best counsel would be, that each one, in his administration of government, should simply direct his thoughts and plans to a faithful prosecution and believing performance of the duties enjoined upon him, not placing any dependence upon his own thoughts and plans, but casting all his cares upon God. The man who does this will at last be sure to discover that he who trusts in God accomplishes more than he who seeks to transact his affairs according to his own wisdom and thought, or in his own power and might.

27. So it goes in the spiritual government of the Church, as specially indicated in the narrative now before us. Where I have preached and taught during the past ten or twenty years, there another could, perhaps, have done more in one year; and one sermon may bring forth more fruit than many others. Here, also, it is true that our labor, diligence and effort can accomplish nothing. These two things must go together, namely, that each one does his duty, and that he, nevertheless, acknowledges with Peter: “My

labor cannot bring forth anything, if thou dost not give the increase." As Paul also says in <461006>1 Corinthians 3:6-7: "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase," etc.

28. In short, all human nature and life are so that, until God gives the increase, we may often labor long and much, and all to no purpose. But the work is not to cease on that account, nor should any man be found without work. He must wait for the increase till God gives it, as Solomon says in <211106>Ecclesiastes 11:6: "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not which shall prosper, whether this or that," etc.

29. However, the circumstances are especially pointed out under which work becomes useful and fruitful, namely, when Christ appears and commands to let down the nets, etc., that is, when there is a faith that takes hold of his Word and promise and then, cheerfully and bravely, does what has been commanded, waiting, with prayer and supplication, for his help and blessing. This is to say with Peter: "Lord, I have indeed done and labored and suffered ninth, but I know that I shall accomplish nothing thereby, unless thou art present to give strength and increase. I will therefore depend, not upon myself or my own works, but upon thy Word, and will leave everything to thy care." Thus shall we prosper; and experience shows that Christ, when he is present, gives more as the result of little labor and effort than any one would have dared to hope. For there can be no failure or scanty fruits where he adds his blessing.

30. Thus the disciples could see the experience for themselves what a difference there is between the work they had done all the previous night without faith in Christ, and the work they did when, without prospect of taking anything, they nevertheless, through faith in Christ's word, and at one draught, drew in an overflowing multitude of fishes. Therefore, if we accomplish little or nothing through our labor and effort, we must put the blame upon our unbelief, or upon the weakness of our faith, and not upon anything else.

31. Yet this is also true, that Christ often delays the bestowal of his help, as he did on this occasion, and on another, John 21, when he permitted the disciples to toil all the night without taking anything, and really appeared as if he would forget his own Word and promise.

But this he does that he may drive us to implore his help the more earnestly, and that we may learn to strengthen and maintain our faith, so that we do not doubt, or cease to labor, but continue to wait for the bestowal of his gifts in his own good time and way. For it is his purpose to guide all Christians into a knowledge and experience of the fact that their livelihood and help do not depend on what they see or do, but upon what is invisible and hidden. This he therefore calls his "hid treasure," as we have already said in regard to <19174>Psalm 17:14:, that is, such blessing, help and deliverance as we have not perceived or laid hold of before, but are hidden in his Word and are grasped by faith.

32. Behold, this is the first part of our Gospel, the events of which took place and were recorded that Christians might be instructed and comforted by the fact that Christ cares even for the temporal needs of his Church, so that it is fed and supported, although it should come into a distress where everything is at the point of ruin, and where it seems to have done and suffered everything in vain. Always and everywhere does it happen that the Gospel, as it advances, brings poverty in its train, together with hunger and nakedness and want. But at last, when the storms of the devil have blown over a little, and the world's greed and appetite have been satisfied, Christ comes and declares that he, too, is a Lord of the earth. For in <19401>Psalm 24:1 it is written: "The earth is Jehovah's, and the fullness thereof," etc. Also in <19806>Psalm 8:6-8: "Thou hast put all things under thy feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea." All these must obey our Lord, and must bend beneath his scepter, so that the world, after all, cannot prevent him and his from sharing in its food.

33. But, as I have said, we must first have hunger and want, that is, Peter's empty boat and net, even where there has been long-continued labor. Yet Christ, after such a trial, makes his gifts all the more abundant, not only a tub full, with which the disciples might have been satisfied, but the entire net full and the two empty boats full. He does this that their faith in his spiritual help may thereby be strengthened, He shows this sign to Peter, and to the others whom he intends to call to be his Apostles, not only in order that they should believe that he would care for their bodies, but that he would so strengthen and help them in their apostolic calling that it should not prove to be in vain or fruitless.

PART 2

THE SPIRITUAL DISTRESS AND CONFLICT OF CONSCIENCE.

34. The second part of this Gospel presents the great doctrine of the inner distress and conflict of conscience, and what constitutes our true comfort in the midst of it. Only after Peter saw this wonderful work of Christ and the abundance it produced, did he begin to consider what sort of a Man this Wonderworker must be, and what sort of a man he himself was in comparison. Out of this great blessing there comes upon him a greater distress than he has ever experienced from any bodily want. He now becomes so thoroughly poor and destitute, that, on account of terror, he almost sinks to the earth and bids Christ depart from him. He has begun to feel his unworthiness and sins. He is forced to acknowledge and lament that he is a poor sinner.

35. Peter is to become a different man; and a greater miracle is to be wrought in him than in the draught of fishes. The sermon which Christ had previously preached from the boat now first began to have its effect upon him. He, with the others, had indeed listened to Christ before this, but he had given no thought to the character of his Person. He had not thought of obtaining any temporal or eternal good from him; nor had he yet begun to tremble on account of his sins.

But now when Peter perceives the miracle and the blessing, and realizes, through the present event, what sort of a Man this Jesus is, he stumbles at the greatness of the blessing and of the Person on the one hand, and, on the other, at the extent of his own unworthiness. He trembles on account of his sins. His heart tells him that he does not deserve such great favor, and that he is far more deserving of God’s wrath and disfavor. He is now filled with anxiety and fear, not as to temporal poverty, or as to means of support, for he has been supplied with what he needs; but as to his ability to stand before God and before this man who has shown this great favor to such an unworthy and sinful human being as he.

36. This is the way Christ begins to make Peter spiritually rich in things that are eternally good, so that he may be able to impart them to others, yea, to the entire world. As on a previous occasion, he must first feel spiritual hunger and distress, that is, terror and anguish of conscience,

before he can attain to forgiveness and to comfort. The boat and the world have become too narrow for him. He knows not whither to betake himself from Christ, whom, however, he has found to be, not terrifying, but friendly and helpful.

37. Here you see how poor and miserable conscience is when it really begins to feel its sins. how it trembles'.

How it runs to escape from God when he draws nigh, as if it would run across a hundred worlds! Thus Adam in Paradise thought to hide himself when God kindly asked: "Adam, where art thou?" So shy and timorous is such a heart and conscience that it gets frightened at itself, and flees from a rustling leaf as from thunder and lightning. It cannot endure the judgment of the Law, which reveals its sins and God's eternal wrath. And here it is of no use to comfort a man by reminding him of the favors that God has shown him in the past. This only terrifies him all the more, as thereby he realizes that he deserves still greater wrath on account of his ingratitude and sins.

38. Yea, even they have ever to contend with this temptation and fear who already have received the comfort of the grace of God through faith. For his goodness and grace are too great and overwhelming. On the other hand, our heart, in the feeling and consideration of its own unworthiness, is far too narrow and feeble to hold and comprehend such great goodness and mercy. At this it is simply filled with amazement. God therefore shows himself merciful to us by veiling and covering these things under simple words and beneath great weakness.

39. But such is the awful wickedness of our nature that, even when Christ comes to us with his grace and comfort, we avoid and flee from our Savior, while we rather, though naked and barefooted, should run after him to the ends of the earth. We turn and twist, and resort to our own works, and would first, by our own efforts, cleanse and make ourselves worthy enough to deserve such a gracious God and Christ. Thus Peter thinks to seek peace and to escape sin by running away from the Lord. He first looks for something in himself to make him worthy of coming to Christ, but thereby only falls all the more deeply into terror and despair, until the Savior, by his word, raises him up again.

40. All this does, and indeed must, come to pass, where nothing but the Law is taught and understood, and where Christ is not rightly and fully

known through the Gospel. A knowledge of the Law has been inscribed and implanted in every human heart by nature, as St. Paul says in <4502015>Romans 2:15. The Law teaches us what we are to do, and pronounces us guilty of disobedience. It does so in many ways, not only through dreadful tokens and feelings of punishment and of God's anger, but also through the various gifts and operations of the Lord, that appear to the eyes and ears of man and point out to him the sin and divine wrath which follow upon their abuse in contempt and disobedience towards God. From this he may conclude that those who are ungrateful to God for his gifts and favors, are worthy of his wrath and condemnation.

41. All God's benefits when they move the heart, are really living sermons unto repentance that lead a man to acknowledge his sins and make him fear them, as St. Paul, in <450201>Romans 2:1, says to the impenitent, hardened hypocrite: "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"

42. Hence, there is nothing in the juggling tricks which our Antinomians play upon this example, when they say that repentance is not to be preached and practiced through the Law, but through the Gospel, or, as they put it, through the revelation of the Son. They change the proper order of the two parts: the revelation of grace and the revelation of wrath, as if we are first to preach comfort through grace and afterwards to terrify through wrath. This is nothing but a blind and foolish pretext on the part of these people. They have no understanding of wrath or grace or repentance, and know not how to comfort the conscience.

43. All preaching of sin and God's wrath is a preaching of the Law, no matter how or when it may be done. On the other hand, the Gospel is such preaching as sets forth and bestows nothing but grace and forgiveness in Christ. And yet it is true that the Apostles and preachers of the Gospel sanctioned the preaching of the Law, as Christ himself did, and began with this in the case of those who had not yet acknowledged their sins and had felt no fear of God's anger. Thus our Lord says in <431608>John 16:8: "The Comforter, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin," etc. Yea, what more solemn and terrible proof and preaching of God's wrath can there be than the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, his son?

It is not the preaching of the Gospel, nor is it Christ's own preaching, but the preaching of Moses and the Law to the impenitent, so long as nothing

but God's wrath is preached and men are terrified. For the Gospel and Christ were neither ordained nor given in order to terrify or condemn, but to comfort and raise up such as are fearful and faint-hearted. And from this it follows that the man, whose heart has been rightly impressed by the sufferings of Christ, must, of his own accord, see and feel in these the unbearable wrath of God against sin, and thereby be so stricken with fear that the world becomes too narrow for him. St. Bernard testifies that this was his experience as soon as he gained a right insight into the sufferings of Christ. He says: "Alas, I thought I was safe! I knew nothing of the judgment and wrath that had come upon me, till I saw that the only begotten Son of God had to take my place," etc.

This idea is so terrible that even the damned in hell can have no greater torment, no greater feeling of God's wrath and condemnation, than this vision of the death of the Son of God, the benefits of which they have forfeited. Thus Judas, the traitor, as he would not heed the kindly admonitions and warnings of the Lord Jesus, and would not take into consideration how he acted towards him, was finally driven into such terror by this vision that he preached the Law and damnation to himself in saying: "I have betrayed innocent blood," etc. , 4270Matthew 27:4.

44. In like manner, Peter preaches to himself the Law concerning his sins and God's wrath, and takes as his text Christ's great kindness towards him. From this kindness he can gather nothing but wrath and terror on account of his unworthiness before God. For he has, as yet, no other understanding in his heart than that of the Law, which Law shows that God is hostile to sin and will punish it. He is still ignorant of the grace of Christ which, through the Gospel, is freely offered to all sinners. To this grace he could not have attained, but must have despaired in 'the midst of his terror, had not Christ delivered another sermon whereby he comforted him and raised him up. For, of himself, no man can grasp this doctrine, or arrive at an understanding of it, without the revelation of the Holy Spirit through the word of the Gospel.

45. Hence those foolish souls are entirely wrong, who allege that the Law is not to be preached under the New Testament dispensation, or that men are to be terrified with God's wrath through the Gospel only after grace has been preached to them. For it is certain that the Gospel preaches no wrath; nor does it cause fear and anguish. When it comes, it is for the purpose of comforting consciences. The order everywhere indicated and

observed by Scripture is this, that sin must always be acknowledged and fear of God's wrath be realized, through the preaching or experience of the Law, before there can be such comfort as proceeds from forgiveness, the purpose of this order being that men may be led to long for grace and be made fit to receive the comfort of the Gospel. Those, therefore, who are yet without any fear of God's wrath, who are secure and hardened and unyielding, must be strongly admonished and urged to repentance by the threats and terrors of that wrath, that is, to them no Gospel is to be preached, but only the Law and Moses.

46. On the other hand, no law is to be preached to those in whose hearts it has wrought its purpose so that, through the realization of their sins, they have become terrified, faint-hearted and fearful. To such as these nothing is to be preached but the Gospel and its comfort. For it is really the purpose of Christ's coming, and of his command to preach the Gospel to all poor sinners, that they should believe that it abolishes and does away with all the accusations and fears and threatenings of the Law, and puts a perfect comfort in their place. This he everywhere teaches in the Gospel; and in <4018>Luke 4:18, quoted from <2610>Isaiah 61:1, he says: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor." I have often said, therefore, that Moses must not be permitted to dominate the consciences that are agitated by the assaults of the devil and the dread of God's wrath, but that these are straightway to dismiss Moses, together with the entire Law, and not listen to him.

47. But besides, we must bear in mind that the doctrine of the Law is not to be entirely done away with, even in the case of those who are Christians, inasmuch as Christians must exercise themselves in daily repentance, because they still live in the flesh which is moved by sinful lusts. hence they must be so taught and admonished, after they have received the forgiveness of sins, that they do not fall back again into a state of security, or give the flesh occasion to war against the Spirit. <4805>Galatians 5:13.

48. Such is Peter's experience at this time. In his terror he has not, as yet, any revelation or knowledge of grace or forgiveness of sins. The revelation of wrath is working in him, and this impels him to flee even from Christ, which he certainly would not hare done, had he rightly known him. But Christ is now about to make of him a true Christian, about to make him experience the real comfort of conscience which overcomes the terror of the Law and raises man from the misery of sin to grace and blessedness,

from death to life, from hell to heaven. It is necessary, therefore, that he should first have a real taste of that power of the Law which is roused and wrought, not by Christ, but by Moses through the ten Commandments.

49. Now, see how kindly Christ comforts the terrified heart and conscience. He says: “Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.” In tones so truly loving does the Savior speak to all who are in fear and terror by reason of their sins. He will not have them to remain any longer in fear and anguish. He takes away from them all the dread of the Law, and shows them that they should not, on account of their sins, flee from him but to him, so that they may learn to know him as the loving Savior who has come into this world, not to reject poor sinners, but to allure them to himself, and to enrich and bless them with his comfort and help. He therefore says, in <42910>Luke 19:10: “The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost.” And in <54115>1 Timothy 1:15 St. Paul says: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.”

50. Not only does Christ give comfort to poor, terror-stricken Peter by the kindly words in which he declares and offers to him his grace and absolution, but he goes on to strengthen this comfort by the great promise that he will give him something far beyond anything he has hitherto received from him; and all this in order that Peter may perceive and experience how Christ’s heart and love go out to him. “From henceforth,” Christ says, “thou shalt catch men.” That Peter is not to be alarmed on account of his unworthiness and sins is, in itself, an abundant comfort and grace. However, he is not only to have the forgiveness of his sins, but is also to know that God intends to accomplish still greater things through him by making him a help and comfort to others.

What Christ would say is this: “That which thou hast accomplished by this draught of fishes is much too little; really, it is nothing at all. Thou art henceforth to become a different kind of fisherman, in a different sea, with a different net and boat. For I am going to engage thee in a business which shall be called ‘catching men’; and this means that, throughout the entire world, thou art to draw away souls from the power of the devil into the kingdom of God. Then, first, wilt thou become the sort of man that can help others, even as thou thyself hast been helped.”

51. From this Gospel let us rightly acknowledge and lay hold upon Christ and the power of his comfort, in order that we may comfort both ourselves and others, and may instruct and remind the consciences which are in

distress and fear that they are by no means to run or flee away from Christ, but should much rather flee to him and wait for his comfort. Thus to run away, thus to fear, is nothing else than to drive your own salvation and happiness away from you. For Christ has not come to make you afraid, but to remove from you your sins and distress. Nor does he draw nigh and follow after you in order to drive you away, but that he may kindly allure you to himself.

You must therefore not do him the dishonor of thrusting him away from you. And you must not pervert to your own fear and despair the comfort he brings you, but much rather run to him in all confidence. Then you will soon hear the cheering and comforting words: “Fear not?’ which he speaks to your heart, and to the hearts of all troubled consciences, and through them he pronounces absolution for all sins and removes all fear. Yea, he will grant you a still richer grace by making you such a holy, blessed and useful man in his kingdom, that you can be of comfort to others, and can bring those to him who, like yourself, are now full of fear and in need of comfort and grace.

52. Here you see how a man is delivered from spiritual poverty and distress, that is, how, through Christ’s Word, he obtains forgiveness of sins and peace of conscience together with grace and increase of spiritual gifts, without any merit or worthiness of his own but only through the grace of Christ. It is in this respect as it was with the temporal miracle of the draught of fishes, which the disciples did not secure by reason of their toil, and which was not given to them before they had labored and striven in vain, and had despaired of taking anything. And yet, as Christ on that occasion does not forbid their laboring, but commands them to let down their nets for a draught, so now he does not abolish works. Although Peter does not deserve grace and forgiveness by what he does, but receives forgiveness and grace freely, yet the Lord will not permit him to dispense with all work and effort. Yea, he assigns to him the duty and business of bringing the same blessings to others, and, in the assignment of this duty, comforts him with the assurance that the necessary power and blessing shall be added. “For,” says he, “I will make thee a fisher of men.” Thus are the two parts rightly taught, namely, that faith deserves nothing by its works, and yet, that it performs all sorts of works in its station and calling, according to the word and command of God.

PART 3

THE SPIRITUAL MEANING OF THIS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.

53. Christ himself teaches the meaning of this history of Peter's draught of fishes when he says: "From henceforth thou shalt catch men." Herein is represented the spiritual rule of the Church, which consists in the office of preaching. The sea, or the water, represents the world, the fishes represent men, while the outward office of preaching is represented by the hand and the net by which the fishes are caught. For as the net is let down among the waves, so the sermon finds its way among men.

54. But this office of preaching is of twofold One seeks to win men without Christ. This is the preaching of the Law, which demands of us nothing but works, and either makes arrogant saints who, without accomplishing anything, would pursue their own free, unhampered course through the wild and watery wastes, or only terrifies and drives away the consciences which, without works, are timid and weak.

55. Hence the labor and effort of the entire night (of the Law) must prove vain and lost until Christ comes with the other kind of preaching, — until he brings with him the dawn and revelation of the comforting and cheering Gospel that enlightens the hearts of men with the knowledge of the grace of God, — until he commands us to let down the net for a draught. When this is done at his word and command, great and rich fruits are the result. Then men's hearts are willing and ready to come to the obedience of faith in Christ, yea, even to press forward to it, and to venture life and limb in its attainment, as Christ says in <40 11 12>Matthew 11:12: "From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by storm."

56. This draught of fishes is so great that the one boat alone (hitherto representing the Church of the Jewish people) is not able to draw it up or large enough to contain it. Those in the one boat must beckon to their partners in the other to come and help them. This other boat is the assembly and Church of the Gentiles which has been established and spread by the Apostles. Thus were the two boats filled with one and the same draught of fishes, that is, with one and the same sort of preaching, and with a corresponding faith and confession.

57. Owing to the great draught the nets began to break, and some of the fishes fell out. These are they who are not sincere, and do not abide in the Gospel, but cast themselves out of it, preferring to continue amid their free and wild waves rather than submit themselves to Christ. So there were many, especially among the Jews, who disobeyed and gainsaid the Gospel. These, and all others who establish sects and factions of their own, may not and cannot continue with the true band of God's people in the assembly of the Church, but make themselves manifest as being good for nothing. Hence St. Paul says in <46119>1 Corinthians 11:19: "There must be also factions among you, that they who are approved may be made manifest among you." These sects and factions must therefore fall away, while the others are gathered together out of the net and put into the two boats, where they are so kept, in the unity of the Church and of faith in Christ, that they do not fall away again. Otherwise they would be in danger of falling away at last, together with the factions by whom they had been seduced.

58. And as the net suffers through being let down into the water and becomes wet, so must the office of preaching suffer through all sorts of trials and persecutions in the world, even to the extent of being rent and torn. It cannot produce profitable or fruitful results in all men; yet great power and much fruit are found in those who remain steadfast and are kept to the end. It is our comfort, however, that Christ, through our preaching, will lead his own into the boat, and will keep them there, although we know that we cannot make devout men of all to whom we preach, and that we cannot escape persecution on account of our office; yea, though we know that many will fall away even among those of whom we felt sure that we had them in the net.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Text. [40]5:20-26. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire. If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art with him in the way; lest haply the adversary deliver thee to the fudge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou have paid the last farthing.

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THE SUMMARY OF THIS GOSPEL:

1. The righteousness of God is through faith and that is the righteousness of the heart. The outward righteousness, however holy and beautiful it may appear, is hypocritical, deceptive righteousness.

2. The Lord wants a good tree, without Which the fruit can not be good.

3. It is a hypocritical, deceptive righteousness, if one does not commit murder with the hand, and yet at the same time cherishes anger in his heart; but the Christian righteousness requires that we be not angry. To do this we must constantly obtain from God grace and forgiveness, and confess ourselves to be sinners, which belongs to Christian righteousness.

4. It is not pleasing to God, if we be not reconciled to our brother. Here we all can learn, what the good works are that God esteems as great.

1. This Gospel teaches us the difference between true piety and dissimulation, or hypocrisy. And it is one of the best Gospels for teaching how our works cannot render us pious; something higher than anything we can do is re-required. For the Pharisees also led a pious life; they did what they should, externally; they did not break any of the commandments of God, abstained from property not their own, went about in fine showy clothes, and hence derived their name, being called Pharisees, meaning those set apart, or the select.

2. In like manner he also attacks the scribes, the flower of the Jews, who were so well versed in the law of God and the Scriptures as to teach other people, lay down rules for the community and render decisions in all matters. To sum up, we here have the best, the most learned and the most pious of the Jews. These Christ attacks, whom of all men he should least have attacked. But he says of them to his disciples:

"Unless your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

3. As though he would say, Behold the Pharisees and scribes lead such a good life that both they and other people believe they will possess the kingdom; but they are wide of the mark. Therefore he reproves them and says: Verily, I say unto you, if you will not be more pious than the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter heaven. Here the question of those is disposed of who ask, What shall we do in order that we may be pious? For here all works that man can do are overthrown and disposed of, and the most holy of the sanctimonious are cast to the' ground. Hence you cannot do any deed by means of which one may be saved and rescued from sin. If a man now says that, he surely is a heretic.

PART 1 THE OCCASION FOR THIS EXPLANATION.

4. They at that time might have said, Well, you are a heretic; ate you going to reject good deeds? He pays no attention to that, however, but freely concluded that their works are nought. They might now have said, Pray, if works do not make us holy, why have we the law through which we hope to be saved, if we live up to it? This now gives Christ an occasion to introduce the commandments, explaining them, telling us how they are to be understood. He says:

> "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shalt say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire."

PART 2. THE EXPLANATION.

5. These words are too high and too deep for any one fully to put into practice. To this our Lord not only here testifies, but every man's experience and his very emotions. Four points are here presented, to-wit: Thoughts, demeanor, words and deeds; which no one can avoid; he must be guilty. As though he would say, You might find persons that do not kill with their hands; but to be without hatred, not to be angry, be of smiling countenance, not to snub persons — of such a nature none is to be found. Now, experience teaches this.

6. For take a godly man or a godly woman; as long as everybody keeps his distance, peace and harmony prevail, but if one comes along that speaks harshly and possibly intrudes, even to the extent of the smallest word, he cannot keep from becoming angry; and follows this up by irritating and enraging the offender. Our reason can never come to the conclusion that we are to be considerate to the wicked. Peruse all your heathen books, enter into your own experience, and you will find it so, we cannot refrain from becoming angry, if not against our friends, then against our enemies. Now God is not satisfied with this, nor can my flesh and blood evade the question, for mark the wording closely when he says, "Thou shalt not kill."

Who is “thou?” Your hand? No. Your tongue? No; but thou, thou and all that is in thee and with thee; thine hand, heart, and thoughts shall not kill.

7. Thus Christ interprets the law saying with authority, “Every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment. “This sentence pertains to the whole world, for I ask, Who is there on this earth that is not a debtor to this commandment? Seeing that we are to comply with it and cannot, what are we to do? For we can never remove the filth. Then despair must be ours, depend on that. So the commandments of God are but a mirror, wherein we behold our filth and wickedness; for they conclude us all under sin, we being unable to work our way out by our own efforts and free will; unless something else comes to our assistance. This is the first point.

8. The Lord continues: “Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca,” which indicates various manifestations of wrath and hatred. But no one is free from this. For if I am told to be friendly to the person I hate, they can tell it on me that my heart is not in it. For you cannot confine the heart; it will out, and show its presence by signs or words. It does not hide itself, and it cannot be hidden. Hence we conclude that we are found guilty of saying Raca, that is, of not being kind to both friend and foe. Now go to past experiences and see this in other people and in yourselves, namely, that no one can deliver himself out of this condition, from this wicked heart, which is planted so deeply in the nature of man. You may act friendly toward your brother; but for you to give him your heart, this you cannot do though you should rend yourself to pieces. Therefore no man can here help himself.

9. Following this he says, “Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire.” This too makes you appear as nought, without the grace of God, for nobody is so fraught with loving-kindness as never to utter an unseemly word, if not to his friends then to his enemies. Even when you are compelled to speak kindly to your neighbor, your heart is not in it, and whenever you with seeming propriety can do so, you will say, “Thou fool.” That already is contrary to this commandment, embracing, as it does, both friend and foe, since it reads, “Thy brother. “We all, you know, are brethren, descended from one common father, and Scripture brings us so closely together as to call us all one flesh. Isaiah says, 58:7, “When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh. “Here the prophet is speaking of your

neighbor; and the word “fool” is to embrace all manner of infamy, cursing, slandering, abuse, judging, maligning and all reviling.

10. It clearly follows that we all are guilty of the commandment: “Thou shalt not kill,” and whoever is not born again of God cannot abstain from murder. Though he desist from the act itself, he cannot banish thoughts and inclinations, for if our enemy meet with death, we will be ready to say, This served him right! And soldiers compose a song on the enemy they have slain or put to flight. But that again conflicts with this commandment, for God does not look at the outward act, but at the heart. Hence much is contained in the words: “Thou shalt not kill,” as much as to say: You must be born again and become a new creature.

11. So the Gospel always reverts to this question, What shall a man do that he may become pious? For, pray as long as you will; fast as long as you will; give alms as long as you will; pay for masses and build churches as many as you will; you are, nevertheless, still a murderer, for you hate your brother; you cannot give him a kind look nor a kind word. It follows that your righteousness is nought; it is of and pertains to perdition.

And now we have two more points that are about as severe as the preceding. We read:

> “If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there remeberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art with him in the way; lest haply the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and thou be cast into prison. Verily, I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou have paid the last farthing.”

12. Here are two things that go against our nature. The first: When I am angry, my brother is to conciliate me. The other: My feelings being hurt, I am to forgive my brother, though he offer no apology; I am to have a kind heart toward him, so he does not deliver me to the judge, as you have just heard. This last part they formerly severed from this Gospel, and I hold that Augustine did so in writing, as appears from his book, “*De spiritu et litera.* “ The sense of the passage is as follows:

13. Here are two persons: the one offending is to ask pardon. The other being offended, is to forgive kindly and willingly, even though he be not

asked to do so. By nature we can do neither. Our nature may prompt us to go and say, My dear friend, forgive me! but doing this under compulsion, in fear of hell and God's wrath, hatred still remains in our heart. On the other hand, the one offended cannot forgive from his heart; and as the one acts the hypocrite in asking forgiveness, so does the other in granting it. But that certainly is of no avail before God, for thus says our text: "If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. And this reconciliation must proceed from the heart; mark well the words of the text.

14. The passage conveys the meaning that God does not want you to come and serve him without having previously been reconciled with your brother; "then come and offer thy gift." As though he said: "Behold, man, I have created and redeemed thee; recognize this, and shape thine whole life toward serving thy neighbor. If not, do not serve me either. If thou wilt not do the one (serve thy neighbor), seeing that is needed, you had better not do the other (serve me), since that is not needed. "So God would much rather be deprived of his service than of the service you owe your neighbor, and would sooner see you less stringent in your service toward himself, if you are pious at the expense of serving your neighbor. Summing up, God wishes you to see first to your neighbor's service and interests.

15. Now, there are many ways of harming our neighbor, as for instance, when I do not protect his reputation, being well able to do so; when I am not kind to him, or fail to aid him; I am already his antagonist. So, if I want to be agreeable to God, I must, in the first place, be reconciled to my brother; if not, I cannot be pleasing to him. For God rejects the service rendered him, if the service due our neighbor is not performed.

16. Now look at the kind of life we have led hitherto. We have been going to St. James, to Aix-la-Chapelle, to Rome, to Jerusalem, have built churches, paid for masses, and withal have forgotten our neighbor; this now is the wrong side up. The Lord, however, here says, Go and take the money with which you were about to build a church and give it to thy neighbor. Look to your neighbor how you may serve him. It is not a matter of moment to God if you never build him a church, as long as you are of service to your neighbor. But all this is now being neglected, and only the contrary is observed. Oh, the miserable, perverted life that we have learned

from the Papists! This is why no one wants to enter the married state, for nobody lends him a helping hand, nobody offers him any aid, so that he might support himself and get along. Hence it comes to pass that the one turns monk, the other nun, the third a priest, a thing we could indeed obviate if we would but show works of love. Thus they go along, forgetful of maidservants and manservants, and finally bequeath a legacy and go to perdition with their legacy.

17. It follows that God simply wants you to serve your neighbor, doing your duty to him, so that matters are righted first of all between yourself and him and you be first reconciled to him; or God will neither see nor hear you. Furthermore, if my adversary come to me, I am to forgive him willingly; if he does not come, I am still to be conciliatory and kind to him, while I am on the way with him, in this life, so that he does not deliver me to the judge.

18. How does that come about? He does not take me by the hand and conduct me to the judge; but when I face judgment my conscience realizes that it had been unwilling to forgive the neighbor, entertaining secret but inveterate hate even then. My conscience over against my neighbor delivers me to the judge; he delivers me to the officer; and he, in turn, casts me into prison, that is to say, into hellfire, until I pay the uttermost farthing, which means forever; for there the liquidation of the debt and deliverance are impossible. Here you see the exalted works that no one can attain, neither by work righteousness nor by the law. For works, if alone, will make hypocrites and dissemblers; the law, if alone, brings forth despair.

19. But what am I to do? Do I hear correctly: am I to be damned? Do as follows: Flee to Christ when thus conscious of iniquity, saying: Oh, my God, thy law is now a mirror to me, whence I see how perverted and lost a being I am! Oh God, now save me for thine only begotten Son’s sake. Thus, by faith God gives you the Spirit, who changes your heart, so that you will be very kind to your neighbor and will argue thus: Behold, if God has acted thus toward me, forgiving me more than I can ever hope to forgive, why should I not be willing to forgive my neighbor a little?

PART 3. AN OBJECTION AND THE ANSWER.

20. Now the sword of the government seems to conflict with this, and the question arises: If I am to forgive, not to hate, not to kill, how then am I to correct and chastise? If I am to wield the sword and with it execute, how can I help being angry? This question is in order, for the Gospel here seemingly subverts the sword of the government. But we are to bear this in mind: Christ is here a spiritual teacher, solely guiding the consciences, showing them how much hatred, envy and wrath they contain, and how to get rid of it. That is his office in which he is engaged; with the worldly sword he has nothing to do, he lets those see to it whose duty it is.

21. Well, this doctrine does not enter all hearts; most of it remains on the surface. But those, into whose heart it falls, prostrate themselves before God and cry to him for help, are at once pious and have no need of the worldly sword, for they are being ruled by words. Now those who do not grasp this but lead an outwardly wicked life, there the worldly sword must be used. Thus you are now to understand that a secular prince or whoever he be that wields the worldly sword, must conform to what is here taught, namely, not to be angry and not to kill.

22. How then are they to conduct themselves who wield the sword in God's stead? Thus: the fact that they wield the sword is a part of their office. In a sense, the Gospel has claims on them', and then they are to be very kind in heart; meek and compassionate; then again, when duty calls, they are to be grave, punishing with alacrity, without regard to friend, foe, beauty, riches or learning. We see this in the case of Moses. He was the meekest man that has ever lived, so much so as to fall down and ask to be blotted out of the Book of Life, <2222>Exodus 32:32, if only the multitude be saved. Behold, was he not a mild, sweet and kind man, being willing to go to perdition and be condemned in body and soul that the people might be spared? But, when placed as chief in command, he, in questions of government, took energetic measures, executing three and twenty thousand, by which he might appease the wrath of God.

St. Paul acted in like manner. He too was ready to surrender his soul's salvation for the Jews, as shown by <4503>Romans 9:3. But on learning that a man at Corinth "had his father's wife," he wrote so stern and severe an epistle as he had never done before, ordering that such a one be delivered unto Satan, "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus,"

[415]1 Corinthians 5:5. Likewise David and others acted. In fact, we find a number of such in the Old Testament as would, externally, use the sword in full rigor, executing the people as they would kill chickens, and at the same time be very tender and kind at heart.

23. Let us take a bold illustration, that you may see how a person in authority is to conduct himself. Take the coat of arms of the Elector of Saxony. It shows, two swords in a white and black field, so arranged as to have the hilt below on a white background, and the blade above on a black background. These indicate how you are to conduct yourself when in authority: below, holding the sword by the hilt, you are to be clean, white, tender-hearted and gracious, having the best of intentions; above, when on duty, you have the blade in a black field, that is to say, a determined and strict enforcement is called for, in order outwardly to stay transgressors. And the red color of the swords indicate that blood is to be shed. Moses, David and others have thus beautifully handled the sword by the hilt in the white field, being sober, mild and kind at heart; and have wielded the blade in the black field, being grave and austere in their official duties.

24. Just so should a citizen or civil judge also do. When dealing with a wicked person that will not be controlled by words, his thoughts are to be: "Oh, my God, how gladly I would die for this man, if it could be done! He has a soul that I cannot succor; besides, he leads a wicked life, not being able to bring his flesh and blood under subjection to the spirit. "And then when comparing the two and seeing which outweighs the other, he will find that it is an easy thing for the man to die, but a grave matter for the soul to die, for the soul's dying is eternal. Hence his thoughts and words should be: "Ah, see how your soul might enter into judgment; see, how you might enter into perdition. For that reason, in order that sin may make no further inroads, I must divest you of your body, and see to the saving of your soul, since I cannot save your body. "And then we must strike hard, resolutely take to the sword, so that we may prevent wrath and stern judgment, as did Moses with the children of Israel. In that event you are carrying your swords in a white and a black field.

25. The design of the two swords crossing each other, as though one would stay the other, is well conceived. This is to teach that a judge should be wise and prudent, and see, where he must temper and modify a harsh sentence, where it is just and right. It is like two sentences clashing when one will annul the other. You are not always to proceed *secundum strictum*

jus, strictly according to law, but see what is just and right, and where a case can be adjusted, there he should also give his attention.

26. Take an example. The disciples of the Lord plucked ears of corn and ate, when passing through the fields. Now the Sabbath was by divine command to be observed under pain of death, <04155>Numbers 15:35; but the disciples were hungry, so one law cancelled the other. For that reason the Lord excuses them over against the Pharisees, saying: “The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day,” <40128>Matthew 12:8. Although the observance of the Sabbath was a matter of divine command, the disciples nevertheless were excused, inasmuch as the Sabbath was not to be so strictly observed as to prevent them from eating and thus to cause them to perish because of this very observance. The same holds true of David, who partook of the consecrated bread which no layman was allowed to eat, <09206>1 Samuel 21:6. This was a case of the two swords clashing, it being necessary for one law to give room to the other. For this reason David and also the disciples were excused. For no law has been established by God for the ruin of man, but for his bodily and spiritual welfare.

27. Hence, to sum up all, civil authorities should be severe externally, staying transgressions; but internally, they should harbor a tender, gentle, Christian, amiable spirit; withal they are to be wise and prudent, so that they may know how to temper stern justice, in accord with what is right and proper. This may suffice on this Gospel. Let us pray God for grace.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

SECOND SERMON. [40]MATTHEW 5:20-26.

This sermon appeared in tract form twice during 1523 and in “The Thirteen Sermons by Luther, 1523.”

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VIII. An Objection Raised By This Exposition And The Reply. 20.

1. In this Gospel the Lord takes in hand the office of extolling and explaining the law of Moses, for it would not have been becoming for him to have insisted in an unfriendly manner to make the people pious. He is not a lawgiver, but a Savior, who never takes aught from anyone, but always gives. So he also in this instance proves his kindness in explaining the law and gently instructing; where there is need and want, he does not sternly insist, as did Moses, who without much ado wished that people were either pious or dead. For this reason Christ's action on this occasion is to be considered one of great benefit to us, in that he teaches us where we fail and come short. Here he particularly treats of the failings due to wrath, which causes so much havoc among men, as is seen on every side, yea, nearly the whole world is under its sway.

2. Now let us examine the command, "Thou shalt not kill," in the sense the Jews took it, and how we should take it. The Jews considered those only murderers who committed the act of murder with their hands; while those who abstained from the outward act were considered by them as pious. In like manner they treated Christ. Having delivered him to Pontius Pilate for trial, they remained without, thus fancying to be innocent of his blood, and to have perfectly kept the law, ◁BIBB▷John 18:28. Again, Saul acted the same way toward David; he believed himself to be godly so long as he only did not kill David with his hand, 1 Samuel 19. Thus they have interpreted the law, failing to see that its roots run into the heart. In view of this Christ here says to his Christians:

> "For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shalt exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shalt in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

3. This is a strong, yea, a dreadful sentence, whereby all false saints and hypocrites, who go about with their own external works, are condemned.

4. But how have we interpreted this commandment? A little better, that is to say, doubly worse is our interpretation. On this wise: it is indeed a matter of the heart that we are to be free from hatred. But a man, according to our conception, may conduct himself friendly and thus banish hatred from his heart. So we have made it a question of free will, going from bad to worse. The Jews have made it a matter of deceptive appearance; we placed the issue with free will. Thus the hypocrisy of the Jews rests in their works; ours in our thoughts. For we argue thus: Well, I will forgive him, will be good to him, and thus lay hold of the doing in the strength of our free will, then it shall be accomplished.

5. Well, how then are we to do? We are to take the fol. lowing position: There is not a man on earth, unless he be born again, who does not become angry, and give forth evil words and evil deeds; nature cannot do otherwise. For there stands the law and says: Thou shalt be a fine, sweet-tempered man in heart, in words and in works; and no evil fiber shall be found in thee. Well, where am I to find such a man? My mother does not give him to me; he must come down from heaven. For there is not a man on earth, so far as he is flesh and blood, that can help becoming angry and giving forth evil words and actions. But if I abstain, it certainly is because I fear the sword or I seek a selfish end. If I do not curse, if I do not calumniate, either the sword or hell deters me, the fear of death or of the devil; these I have in my mind and abstain, otherwise, I could not abstain. Not alone this, but I would actually murder and massacre, wherever and whenever I could. By nature I cannot produce a single kind word or action. If I do, it certainly is hypocrisy, since the heart at least always remains full of poison. This you now hear from Christ, who so explains the law as to cause you to feel ashamed in your inner heart. He would say: Thou art not sweet in heart, thine heart is full of hatred, full of murder and blood, and so thy hands and eyes would also gladly be full of the same; nor canst thou prevent it, any more than thou canst prevent the fire from burning, for it is its nature to burn.

6. A person might here say, What then am I to do? I feel all that within me, but I cannot change conditions. I reply, Flee to the Lord, thy God, lay thy complaint before him and say: Behold, Lord, my neighbor has injured me a little, has spoken a few words touching my honor, has caused some damage to my property, this I cannot suffer, therefore, I would cheerfully see him killed. Oh my God, how gladly would I be amiable to him, but, alas, I cannot! See how wholly cold, yea, dead I am! O Lord, I cannot help myself, I must stand back. . Make thou me different, then I will be godly; if not, I will remain like I have been. Here you must seek your help and at no other place; if you seek it in yourself, you will never find it. Your heart perpetually bubbles and boils with anger, you cannot prevent it.

7. Now, this is the sum of the law: You are to be kind, amiable and benignant in heart, word and deed; and even though they take your life, still you are to suffer all in love, and render thanks to your Lord. Behold, thus a great deal is included in the short sentence, "Thou shalt not kill." Christ lived up to this; do the same, and you are a good Christian. When nailed to the cross, his name, which was above every name, and his honor were profaned by the Jews, while they reviled him by words of the following and similar import: Well, what a nice God he has! If he be God's son, let him come down! Let his God come now, in whom he banked and boasted so much, and help him! <4027>Matthew 27:43, <4115>Mark 15:32, <4023>Luke 23:35. Such words pierced his very heart, hurting him more than all his other sufferings; still, he suffered all this with patience; he wept over his enemies, because they would have no part in the great benefit to be derived from his death; yea, he prayed for their sin. And in the face of this we are ready to snarl and growl over the least trifle, when asked to yield even a little to our neighbor.

8. Here you see how far we are still from Christ. It is indeed necessary to suffer with Christ, if we would enter with him into glory. He has gone before, so we should follow, as St. Peter says, <6102>1 Peter 2:21f.: "For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. "Now see what kind of an example St. Peter places before us; truly we should emulate it, endeavoring to be and to act like him. But this we cannot do by nature; it follows that we without exception are the devil's own, there being not a

man on earth that is found not guilty. Hence the sentence holds good: You must be likewise skillful, namely, good at heart, or you belong to perdition.

9. What then must we do? You must do as follows: You must acknowledge that you are condemned by the law, and the devil's own property and that you are unable to rescue yourself by any power of your own. Therefore you must flee to God, pray him to change you, or all is lost and ruined. This was well understood and observed by those highly learned, but they argued thus: If we preach that the whole world is condemned and the devil's own, what is to become of the sanctimonious priests and monks, for then they too would be condemned? God forbid! Wait, wait, we will sharpen our tongues, bore a hole into the paper for our God, make a comment and say thus: Why, God never meant it in that sense, for who could keep it? He did not command it, but merely suggested it to such as wished to be perfect. Again, the perfect are not under obligations to be so, it suffices, if they strive after perfection. Many large books, called *Formas conscientiarum,* treatises to comfort and acquit the consciences, have been written on this subject. Thomas Aquinas was about the leading heretic in this line. Later the same doctrine was confirmed by the Pope, and diffused throughout the world; this explains the later origin of the Orders, which aimed at perfection. Well, God be praised that we have understood the error, so that we can avoid it.

10. We comfort consciences in a manner quite different, namely thus: Dear brother, all this is addressed not to the monks and priests only; Christ is not trifling with his words; it is a direct command, you must conform to it, or you are the devil's property. This is our way of comforting. Alas! exclaims our nature, Do you call that comforting? It is rather a transfer of souls to the devil. True, friend, but I must first take you down to hell before taking you up to heaven, you must despair in the first place, then come to Christ, behold his example, how he conducted himself toward his enemies, in that he wept over them. But the bare example alone moves you; yet, it does not help you to any extent.

11. In view of this lay hold of his word and promise, that he will change you; this only will help you. Pray thus: Oh my God, thou hast placed Christ, thine only beloved Son, before me as an example, so that I might lead a like life; but I am not able to do this. O my God, change me, grant me thy grace! God then comes and says: Behold, since you know yourself and seek grace from me, I will change you and do as you desire. And

though you are not so perfect as Christ, as indeed you should be, I shall nevertheless have my Son's life and perfection cover your imperfections. So you see we must always have something to keep us in the right humility and fear.

12. This is true comfort that does not rest on our ability, but on the fact that we have a gracious God, who forgives our sins; on the fact that we believe in Christ and not in our own worthiness, he cleansing us from day to day; on the fact that whenever we fall short, we should always place our hope and trust in Christ. See, this is the main drift of our Gospel. Now let us briefly run over the text and consider the contents.

CONCERNING THE FOUR GRADES OF ANGER.

13. The Lord here notes four grades or degrees of anger or wrath. The first is the anger of the heart; and that is the main grade; it should be so pure that you are not sensible of it. But this cannot be in our present state. Hence when you are sensible of it, come direct to Christ and ask him graciously to change you; ask him to extinguish the fire where it starts to burn; you cannot work a way out by your own efforts.

14. The other grade is "Raca," which means an angry, unfriendly expression with the eyes, with the neck and with the whole countenance, and in whatever other way it may be made. This too should by no means be. So you should at all times know when and how to obtain help.

15. The third grade consists in saying, "Thou fool." This implies the use of all kinds of scolding and profane words, by which our neighbor is degraded. This should also be laid aside; but we should defend and protect our neighbor with the utmost zeal, wherever we can.

16. The fourth grade consists in gross murder with our hands. The meaning is that we are to help our neighbor with our hands, give and advance to him, so that he may be sustained. For if I behold a poor person lying in distress and-fail to help, protect and give, so that he be sustained, I murder him with my own hand.

17. Now if you want to see and know who you are, you must not judge yourselves by those whom you love. Nature teaches that we do not want those we love to meet with any ill. But judge yourself by your enemies, and

you will soon see who you are. Do you find that you are not in your heart kindly disposed toward them, nor kind in conduct, but speak evil of them, failing to help them with your hands, you are a murderer.

18. But in that our Lord says: “Everyone who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire,” he uses the language in vogue in the civil courts, when the accused is brought before the court, the question of guilty or not guilty is first discussed; afterwards the deliberations are on the penalty to be imposed; and lastly, the culprit is delivered over for punishment. The same holds true with these grades of wrath; that is to say, as they advance, the one is punished more severely than the preceding. There is indeed but one hell, but there is a variety of penalties and punishments, and of these the one is always nearer infliction than the other: just as he is nearer death concerning whom the question is being debated what death he is to die, than the man just cited before the court.

The Lord himself further explains his words when he says:

> “If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gilt. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art with him in the way; lest haply the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily, I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the last farthing.”

19. Here you see what God demands of us, that he does not want anything done even for himself, unless it be done in love, after the proper relation has been established with one’s neighbor. So you see, anger cancels all good deeds that might be done, for instance, prayers, fastings, self-mortification, giving of alms, and other like deeds. And God in the first place wants those to be reconciled who live in discord, they asking the pardon of the ones they have offended, as indeed is proper. This is the meaning he would convey when he says: “If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother,” that is, ask his forgiveness. Again: “Agree with

thine adversary quickly;” and even though he does not come at once to you and beg pardon, be kindly disposed toward him nevertheless and forgive him. See how God has balanced both sides: on the one hand, when offended, we are to be kind and forgiving, on the other hand, the offender is to beg pardon, so all things may go well.

20. Now one might ask: You tell us not to say, “Thou fool,” but how about Christ often calling his disciples “fools” and “unbelievers,” <41614>Mark 16:14, a great and strong slander for a Christian? Reply: We must judge according to the condition of the heart: that determines the nature of our actions. Christ and Paul rebuke and reprove harshly, but they have the best of intentions, hence their words are to be counted good deeds. Even as a father ofttimes calls his son a fool, yea, and adds bodily correction, yet he does all this out of love, in that he is always kind in his heart to his son; so Christ and the Apostles and all the faithful act; whatever they do, they do from a paternal and maternal heart, hence they are truly good deeds. Therefore we must judge such questions according to the heart and the person. This may suffice for the present on this Gospel.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THIRD SERMON: [4010]MATTHEW 5:20-26.

This sermon was first printed in the “Two Sermons on Anger.” A new and unaltered reprint appeared under the title: “One person should not be angry at another, an excellent sermon. — An exhortation to patience and meekness, a second sermon by Dr. Martin Luther, Wittenberg, 1543.” At the end are the words, “Printed at Wittenberg by Joseph Klug.”

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1. The first sign. 27.

2. The second sign.

a. Its nature. 28.

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This text has now been the theme of sermons for more than fifteen hundred years, and will continue to be until the day of judgment, before a person can be found who fully believes and keeps it. It has been copied enough and clearly enough explained, so that we can read and hear it daily and continually. However, it will indeed not be exhausted and still less lived perfectly, although everybody fancies he can hear and learn his fill in one day, so that he will need no more of it. But God knows What fools and dunces we are when we believe ourselves to be the wisest; for that reason he constantly presents one and the same sermon to us, and does not grow tired of drilling and forcing it into us continually, hoping to bring us to the point of seeing our blindness and stupidity, and, like obedient pupils, begin to learn and practice it. [The above is inserted from Luther's Two Sermons, "Zwo Predigten."]

PART 1. CONCERNING ANGER.

1. This Gospel we have fully and sufficiently explained on other occasions, when treating of the entire sermon of Christ, which Matthew the Evangelist records in three chapters; for today we will take a part of it, where Christ expounds and explains the fifth commandment. For here we observe first, that Christ attacks a sin called anger, which is very common and powerfully rules the world.

And it is not one of the gross, public vices punished also by the world, but one of those fine sins of the devil that do not want to pass for sin. For they sail under false colors, so that no one can rebuke and punish them. For instance, pride will not be called pride, but truth and justice; envy and hatred do not want to be reprimanded, but rather extolled as being true earnestness and godly zeal against wickedness. These are really the two colors the devil carries in his realm, namely, lying and murder, which in the eyes of the world claim the honor and praise of being holiness and righteousness in the highest degree.

2. For this reason our Lord and Savior singles out the Pharisees, who fain would be the holiest and most pious, and be so considered by everybody; he even calls their doings by the beautiful name of righteousness, but he pictures and judges it as one not leading to heaven but into the abyss of perdition, a veritable fruit of satan. And this he does for the reason that they wanted to be called righteous and pious, defying the whole world to prove the contrary, and at the same time were filled with venomous wrath, envy and hate. The world cannot see nor judge in such matters, therefore Christ alone is the judge here who dare and can pass such a sentence of judgment. Even if this righteousness of the Pharisees be ever so beautiful and holy, yet, they shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven; for I do not desire nor will have a righteousness that stamps itself as such, and will not be called sin, but struts about in the fine coat of divine righteousness, so that we must call them Christian, pious people, holy spiritual fathers, etc.

3. Now, on what is this righteousness of the Pharisees based and where does it derive its name? On the fact that God said, “Thou shalt not kill,” etc. On these words they planted themselves and stood. The text says nothing more than “Thou shalt not kill;” hence it follows that whoever does not kill, is righteous. But when my feelings are hurt and I am wronged, I have good grounds and reasons for being wrought up and for

resenting the injustice; at the same time my wrath appears doubly justified because it suffers violence and injustice without actually killing. This wrath of mine advances a step by embellishing its cause in proclaiming its innocence and parading its piety before God and the world thus: Have I not good reasons for being angry? This and that my neighbor has done to me in return for my many favors, and I would have gladly given him my life's blood; this is the thanks, the returns, with which he pays me. Am I to suffer all this and pass such malice by? And at this point a Pharisee boldly proceeds to malign and persecute his neighbor in the highest degree, wherever he can, inflicting harm and injury; and all this is claimed to be done justly, he himself being pious and holy, yea, extolled as a martyr in the sight of God and men.

4. In like manner, when the Pope and his followers condemn. burn and murder all who will not worship their abominations, counting them as disobedient to the Christian Church and obstinate, this of course must be called genuine service of God, and God should feel elated over becoming worthy of such saints. Our great noblemen act much in the same way, who boast so loudly they are friends of God and of the whole world, but enemies to iniquity. Indeed, what a great friendship we here have with God and with mankind! Where shall God stand before such saints in order to raise them high enough heavenward?

5. Behold the excellent, grand and sacred anger of the cavalier or nobleman, who cannot possibly be guilty of a transgression or an injustice; and whoever is not of this opinion is evidently not a godly man. This sermon of Christ seems therefore very peculiar to the world, in fact it is unknown in use and practice, though heard often enough and well known as to its words. For the world does not consider it a sin for a man to resent a wrong, when he is innocent; and it is true that he who has a clear case against his offender can also seek redress in court, all this we must admit. But in adding his personal wrath to matters and trying to avenge himself, he overdoes it; one law now conflicts with the other, and a small right develops into a great wrong.

6. Hence you must in this instance so tune the organ as to have the pipes sound in harmony, and so as to prevent two from clashing. For what kind of justice would you call it when one offends you by a mere word, or pilfers a penny's worth, and you go and cut off his arm or burn down his house, crying angrily the while: Well, he did me wrong, and I have good

reasons, etc.! In such a case your murderous wrath, that does tenfold more violence and injustice to me, is not to be called a sin, but righteousness and holiness, while I am to be considered unrighteous aria suffer wrong.

7. This now I am not saying for the benefit of strangers, who are without, except merely for an illustration to show how this vice rules in the world; but concerning us, both teachers and scholars, who pride ourselves on being evangelical and still want the liberty of becoming angry and to rage when we please; and not permit ourselves to be punished nor reproved, but rather than that everything may go to pieces, if only we be considered to be in the right, and pious, despite the fact that such a despicable farce of right causes a hundredfold more wrong.

8. Therefore Christ here takes energetic action, and abolishes anger wholly and completely in the entire world, draws it to himself and says: I do not merely say, Thou shalt not kill, nor say Raca to thy brother, but thou shalt in no case be angry; the one is as solemnly and earnestly prohibited as the other.

For you are not told to judge or avenge yourself, and even though you are right and have a just cause, still your wrath is of the devil; as St. James in his James 1:20, says: “The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Hence all anger is to be abolished entirely from us and the wrath of God alone is to work; otherwise it will turn out to be the devil’s wrath and it certainly does not cool down without sin. Just as also these three: to judge, to avenge and to glory, have been taken from us, and no person should share in them, though they have ever so good a cause and ever so great holiness. But to God alone belong honor, judgment and vengeance, hence also wrath.

9. Now, I fear, this will not be done by us as long as we are here in this life, and yet it would be grace, if we only became so pious as to make a beginning; for as soon as we suffer an injury, flesh and blood at once act as flesh and blood; they begin to rage and rave in anger and impatience. It is natural for us to feel hurt when suffering injustice and violence, hence it is necessary to check and restrain the feelings of anger and resist them. The feeling that you are injured will pass away; but that you in addition desire to avenge yourself in this or that way, is prohibited. Therefore see to it that one fits well into the other, that one claim does not conflict with the other nor cancel it, but let the two harmonize, so that both may continue. If you cannot secure your rights without doing greater harm, let it go. For it is not

good to check or punish one wrong with another, nor is God willing to have universal justice perish because of your petty claims.

10. Now the aim and contents of this sermon by Christ are as follows: You fancy that whoever does not inflict a blow with his arm has not acted contrary to God's command; but he is at liberty to be angry at his neighbor and to avenge himself; and to take vengeance is so far right, and no sin at all. This would nullify the commandment, leaving it without any force whatever. For it does not ask merely that you refrain from killing with your fist, but also from doing harm or injury with your tongue or your heart. If not, how about the command that we are to do good to our enemy? If that is to hold good, we most certainly must not work against our neighbor. Otherwise in what respect would we be better than publicans and public sinners, as Christ himself says, [4062]Luke 6:32, who are friends to each other, the one not inflicting any harm on the other?

11. But possibly you say' Well, if wrath is to be so thoroughly rooted out of the heart of man, how is evil to be stayed and punished, which cannot be done without some severity? But if evil is to have free course and left go unpunished, you would soon have no house and no town. I would reply: We know that God has committed the judiciary to the civil government and to that end established princes and lords, who bear the sword in God's stead; their sword and its edge is God's sword and edge. Aside from this they are personally exactly as other people are, having no more right to be angry than anybody else. Now the judge or executioner, in condemning and executing a man that never personally did an injury to either, does so in God's stead, officiating in God's place, inasmuch as the malefactor has become liable to God's sentence and penalty. Assuredly there should be no anger nor bitterness in man's heart, and yet God's wrath and sword accomplish their work.

12. The same holds good in war, when you must either defend yourself, or vigorously thrust, beat and burn: then likely wrath and revenge reign supreme, and yet it should not proceed from the heart of man, but emanate from the divine authority and command, so that the wicked be punished and peace be maintained. Even though you thereby meet with damage and harm, you must submit. Thus God suffered his wrath to come over Jerusalem through the king of Babylon; again through the Romans, until not one stone remained upon another.

13. Hence where such wrath exists it is not to be called man's wrath, but God's. And when, unhappily, you commingle God's and man's wrath, it is the miserable doings of the devil. Wickedness, I say, must be restrained; but this duty must be performed in God's place and stead. But when a judge and government are not godly, and they mingle their personal wrath with God's, and grace their actions with the name and shield of the office; when they are secretly hostile to me and can do me harm, they avail themselves of opportunities to do so, and then claim to have done so officially: this I would call diabolical malignity, but they claim to have done the right thing and to be entitled to praise.

14. But you say: Well, the officer has done this and the other thing to me, and I cannot restrain him in any other way; if I should allow it, I would never have peace. I answer: It is indeed not right for persons to harm you, nor are you forbidden to protect yourself in a proper way; but it will never do for you to play double, using the office as a vent for your wrath, so that people will later on say: Mr. John — or Mr. Peter — did not do this, but the mayor or the judge, and you then take credit in saying that you did not do it from motives of anger or hatred, but of duty and justice.

15. Here you see that infamous filth formed by appending human, yea, devilish wrath to divine wrath and making one cake of both, which indeed should be kept asunder farther than heaven and earth. And just as they, contrary to the second commandment, use the name of God in vain by swearing and the like, making that sacred name serve the purpose of a lie, so that it can be on the market under the label of that beautiful and glorious name: so too in this instance the office and law that are God's must serve the purposes of your envy and hatred giving them a standing so they can achieve all they purpose in the way of harming a neighbor. At the same time you parade about as if you had done the right and proper thing. Yea, you are a two-fold saint; in the first place you have been abused; in the second place, you do not avenge yourself or seek redress personally, but in the capacity of an officer or judge. In this same way our tender saints, the Papists, bishops and priests, now act everywhere, and, following in their wake, great princes and lords illtreat and murder people, as the whim of their raving wrath and hatred may move them. And in the end all this is to be called the service of God and supreme holiness.

16. Thus the wrath of man is at all times full of envy and hatred to his neighbor, being occasioned by the devil and planted in the heart of man,

especially in the Pharisaical saints, who sin manifoldly and are more worthy of condemnation than others, since, for one thing, they interfere with God's office and law, robbing him of his own, and then want to be in the right and be considered pious.

17. On the contrary when God's wrath is administered according to his command, it does not spring from envy or hatred, but from pure love and a good heart. A heart that deplores the fact that man should suffer any ill, and yet, for his own sake and the sake of his office, God must punish and abolish wickedness.

18. For it is indeed plain that Adam loved his son Cain as being his first-born flesh and blood, and he moreover wished to be holy and began to serve God with his first offering, etc; and thought his offering was far more acceptable to God than his brother's. He also insisted that he was right and his brother wrong by virtue of being the first-born, so that he had to be the true priest and the first in God's sight. On these things he depended, despised his brother, and fancied to have good reasons for being angry and for persecuting and slaying his brother; as if injustice were done him in that Jehovah had no respect unto his offering. Therefore he goes ahead, and because his father did not approve and praise him, he murders his brother. He follows this up by being insolent, for when Adam in the name and place of God calls him to account he retorts, What do I know of my brother? Am I to be his keeper? Now, dear as he was to Adam as a natural child, and after Abel's death his only child, still his father pronounces that stern and dreadful sentence, Genesis 4:10: "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now thou art cursed from the earth." Again: "A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. "Truly these are the words and actions of wrath, for by them he placed him under the gravest ban and direst anathema, expelling him from heaven and earth. And Adam forthwith proceeds to execute this stern wrath, and banished his son, so that he should nowhere have a safe dwelling place. Without doubt he did this very reluctantly, for he would by far have preferred to keep his son; but the wrath of God must take its course, assigning death and the fire of hell.

19. The Christian Church must act on the same principles, when putting a person under the ban and "delivering such a one unto Satan," as St. Paul did at Corinth, 1 Corinthians 5:5; also when denying him the sacrament and all fellowship, so as not to participate in his sin. This indeed is a

dreadful sentence and terrific wrath; still it is not the wrath of man but of God. For the Church would much rather see man converted and be saved; as she shows by her actions, for where one repents and is converted, she gladly receives him back as her dear son and rejoices over him with all the angels, as Christ says of the lost sheep and the prodigal son. <42150>Luke 15:6f.

20. Here we must beware not to abuse this power, as the Pope has been guilty of doing against those attacking his person or rule, thus confounding his person with his office, making out that his wrath is God's wrath, thereby spoiling both and pouring poison into the wine. For thus the Pope has, under the name of divine wrath, threatened and stunned emperors and kings, and yet he accomplished nothing more than to pour out his own wrath and spite. For this reason his church is in Scripture called a church of blasphemies, <66135>Revelation 13:5, 16, having the marks of blasphemies written on her forehead, in all her words and deeds.

21. This now is the wrath we call the divine or paternal wrath. Then there is another, called the brotherly wrath, of the same nature because it proceeds from love. For instance when I am angry at a person whom I heartily love and to whom I wish all manner of good, and I am grieved because he will not forsake his sins and do better, so that I always distinguish between the person and the sin, to help the person and restrain the sin, doing all I can by exhorting, warning, threatening and correcting, in order to lead him to forsake his sins.

22. But it is well here also to be on one's guard, lest a rogue be back of this, in the sense of one's own wrath intermingling. For our wrath should be so wholly absent that not a speck of it be found; but that God's wrath alone hold sway, which is to flow either from the office assigned, or from brotherly love, which here would mean from the wrath of God. For it is God's command that we admonish, correct, reform and help one another, so that our neighbor desists from his sins and receives our admonitions gladly and with thanks. This is the "wrath" of that common Christian love of which Christ says, <40185>Matthew 18:15: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone," and in Scripture it is called an excellent, godly jealousy. St. Paul in <47102>2 Corinthians 11:2 says' "I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy." For a wrath of this nature does not seek your disgrace or disadvantage, but your

honor and advantage; it would regret to see you injure the prospects of your soul's salvation.

23. So we assert that Christ here is not preaching on the office which is God's, nor on love, but on each person's own and individual wrath, proceeding from our heart and will, and directed against the person of our neighbor: — this wrath is to be wholly done away with and be put to death, no matter if the injury and injustice done to us hurts and pains. To illustrate' that John the Baptist was so shamefully slain, that Christ was nailed to the cross, that the holy martyrs were so cruelly put to death, all this did not pass without the weeping and lamentation of pious hearts; for we do not have, nor should we have, hearts of iron but of flesh, as St. Bernhard says: *Dolor est, seal contemnitur;* it is painful, but must be borne and overcome. And there is quite a difference between enduring pain, weeping and lamenting, and seeking revenge, or entertaining hatred and envy.

24. Now God wants this commandment: Thou shalt not kill, understood to mean so much that no one is to be angry. For by nature we all are liars, born in natural sin and in blindness, not knowing how to be angry, nor seeing how depraved our nature is, to-wit. , that it is not able either to love or be angry aright, since in both it seeks nothing but self and selfish ends. Since now by nature we are so corrupt, it is forbidden and annulled both to love and be angry as a human being, in which our nature would seek its own ends. On the other hand, divine love that "seeketh not her own" but that of one's neighbor, is enjoined, and an anger that is zealous not for his own but for God's sake, whom it behooves either to punish transgressions against his commandments, or out of a spirit of love, and for the good of our neighbor to help him.

25. The Pharisaical holiness, however, does not act thus; but as it has no love for one's neighbor but only wishes to see self honored and praised and served; so too it cannot' but rage and rave against the truly pious persons, and still pretends not to have sinned against the commandment in question. ,lust as Christ was treated by the Pharisees and high priests, who delivered him to the judge Pilate to be offered upon the cross, and still they did not want to be accounted guilty, but to eat the pascal lamb and remain holy.

26. Hence the Lord strikes a fresh blow at all the Pharisaic holiness and righteousness, denying them every particle of grace and the kingdom of heaven and condemning them to hell-fire, as having an unrighteousness

doubly wrong in God's sight and corrupt to the very core. Therefore I say, says God: "Whosoever is angry with his brother;" I do not say, He only that slays with his hand, but if you have anger in your heart, then you are already worthy to be condemned by the judgment; for such wrath originates only in man's inborn malice, which seeks either its own revenge and wantonness, or its own honor and gain. But God does not want you to seek your own honor and right; but let him seek and demand it who should, and to whom he has given authority, namely, the judge and executioner, who are not looking after their own but God's affairs, for otherwise they would not be permitted to execute or punish anybody. But see to it, says he, that you personally do not grow angry, but so completely control your anger that, be it in official duty or not, it does not proceed from the heart.

PART 2. CONCERNING THE SIGNS OF ANGER.

27. The other part of this text, "Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca," etc. , we hold to mean all kinds of evil demeanor and bad turns done to a neighbor, which are not done by angry words. Such a man, Christ says, "is in danger of the council;" it has, as yet, not been determined what to do with him, but he has incurred the verdict of guilty; it remains merely to determine the penalty. This means that such a person cannot enter heaven, but has already merited his condemnation, the only difference between him and those in perdition is that he is a little more remote from the final punishment; but nevertheless he also belongs there.

28. The third part is: "Whosoever shall say, Thou fool. "This is also a very common vice, consisting in robbing our neighbor of his honor and reputation, be it done behind his back or to his face, which is called *"contumeliam"* and *"conuitium,"* defaming and reviling. Whoever does this, Christ says, "is in danger of hell-fire;" that is to say, there is no need of debating the question, of citing the culprit, indicting and sentencing him; he is already convicted and condemned, it but remains for the executioner to lead him off and do his duty. So God does not want you to avenge yourself out of anger in any form or manner, be it with your heart, with your fist, or with your mouth, and thus do an injury to your neighbor, show him spite, give him unkind words, etc.

29. But I hear you say, Who then can be a preacher or a judge or a plaintiff, if no one's honor is to be questioned, or be ever called a fool? Why then preachers, judges, plaintiffs, witnesses, etc. , are all to hold their peace. But here, as I have stated, this difference is to be observed. When I, as a preacher, reprove you publicly from the pulpit, or privately in confession, I do not do so, but God's Word: therefore you are not to complain that I am speaking against your honor. For a preacher cannot, in keeping with his office, abuse or revile anybody, unless he be a rogue, who mingles his own malice and hatred with his office. And you cannot say to a judge when performing the functions of his office: You are speaking against my honor in calling me a thief and a murderer; for God and not the judge, has spoken thus to you. Therefore it will not do to say it is touching your honor, when being reproved or corrected. True, such words do not promote your honor; however, not man, but God did it; should he not have the right and authority to speak on this subject?

30. But when God through the office has already rendered a verdict, both I and others may speak of that; for anyone may speak of God's public works and judgments; it is then a matter of history, discussed everywhere. Therefore we must nevertheless not enjoin silence on everybody to the extent of forbidding him to say, "This man is a thief or a rogue," after the judge has pronounced him such. For more honor you can neither take from nor give to a man than God has taken or given. Now since God has declared the sentence and published it publicly through the judge or preacher, everyone may with a good conscience speak of it. I recur to this because we are always inclined to go the wrong road. When preaching, there is always an inclination so to turn and twist everything as not to be bound by the Word of God. Likewise, when with Christ we say that no one should be angry or at variance with his brother or speak evil of him, everybody would like to silence the preacher to the extent that he is not to touch upon or punish public sins and vices.

31. Finally this is the sense of our Gospel lesson: When you, as a man, for personal reasons speak against the honor of your neighbor, feeling elated over his sins, this is wicked and wrong. But when it has come so far that God himself makes anything public, then it will not do for me to praise a public, scoundrel, whom God himself has publicly proved to be such; for that would be the same as defending and abetting rascality. So our whole conduct should be guided by this, that we do not contemplate or attempt anything of ourselves; but see what God enjoins, or does through his

servants; this then God himself has done and all is good and proper. So it will not do to be silenced in such cases, but to stand on the side of truth and justice, and contribute your influence in upholding and lauding God’s judgment, in order to terrify and warn others. Let this suffice for the present on this Gospel text.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

This sermon appeared in pamphlet form in seven separate editions during the year 1523; also in the collections of “Ten Useful Sermons” of 1523 and of twenty-seven sermons of 1523.

Text. <40801>Mark 8:1-9. In those days, when there was again a great multitude, and they had nothing to eat, he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and ,if I send them away fasting to their home, they will faint on the way; and some of them are come from far. And his disciples answered him, Whence shall one be able to fill these men with bread here in a desert place? And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven. And he commandeth the multitude to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he brake, and gave to his disciples, to set before them; and they set them before the multitude. And they had a few small fishes: and having blessed them, he commanded to set these also before them. And they ate, and were filled: and they took up, of broken pieces that remained over, seven baskets. And they were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

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SUMMARY OF THIS GOSPEL:

1. Here we have a clear, plain passage of Scripture against the temptation in securing our daily bread. To this the last part of the sixth chapter of Mathew refers.

2. When we read of the unbelief and distrust of the saints, it should minister strong consolation to us that we despair not, although we are also still weak in our faith.

3. God the Lord, nourishes us still today contrary to all comprehension of reason, if we only view it rightly. Ah, God will never forsake you, who perhaps have yet only a few days to live, for this God has so richly nourished you until the present through thirty, forty, or fifty years.

4. Every creature of God is good, if we receive and enjoy it with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the Word of God and by prayer, as St. Paul writes in <5004>1 Timothy 4:4.

JESUS FEEDS THE FOUR THOUSAND WITH SEVEN LOAVES AND A FEW SMALL FISHES.

PART. I. CONCERNING FAITH.

1. Beloved friends, I hope you thoroughly understand this Gospel; for you are now sufficiently established in the truth to know what we should expect in the Gospel and what is presented to us there, namely, the true nature and life of faith. Because of this Christ is pictured and represented so lovingly in all the Gospel lessons. Although his history and works are ever changing, yet the plain, simple faith remains ever the same. To-day's Gospel paints to us the Lord in a way that we may fully know how we should esteem him, namely, that he is merciful, meek and loving; that he gladly helps everybody and freely associates and deals with all people. And such a picture as this faith really craves.

2. Therefore the Scriptures present to us a double picture; one is that of fear or the overpowering picture of the severe wrath of God, before which no one can stand; but must despair unless he has faith. In contrast with this the picture of grace is presented to us in order that faith may behold it and obtain for itself an agreeable and comforting refuge in God, with the hope that man cannot expect so much from God, that there is not still much more to be had from him.

3. You have often heard that there are also two kinds of possessions, spiritual and temporal. To-day's Gospel treats of the temporal and bodily blessings, teaches us the faith of the child, and it is a picture for the weak, in that they should look to God for everything good, and that they might thus later learn to trust God and depend upon him for spiritual blessings. For if we are instructed in the Gospel, how Christ feeds our stomachs, we can then conclude that he will also feed and clothe our souls. For if I cannot trust him to sustain my body, much less can I trust him to sustain my soul forever. For example, if I cannot trust a person that he will give me one dollar, how can I trust him that he will give me ten? If I cannot expect from a person that he will give me a piece of bread; much less could I have any hope, that he would give me a house and yard, and the whole earth.

4. Now, he who cannot, like the babe on its mother's breast, have a child faith, will hardly hope that God will forgive him his sins and save his soul forever; for the soul is inexpressibly more than the stomach, for which also Christ has compassion as the Gospel to-day proves. Therefore St. Peter said correctly in 1 Peter 2:1-3: "Beloved brethren: Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, anal hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto Salvation; if ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." For it is not enough that a babe should imbibe milk, but it must also grow large and strong, that it may learn later to eat bread and hard food.

5. But "to feed on milk" means, to taste the favor and the kind grace of God. "To taste the goodness of God" means, to experience it in one's life. For should I preach a hundred years of God, how kind, sweet and good he is, that he condescends to help man, and I have not yet myself tasted it through experience; thus all is still in vain and no one is in this way taught to trust God rightly. From this you can conclude what a rare person a true Christian is. For there are many who say they trust in God for their daily bread; but that floats only upon the tongue and hangs in the ears; it never enters the heart where it belongs.

6. Now let us observe in this example, what the life and nature of faith are. The apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews 2:1, writes thus: "Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." That is as much as to say, faith is the means by which one trusts in possessions he does not see, namely, that I should expect temporal things which I can neither see nor hear, but I must only hope for them; as is the case in to-day's Gospel. There were many people together, about four thousand, who with their wives and children had had nothing to eat for the space of three days (I judge that can be called fasting), but were extremely hungry, far from home, without any provisions on which the body lives. Now the apostle says, faith is that through which I hope for things I cannot see. Such a faith the great multitude of people here has; they see no food and yet they hope that God will nourish them.

7. Now, what does Christ do in this case? What attitude does he take to this transaction? He must not have had much tact, for he goes to the disciples and asks, how shall one feed all these? They reply, Oh, who will be able to feed such a great multitude of people with bread in the

wilderness? But here you see how little human thoughts and faith harmonize; here you see, the wiser reason is, the less it accomplishes in the works of God. Therefore Christ asked his disciples that everyone might learn to know by experience what reason is, and acknowledge how reason and faith in no way agree. Here we learn to blindfold reason, when we begin to believe, and then give reason a permanent furlough.

8. Take an example: If I were a man who had a wife and children, and had nothing for them and no one gave me anything; then I should believe and hope that God would sustain me. But if I see that it amounts to nothing and I am not helped with food and clothing, what takes place? Then, as an unbelieving fool, I begin to doubt, and go and take whatever is at hand, steal, deceive, cheat the people and make my way the best I can and may. See this is what shameless unbelief does. But if I am a believer then I close my eyes and say: O God, I am thy creature and thy handiwork and thou hast from the beginning created me. I will depend entirely upon you who cares more for me, how I shall be sustained, than I do myself; thou wilt indeed nourish me, feed, clothe and help me, where and when you know best.

9. Thus faith is a sure foundation, through which I expect that which I see not. Therefore faith must always have sufficient, for before it should fail the angels would have to come from heaven and dig bread out of the earth in order that believing persons should be fed. Yes, the heavens and the earth would have to pass away before God would let his believers lack clothing and the other necessaries of life. The comforting and powerful Word of the divine promise requires and demands this. David boasts of this in <1925>Psalm 37:25: “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.” And in the verses just preceding in <1918>Psalm 37:18-19 he says: “Jehovah knoweth the days of the perfect; and their inheritance shall be forever. They shall not be put to shame in the time of evil; and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.”

10. But when one inquires of reason for counsel it soon says: It is not possible. Yes, you must wait a long time until roasted ducks fly into your mouth, for reason sees nothing, grasps nothing, and nothing is present. Just so the apostles do also here who thought: Yes, who will provide food for so many, no one is able to do that; but had they seen a great pile of money and in addition tables laden with bread and meat, they would soon have discovered good counsel and been able to give good consolation; that

would. have gone according to their thinking very reasonably. However, since they saw nothing they could find no counsel, but held it to be impossible that one should thus feed so many people, and especially since no provisions were at hand.

11. We have said enough concerning faith through which we entrust the stomach to God for his care, and believe that he will not allow us to come to distress because of the lack of temporal things. Now concerning spiritual blessings, when we are about to die, I wish also to say: then we will find and see before our eyes very death, and yet we would gladly wish to live; then we will see before us very hell, and yet we would gladly wish to possess heaven; then we will see God's judgment, and yet we would gladly see his grace. In brief, we will not see a single one of the things we would like to have. No created thing can help us in the presence of death, hell and the judgment of God; and if I believe, I will say: Yes, faith is the fundamental principle by which I secure what I do not see; hence, if I believe, nothing can harm me. Although I see nothing now but death, hell and the judgment of God before my eyes, yet I must not look at them; but fully trust that God, by virtue of the power of his promise, not because of my worthiness, will give me life, salvation and grace. That is cleaving to God by faith in the right way.

12. This is here beautifully painted in the visible picture of the four thousand men who hang on God alone through the faith that says: yes, God will indeed feed us. Had they judged according to reason, they would have said' Oh, we are so many, we are here in the desert, we have empty and hungry stomachs; nothing can help our condition. There was nothing of which they could speak; but they had a good refuge without any human disputing with God, they commended themselves to him and freely laid all their need upon him. Then Christ comes, before they have any care and before they ask him to come, and takes all more to heart than they do themselves, and says to his disciples:

> "I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days and have nothing to eat; and if I send them away fasting to their homes, they will faint on the way."

13. Behold, what a sympathetic Christ we have, who even provides food for our poor stomachs. Here new hope is awakened and man is comforted through the words of Christ; as he says: They lie there and wait for me until the third day. I must give them also what they need. Here you see that

all who thus faithfully cling to the Word of God will be fed by God himself; for that is the nature and the power of faith, which flows alone out of the Word of God.

14. Therefore, beloved friends, let us once make a beginning to believe; for unbelief is the cause of all sin and vice, which now have taken the upper hand in all stations of life. How does it come to pass that everywhere there are so many foolish women and rogues, so many rank imposters, thieves, robbers, usurers, murderers and sellers of indulgences? It all comes from unbelief. For such men judge alone according to human reason, and the reason judges only according to that which it sees; but what it does not see, it does not wish to lay hold of. Therefore, if it does not place its confidence in God through faith, then it must despair in itself and develop rogues and rascals. Observe, thus it comes to pass wherever men permit their reason to govern them, and are not ruled by faith.

PART 2. CONCERNING LOVE.

15. Now just as you have learned faith, so should we learn love; for Christ wishes to set before us a twofold picture, namely, a picture of faith, that we should not be over-anxious; also a picture of love, that, as he does to us, is anxious about our welfare, feeds us and gives us to drink and clothes us, only out of free love, not for the sake of his own advantage or because of our worthiness; so should we also do good unto our neighbor, freely and gratuitously, out of pure love, by which, as he is a Christ to you, you should thus also be a Christ to your neighbor.

16. Therefore you see that all the works of the priests, monks and nuns are vain and cursed; for they are not directed to the end to serve their neighbors; but only that they may merit much before God through their works. For true Christian works must be directed entirely and freely to the end that they be done for the good of our neighbor, only freely given and scattered broadcast among the masses; as Christ also did who cast his good deeds away freely for the people to scramble after, and gave his doctrine, word and life for the Church. Blessed are they who accept this giving with thanksgiving.

17. I say this only for the reason that you may see how all parts of the Gospel lessons tend in the direction and will have nothing more, and God

also requires nothing more from us, than that we surrender ourselves to the service of our neighbor, and accordingly sustain him in the name of God and in the place of God, do him good and show him a service; for God does not need our good works, as [1907]Psalm 50:7-13 says: “Bear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify unto thee: I am God, even thy God. I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices; and thy burnt-offerings are continually before me. I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?”

18. Just so he says to us also; behold, Israel, that is thou believing one, I am thy God and thou art not my God; I will give to you and not you to me. Hear, Israel, I will not be angry with thee that thou dost not offer me any sacrifices; for what thou hast in thy barn, house and yard, that was all mine before it was thine; for I have stored it away there, Here he spoke very pointedly to the Jews who prided themselves highly on their sacrifices. Now, since he rejects our offering, what will he then have? The Psalmist in the verses immediately following says: “Offer unto God the sacrifice of thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High; and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.” That means, I wish to have thy heart, rest thou in me and believe me to be a kind and gracious God, that I am thy God: then you will have enough. Therefore he says also in the following [1914]Psalm 51:14-19: “Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise. For thou delightest not in sacrifice; else would I give it: thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”

19. In this confidence and hope let thy faith run its course, to acknowledge God as thy friend, to cleave to him and in the greatest need to flee to him, and to one else. Believe it and expect it, then he will help thee, this thou shouldst not doubt; therefore in harmony with this, thou shouldst serve thy neighbor freely and gratuitously. These two thoughts are presented to us in this Gospel.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

SECOND SERMON: <4000>MARK 8:1-9.

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PART 1. THE ADMONITION AND CONSOLATION.

1. To-day's Gospel presents to us again both the doctrine and the consolation against the temptation in caring for the necessaries of this life, or the temporal support and maintenance of the Church upon the earth. And faith belongs here since Christ came not for the purpose of establishing a government that may be called a political or a domestic kingdom, which were long ago established by God and given for the purpose of meeting our bodily needs. And reason itself here teaches how and from what source we can bring it to pass that everyone in his station may enjoy a livelihood, peace and protection, so that one may see before his eyes and have in his hands all the necessaries of life that he needs to maintain the temporal government. Therefore this did not claim the attention of Christ since it was not a part of his calling and office; but as his kingdom was to be a different government, in which all persons in all callings and offices, high and low, as sinners condemned before God to everlasting death, should be helped to the divine, eternal kingdom and life; the spiritual kingdom had to engage his attention while he passed by the other two, the civil, and the domestic.

2. Therefore it had to follow that his disciples, preachers and servants would have to suffer poverty because they could not outside of their service and office seek their livelihood as the rest of the world does, nor hope to become rich from their calling; in addition, that they, aside from this, would be persecuted by the world, which would oppose their preaching because it would not be in harmony with their understanding and prejudices. And thus the Christians in the world could not depend upon any sure guarantee for their peaceful life and protection; but had to live

continually in uncertainty because of the world, and felt in danger and as restless as the waves of the sea because of that which they already had or might have. But should they have enough to eat and to drink and a place and a room where to live, they could not expect it from any other one than alone from Christ.

3. Now Christ knows this very well, therefore he arms and comforts his disciples with these and like examples and sayings in order that they might not despair. Although his kingdom has nothing to do with eating and drinking, building and caring for the needs of the body; yet they should not die from hunger. And this he again confirms in the passage of 4033Matthew 6:33. “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” For by to-day’s Gospel he proves that they, who followed him to hear his preaching, and followed him so faithfully that they continued with him three days in the desert, could not now very well return out of the desert without fainting and coming to poverty, need and distress on account of his Word. Yet since they sought first the kingdom of God and Christ had previously preached, prayed and accomplished that which pertains to the righteousness of God, there must follow also that which pertains to the body in order that they may learn to believe that they would not come to want and that they should expect from him all his Church needs for the maintenance of her bodily or external existence upon the earth.

4. It is true that in all ages of the Church two things have done and are doing great harm, namely, poverty and riches. For in the first place, we see the apostles and true bishops and preachers in such straightened circumstances, that no one gave them anything and they themselves were not able to acquire anything; hence everybody felt shy of such an office and no one wished to enter it. In the second place, when the church became extremely wealthy through great endowments and stipends and sat in all luxury, the ministers themselves neglected the office of preaching and the care of souls, and themselves became lords.

5. Just so it is also at present: Where true pastors and preachers are so poorly supported that no one donates anything to them, and moreover what they have is snatched out of their mouths by a shameless and unthankful world, by princes, noblemen, townsmen and farmers, so that they with their poor wives and children must suffer need, and when they die leave behind them pitiable, rejected widows and orphans. By this very

many good-hearted and very clever people are more and more discouraged from becoming pastors and preachers. For all arts, trades and callings in life serve to the end that we may through them fortify ourselves against hunger and poverty; but with the office of the ministry the contrary is the case, whoever will per, form its duties faithfully, must expose himself to danger and poverty.

6. From this then will follow the ruin of the Church, in that the parishes will stand vacant, the pulpits be neglected and again preachers arrive who seek not faithfully God's Word nor the kingdom of Christ; but who think, as they preach, what the people will gladly hear, so that they may continue in that direction and again become rich; and in this manner things will again go to ruin. Therefore also at present the great and powerful, especially the nobility, plan to keep their pastors and preachers under their feet in order that they may not again become rich, and lord it over them as they formerly experienced and are now overcautious. But they will not be able to bring it about as they plan.

7. How shall we now act in this matter and from what source shall we obtain preachers and pastors in order that the kingdom of Christ may be perpetuated? For neither poverty nor riches is good for the Church; mere poverty, hunger and anxiety the preachers cannot suffer; great possessions and riches they cannot stand. Poverty hinders the development of their personality; riches are in the way of them performing the duties of their work and office. But wherever it thus happens that support is not given, and the pulpit and the office of the pastor are left vacant, then will the world also see what it will have to enjoy because of such action.

For if each will consider the welfare only of his own house and seek how he may maintain himself and no one inquires how the Word of God and the office of the ministry are to be perpetuated, then will God also say as he said in the prophecy of Haggai 1:4-11, where the people also left the house of the Lord desolate, neglected God's Word and the service of the temple, so that the priests and servants of the temple had to resort to work as farmers and learn to do other things, by which they could support themselves because nothing was given for their office and service. Therefore he speaks thus: "Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your ceiled houses, while this house lieth waste? Now therefore thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with

drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith Jehovah. Ye looked for much, and lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith Jehovah of hosts. Because of my house that lieth waste, while ye run every man to his own house. Therefore for your sake the heavens withhold the dew, and the earth withholdeth its fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the grain, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labor of the hands."

8. Behold, this is the punishment for despising the office of the ministry, when such punishment was the most gracious as it has been still in our day, and I would to God, that it might continue so. But when we esteem the Word of God so lightly and the ministers and preachers are so poorly supported that they are compelled to forsake their office and seek their bread through other occupations, and thereby also discourage others from entering this office, who otherwise are gifted for it and inclined to it; God not only sends famine and other great national calamities as now appear before our eyes, in order that no one's purse may retain anything and no blessing and no provisions remain. But he takes the Word and the true doctrine entirely away, and in their stead permits fanatical spirits and false teachers to enter among them, by whom they are led astray and deceived before they are aware of it both as to their souls and property, and for their neglect they must contribute richly and most bountifully.

9. Therefore the world should be advised, if it will take advice, that the lords, the princes, the countries, the cities and all in general make efforts to provide a little for the necessaries of the house of God and the kingdom of God, as they must do for other offices and arts, in order that they may give their whole attention to them and obtain their daily bread from them, which are needed much more than other offices and arts. While one officer or judge is sufficient, likewise one jurist or physician can meet the needs of one city or more, and for a time of the entire country; we must have thousands of preachers for the various countries since the parishes and districts are so many; for children are daily born who must be baptized and educated, learn God's Word and become Christians. From what source can ministers be had, if they are not reared and educated? Then the churches

must either stand vacant and the people scatter and go astray, or the people receive and suffer from coarse mulelike characters and corrupters of the Word.

10. But woe unto all who contributed to bring about such a state or have not tried to prevent it, that God's house had to become desolate; much more, however, those who have discouraged and hindered others from entering the ministry, or continuing in it; for such characters are worse than the Jews or Turks. However they are not to be excused because they allowed themselves to be discouraged from entering the ministry on account of poverty, for their greatest lack was in faith that Christ would notwithstanding give them their daily bread or nourishment for their bodies, which, although at times may be scanty and bitter, yet, you are to remember on the other hand how very much greater treasure it is that one receives a piece of bread into his hands in an exceptional way and through the special blessing of God, than all the riches and fullness of the world.

11. Therefore the civil government should especially try to do something here and to be helpful to our children and posterity, and not withdraw its hand and by its example hinder and deter others, and do Christendom an irreparable damage. How will you give an answer to God if you through your cursed avarice retard or hinder a single soul in its salvation; I will say nothing about hindering a whole city or country by your example, so that they may no longer possess the Word of God and the preaching of it? And he must indeed be a cruel, unmerciful and cursed person who does not help his own children in this way, much more if he hinders it. For if we wish to be Christians we should positively know that we are called to do this, and it is the command of God that we all do it with both our hands and with all our powers, that the house of God may not become desolate nor the pulpits stand vacant and his kingdom cease, and that both we ourselves and the young people be not robbed of their salvation.

12. To be sure, in the Old Testament it was obligatory on everybody, and commanded by Moses, that the tenth part or the tithe be given for this purpose from all their income, <0273>Leviticus 27:30f. How much more should we Christians do for this cause, which is the most necessary, and without which no one upon the earth gives and does anything that Christ's kingdom may continue built up, so that we allow his servants to eat with us in order that we may remain in the same kingdom of God, and give such grace and salvation to our children as an inheritance. If we do not do this

then he will as a reward of our ingratitude put an end to our avarice and devouring spirit, so that we ourselves will soon perish; because such great possessions and provisions we have not, but that God can permit rust to enter among them through famine, Turkish war and other national plagues and everything be consumed, ravished or otherwise destroyed in a single year.

13. Thus will Christ warn us first of all here through his own example that everyone is required to help the kingdom of God and his Word with temporal provisions for the body; in case he himself cannot or will not beck)me a minister of the Gospel.

14. Following this he also comforts those who are in the ministerial office, that they become not distressed or alarmed through their present want or poverty; but that they may know that Christ cares for them and will nourish them even in their poverty and will never permit them to suffer need and want, but will finally provide the richer bounty for them; yea, he has already thought of all things before and provided for them before they thought from what source they should obtain what they need.

15. For he shows indeed forcibly in this example that he is a rich and powerful lord and provider; yea, he is a rich miller and baker, better than any other upon the earth that has learned his trade perfectly. Yes, he does indeed very much work instantly and aside from and without any human help. He plows, harvests, threshes, grinds and bakes in a twinkling of the eye. For it is indeed a miracle and beyond the comprehension of reason that so many thousand men, not counting the women and children, were fed with seven loaves, that they all were satisfied, and yet some were left over; but he did it so quickly by one word, when he only touched the bread and gave to his disciples to distribute; there is at once ground to flour, baked and everything prepared for so many thousand persons and even more. He must be a fine king (as the five thousand said whom he also fed in a like manner, <4B614>John 6:14), him we would also wish to have as our king, who should lead a multitude of people to the field and care for them, so that one could at all times reach into the basket or into the pocket, and richly feed and pay a whole multitude.

16. Now he can do that and in him we have such a king. Where he reaches there all is full, and where he gives there all must be sufficient and overflowing. Thus in <401727>Matthew 17:27 he told Peter to go and take a shekel out of the mouth of a fish. Who prepared or minted the silver there

or who would seek there in the water and even in the mouth of the fish for money? But he can create it and take it when and where and as he wishes; yea, can also bring bread and water out of the rock with which to feed the whole world; for we see everywhere he does so daily and everything that the world has comes about only by such miracles which are not less miraculous, as St. Augustine says, than this miracle.

17. We are, to be sure, thus familiar with the fact that corn grows yearly out of the earth, and through this familiarity we are so blinded that we do not esteem such work. For what we see daily and hear, that we do not regard as miraculous; and yet it is even as great; yea, if one should speak correctly, it is a greater miracle that God should give us corn out of the sand and the stone, than that he should here feed a multitude with seven loaves. For what is the dry sand but crushed stones, or a stone other than sand and earth welded together; but how can bread which we eat come out of stones, and yet it grows only out of the sand of the earth? In like manner everything that grows, and all the animals give to us, each according to his own nature; whence does it come but out of the earth and dust?

18. These are even the miracles which have been established from the beginning of the world and daily continue, so that we are entirely overwhelmed by them, without our eyes and senses feeling them, since they are so common that God must at times, as he does here, perform not a greater, but a special miracle, which is extraordinary by which he awakens us and through such an individual and special miracle he shows us and leads us into the daily miracles of the whole world.

19. No farmer can deny that his corn grows out of mere stones, as also Moses in (5213)Deuteronomy 32:13 says: “He made him ride on the high places of the earth, and he did eat the increase of the field; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock.” What does that mean? How can honey and oil grow out of rock and stone? Now it does happen that both corn and trees which bear the sweetest fruits are rooted in stones and sand, and out of that they grow and from nowhere else do they receive their sap and strength. If it should take place before our eyes now that oil and honey should flow out of a column of rock, then the whole world would speak of this as the miracle of miracles; but since we daily walk over the fields and land where they grow before our eyes, there we see nothing and appreciate nothing.

20. Since we now cast to the winds the daily works of God, which are nothing but miracles, he must cause us to gape at these special and like miracles, and let them be proclaimed as special miracles in order that a Christian may let such miracles be to him a writing and a book, from which he learns to behold all the works of God, and satisfies his heart with them, and thinks thus: Why shall I be worried with anxiety and care on account of temporal need and provision? From what source does God give us the corn in the field and all fruits, since the world with all her wisdom is not able to create a straw, a leaf or a little flower? Since Christ, my Lord and God, does such things daily, why then shall I be worried, or doubt as to whether he can or' will sustain my bodily existence?

21. Here you may reply: Yes, how does it then come about since he is such a king who feeds the whole world so bountifully, that he permits his Christians so often to suffer from want and poverty in the world? For he should indeed care for his own people bountifully above all others. Answer: Here one must understand how the kingdom of Christ is constituted; for he will by this show us, as I said at the beginning, that his kingdom upon the earth is preeminently not a temporal kingdom, which consists in how we here upon the earth may eat, drink, keep house, care for the body, and moreover where all the necessaries of this life must be regulated and provided for. But he has founded a spiritual kingdom, in which one should seek and find divine and eternal possessions, and so constituted the same that it would be richly provided for and perpetuated by the Word of God, the sacraments, the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit, and that it would not lack in anything that serves us in securing and maintaining our eternal life. Therefore he lets the world in its government have and take the necessaries and provisions of life, and thereby provides richly for it. But Christ exhorts his Christians to place their hope and consolation not in temporal things, but to seek the kingdom of God, in which they shall have sufficient forever and shall be truly rich. That is the first.

22. In the second place Christ desires to teach his Christians to exercise faith in the things which pertain to the temporal life and to their temporal possessions, in a way that they see him here even in their hands and expect from him also the necessaries of this life; for since the Church upon the earth is his Church and shall remain so, he must provide for her, for her body, for her food, her drink, her clothing, her buildings, her locations and other necessary things. Yea, he has indeed created all that the world

contains and produces for the sake of pious Christians; he gives and maintains all still only for their sake, as long as the world stands, in order that they should richly enjoy these things in this life, and have no need. But since the devil rules in the world and he is the enemy of Christ and of his Church, and since they themselves do not seek the things of this world, they must suffer that to be taken out of their mouths, and robbed of, which belongs to them. Here now Christ must help his Church and give where she suffers need and want, that she may continue to exist, that it may be called miraculous giving; and the Christians acknowledge that it is given by him and that he shows forth continually in his Christendom such special miracles, so that they notwithstanding will have something to eat, drink, etc. , even if the world gives nothing and grants no favors; but takes from her, and is jealous and hateful because of what God gives her.

23. Behold, we should now also learn to believe that we have a Lord in the person of Christ, who provides for our stomachs and for our temporal lives, and thereby thrusts aside and conquers the cares of unbelief. For he excites us through many examples to faith, as it is his earnest wish that we should be a people, who have no care for our own person as pertains to both the spiritual and bodily, or the temporal and eternal (for here he is not speaking concerning the cares of the office or of the labor which is commanded everyone by God and laid upon him, in which he is to be true and faithful); in order that we may do with cheerful hearts and with confidence in him what is commanded us, especially that which belongs to the kingdom of God, and if need and want stare us in the face, that we permit such things to be commanded us. And a Christian should comfort and strengthen himself thus: I know, and have learned from the Gospel that I have a Lord who can make out of one loaf as many loaves as he will, and he does not need in order to do it either a farmer or a miller or a baker, and he gives to me when and as much as I require, although I do not at once know or understand, yea, do not even think about it, how or when and whence he shall come to my help.

24. The text of this gospel also now shows how Christ feels and speaks when he sees the people who follow him and cannot return home without fainting, when he calls the disciples to himself and has a little counsel with them, he begins and says: “I have compassion on the multitude.” And he adds the cause when he says: “Because they continue with me now three days and have nothing to eat,” etc.

PART 2. THE DOCTRINES.

A. THE CHIEF DOCTRINES.

25. Here tell me, if the multitude had sent an embassy to Christ to report on their need, could they have formulated their report as well as Christ himself here thinks it out and holds it before his disciples? For how would they or could they paint it better or allege stronger reasons to move him, than to have said: Oh, beloved Lord, have compassion on the poor multitude of people, men, women and children, who have followed thee so far in order to hear thee? In the second place, consider that they have now remained and continued with thee for three days. In the third place, remember that they have nothing to eat and are in the desert. In the fourth place, if you send them away fasting they must faint on the way before they arrive home, especially the weak men and the women and children. In the fifth place, consider also that some have come far, etc. Behold, Christ reflected upon all this himself before anyone speaks with him and has himself formed the prayer so beautifully in his own heart. Yes, he is distressed on their account before they think of praying to him, and earnestly discussed with the disciples their need and gave counsel what to do in their behalf.

26. What then is all this but a purely living sermon, proving and witnessing that Christ is so earnestly and heartily concerned about us, and before we can propose anything to him, he looks into our hearts better than we ourselves can, so that no mortal person could speak with another more heartily. For he does not wait until someone says to him: Oh, Lord, have compassion on the multitude, think how they have held out, how far they are from home, etc. Yes, he says, I have compassion on them already and have thought over it all before. But listen, he says to the disciples, what counsel do you give, what shall we do for them in order that the multitude may be fed?

27. Now this counseling and consulting with the disciples took place, first, in order that he should thus reveal his own heart and thoughts. For it must not remain hid in his heart only, that he had compassion and anxiety for the people; but it should come to light so that it could be heard and seen, and we might learn to believe that we have the same Christ who is ever concerned about our bodily needs, and in whose heart are ever written in

living letters the words, “I have compassion on my poor people,” and he shows it in his acts and works, so that he earnestly wishes that we only acknowledge it and hear this Word of the Gospel, as if he spoke it yet this hour and daily whenever we feel our need, yea, much sooner than we ourselves begin to complain about it.

For he is eve,’, and remains forever, the same Christ and has the very same heart, thoughts and words concerning us as he had at that time, and has neither yesterday nor at any other time been different, and will not to-day nor tomorrow become a different Christ. Now here we have a very beautiful picture and tablet which paint to us the very depths of the Savior’s heart, that he is a faithful, merciful Lord, to whom our needs appeal to the very quick, and he sees deeper into our wants than we are able to pray and present to him. Shame on our abominable unbelief, for we hear and see this, and yet in spite of it, we cannot fully trust in Christ.

28. Yes, that is just the reason he began this interview and asked the disciples for counsel, namely, that we might see our own unbelief and foolishness and chastise ourselves. For here you see how he considers their need much better and more fully, and gives counsel concerning it, than we ourselves are able to do, and no person in his own danger or need can give Christ counsel how he might be rescued out of his distress. And although Christ had already deliberated and concluded what he would do, yet he asks them for their advice through which they see how he cares for them and what they themselves are able to advise him. Here it is revealed what the counsel of men can do when men undertake to be the counsellors of God and of Christ. Here they all stand like the musicians who have ruined the dance, they have gone in their human wisdom and considered it with their financiers. Here are four thousand men and indeed as many women and children. Where should one receive sufficient for them to eat, especially here in the desert, unless they eat grass and hay?

29. Thus you hear the answer of human wisdom when appealed to for counsel and how different it is from faith; for it does not know anything to say to this, than to conclude in a common and dry manner, there is no way to help the situation. That is what nature and reason at all times propose where need and want reign; when they should trust in God and expect from him counsel and help, they fall instantly upon the blasphemous words: Why, it is impossible, it is a lost cause, etc. When the peril of death and danger visit us, then reason thinks and concludes instantly, it is not possible

to live; when there is no bread in the house, it is impossible to ward off hunger; and nothing but mere doubt is where reason cannot see at once before its eyes and grasp that with which the situation can be helped. Reason is not so wise as to think that Christ knows yet of some counsel and help, since he himself takes interest in our distress and does not doubt, but speaks as he does here, as one who will counsel and help, and not permit his people to go from him fasting, and faint on the way.

30. Yes, reason is not pious enough to give Christ this honor, and believe that he knows how to counsel and help more than it realizes, and to confess its lack of understanding and ability, and thus bring the matter home to him and covet his counsel and help. This is why we have so many fools and wish, in case God should deal with us, to reckon and measure in an ordinary way according to our own ability and powers. Therefore where he fails, we must indeed doubt; as here the apostles calculate and measure by their reason their food and provisions over against the great multitude, and their need compared with their ability. Then the only result will be that they are compelled to say: Here there is no other advice to give than that we let them go where they decide, where they may buy and find food; they may do in this matter as they are able, either faint or continue to live.

31. Thus you see also in the disciples and apostles of Christ our great and deep rooted unbelief, what great ignorant fools we are, compared with the counsel and works of God. And we believe nothing at all unless it goes according to our thoughts and ideas, and think he knows no counsel and does nothing for us where we are not able first to see and calculate how it is possible. Yet he deals with us thus for the very purpose of showing us where our counsel, wisdom and ability end, so that he does a much higher order of work for us than we are able to think and esteem as possible, or can pray for and wish; so that if he should not deal with us in any other way than according to our thoughts and counsels, he would never be able to do any divine work or be able to prove anything divine to us, and every minute we would have to doubt, sink and perish without God.

32. Therefore it is also much better that he, without our counsel, yea, contrary to it, should go ahead and do, as the Lord and God of all creatures should do; for we still would not counsel or say anything more on the subject than the apostles here said in this case, that it is impossible and a lost cause, to feed so great a multitude. Yet however he thus shows himself friendly in that he asks them for counsel and lets them advise on the

subject and can have patience with them, lets them begin thus in order that they themselves might be forced to see later how foolish they acted and be ashamed of their unbelief since they experienced and saw before their eyes his miracle.

33. From this we should also learn to become an enemy of our unbelief and oppose it, which continually bestirs itself in times of need and danger, and at once despairs of all consolation and help, where it does not see before its eyes help and counsel in our own human strength. But we should accustom ourselves to think that Christ is able to do, and does do, more and greater things than we can understand or believe; for our hands and strength are not indeed created to the end that they should help us to corn and bread in time of famine and want, to life in time of death, and make something out of nothing. But he is the Lord who can do this and does do it as work that comes natural to him. Therefore he says, turn thine eyes and thoughts from your hands and your ability upon me; my fingers are adapted to the end that they should do it. You are Only to believe, and where it is not possible according to your counsel, then let it be possible according to my counsel and my power.

34. This Christ teaches everywhere in all his miracles and still to-day in his wonderful works which he does in his Church. And yet he cannot exalt himself in our estimation to the degree that we in strong confidence and sure courage commit our need to his counsel and power and let it be commended to him; through which we are helped both out of our need and want, and become free from all anxious care and fear, by which we make our need greater and severer than it is in itself. And we have in this a twofold benefit and gain: A peaceful, quiet heart and conscience and in addition consolation and help, and moreover, that we thus render to him the best sacrifice and divine service. On the other hand, if we do not do this, it cannot be agreeable or pleasing to him, and the blame is no one’s but our own that we worry and plague ourselves and yet accomplish nothing by such worry; for we must nevertheless let it remain in his power, since no one of us is able even to change a little smallpox mark on his body although he should worry himself to death over it.

35. However, it is still well for us that Christ permits us to be tested and disciplined in this way, and through our vain counsels and suggestions, our struggling and doubting, he teaches us to acknowledge our exigency; otherwise we would never realize that we were in need and would never

learn either to believe or to pray. Therefore he shows and reveals here to his disciples their present want and extremity before they themselves think of it.

36. In like manner also for a time God sends us temptation, terror, misfortune and suffering in order that we may feel our need and become conscious how utterly unable we are either to counsel or help ourselves; but he does so that we may learn not to go ahead heedlessly according to our feelings, and say: Ah, whither now? Here all is lost. Where shall we get something? That "whither?" and "where?" take out of thy mouth and heart, and instead, run here to Christ and expect what he will say and give to thee. For the fact that you feel your need will not hurt you; he lets you feel it in order that you may experience and feel also his help, his beneficence and his rescuing power, and that you learn thus to believe and to trust him.

B. OTHER DOCTRINES.

37. We have said enough now concerning the summary and central doctrine of to-day's Gospel. Further there are also given in the history of this Gospel many good points. First, that Christ asks, how many loaves have ye, and he takes the same along with the few fishes, for which he thanks God and says grace, and gives them to his disciples to divide and set before the people. Here he teaches, first, that we should use that which God bestows upon us, however small it may be, and accept it with thanksgiving, and know that Christ will also bless it that it may be efficient and sufficient, yea, even multiply it in our hands; for it is pleasing to God when we acknowledge his gifts and thank him for them, and he adds his blessing so that it becomes better and reaches farther than the great riches and superfluous possessions of the unbelievers; as the Scriptures say in <19376>Psalm 37:16, "Better is a little that the righteous hath than the abundance of many wicked." Thus also <20102>Proverbs 10:22, "The blessing of Jehovah, it maketh rich." That is, what is given by God and received with a good conscience. And St. Paul also explains this in <54606>1 Timothy 6:6, "But godliness with contentment is great gain," etc.

38. For what do they have who hold such great possessions without faith and without Christ, and what do they gain, except that they rob themselves of God and his blessings? And besides they are idolators and captives of mammon, so that they dare not touch their own possessions; and they

neither let others use them nor do they use them with a good conscience themselves, so that they cannot enjoy the little they eat, because of their avarice and wicked conscience, in which they only think of how to scratch together more and more through their cruel business and trickery; and yet they must ever live in danger and worry, so that they have no peace, neither before God nor before man. They must see and hear, and experience so much with their great wealth and among their own children and in other ways, that their heart sickens; and thus they throw themselves into the snares and pains of the devil, as he also says, out of which they cannot be delivered.

39. On the other hand St. Paul says: He is truly a rich man who fears God and lives in faith, and is contented in this blessedness with that which God gives him, and he possesses it with God and in honor without injustice or damage to anyone; for he has a very great treasure, called God's blessing, even in his poverty, so that lie must still have enough; for he knows that we all have no more out of life than what we eat and drink, and as we say, to our fill and satisfaction. And yet it does not depend upon our anxious care where God does not give success; as <19C702>Psalm 127:2 says' "It is vain for you to rise up early, to take rest late, to eat the bread of toil (German, care); for so he giveth unto his beloved sleep." And Christ himself in <422215>Luke 12:15 says' "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

40. Therefore a Christian should think much more of a dollar that God gives him than of all the great treasures of the rich misers upon the earth; for he has this beautiful treasure in his own home that is called godliness, and he has enough or he is satisfied, that is, he has a peaceful, quiet heart in God.

Thus also <19B201>Psalm 112:1-3 says of such a pious and godly person' "Blessed is the man that feareth Jehovah, that delighteth greatly in his commandments. His seed shall be mighty upon earth' the generation of the upright shall be blessed. Wealth and riches are in his hour; and his righteousness endureth forever." What kind of riches and glory and sufficiency is that, the ungodly world says? What are two dollars in the house and on the farm of a poor Christian who has his house full of children, compared with that of a person who has ten, twenty, fifty thousand dollars in his chest? Yes, and what estimate do you put upon the fact that a pious person has the blessing from God, which you cannot buy

either with your hundred thousand dollars nor can you secure it with all the possessions of the world? A dollar with a good conscience is more beautiful in the home and shines more gloriously before God and is of more value to him than all the crowns and kingdoms of empires, which do not enjoy their large possessions with great quiet and with a joyful conscience, and at last are not able to secure from them more than the poorest beggar possesses.

41. But the world will not believe this although it sees it before its own eyes. It goes ever ahead with its raking and scraping together of riches and will let no one be satisfied with what he has, every man desires more than his fellow and seeks riches (as it must naturally follow) by robbing, stealing, oppressing the poor. It also follows from this that there is no blessing or success with such riches; but only the curse of God, misery, misfortune and heart agony.

42. In the second place, Christ commands the disciples to set the loaves before the multitude, by which he shows he will administer his work and gifts through the instrumentality of human agencies. He thus also teaches those who have an office or commission (especially the office of the ministry) and those who stand before others, that they should, in obedience to Christ, faithfully and conscientiously serve the people by cheerfully and meekly giving of their own and imparting to others what God entrusted and gave to them. And especially does he teach them to be of use and comfort to the poor flock of Christians by their good example of faith and of love, and thus strengthen their faith and love. For he here shows how he gives and will give rich blessings to the end that such office and service may accomplish much good and bring forth much fruit. Just as it takes place here, when they received from Christ not more than seven loaves and a few fishes, and they began to distribute them, he multiplies them more and more in their hands, and it more than reaches, so that there is an abundance left over.

43. Let us also learn that the gifts and good things, which God gives, are not profaned, if they are thus used in helping the poor in acts of charity, as Christ in 4168Luke 6:38 also promises and says: “Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom.” And the experiences of many pious people everywhere have shown those who liberally instituted and gave before our time charitable gifts for the ministerial office, schools, the

support of the poor, etc. And God gave them for doing so good times, peace and quiet; hence the proverb arose among the people and was confirmed: One loses no time by going to church; giving alms does not impoverish; possessions received unjustly do not increase, etc.

44. Hence one sees in the world to-day the very opposite; since such unsatiable avarice and robbery reign, no one gives anything either to his God or to his neighbor; and everyone only scratches to himself what is given by others, and they even drain the poor people of their very sweat and blood; and God gives us in return as a reward famine, discontent and all kinds of misfortune until at last we devour ourselves among one another, or we all, the rich and the poor, the great and the small, are devoured by others.

45. Let us also notice the last part of this Gospel, what the gathering and the preserving of the broken pieces that remained over, teach us; for it is God's pleasure that we do not squander his gifts uselessly; but be economical and prudent with them, and use the abundance which he gives faithfully for our benefit and needs, and preserve them for the future when we may further have use for them. That is honoring the precious food and not permitting the crumbs to lay under the table; just as our fathers taught their children from this example and added the proverb: "He who saves when he has will find something when he needs it," etc.

46. For it is a malignant, shameless vice and great contempt of the gifts of God, that the world is now over-flooded everywhere with cloisters, pomp and expenditure of money for everything far beyond its ability to pay. From this then must indeed follow such robbing, stealing, usury, hoarding and pinching by which the country and the people, rulers and subjects, are ruined as a punishment. For in this no one will be less than another, and neither will the lords allow themselves to be checked, nor are they able to check others; for since they mass together one vice upon another, so must we be visited with one punishment after another.

47. St. Paul says, <5067>1 Timothy 6:17, "The living God giveth us richly all things to enjoy." That is certainly true if we use them as given to enjoy, and we should not shamefully expend and destroy that which we have in abundance and cannot enjoy either in our need or in our pleasure, and even if such is expended, ravished and destroyed in an unchristian manner, and later the poor have their little tort, from their teeth by our greed, gluttony and avarice. In this way we merit that God does not permit us to enjoy that

which we have raked together, extorted and saved by pinching in great superabundance. For all this is hardly enough with which we can fill the open jaws of hell. No lord has so much land and so many people, no land so much money, that they are able to support one prince more; for a prince must have much more for banking, for sports, for display in dress, etc. , than his people and country can afford. The jaws of avarice can devour property of a prince more than a whole city can give him, and yet no person is happy or better because of it. And all is devoured in a heap while there is lack everywhere in those things we need for the church and the school, for the government and the common advantage of all, for our own honor, nourishment and necessities.

48. Summary. It cannot be called any more enjoying the gifts of God, since he gives them so richly and overabundantly to the end for us to enjoy, even if the Elbe and the Rhine flowed with nothing but gold, and all the lords and princes could make their country nothing but mountains of silver. For man will not use them in the praise of God and enjoy them for himself, but only for the dishonor of God and for the destruction of the blessings given. No one has any thought about advising the saving of anything for posterity, but all live as if they would gladly destroy everything at once. In all this work of destruction he will also help us, since we wish nothing different. The explanation of this history is sufficiently treated in the Postil sermon for the Sunday Laetare, where you may review it.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

This sermon was printed as early as the year 1522, under the title: A Sermon Lately Preached by Dr. Martin Luther, on the Extent of the Influence the Holy Gospel Had Over Church Councils. It also appeared in the collections of 14 sermons, 27 sermons and “The Five Beautiful Sermons” in 1523.

Text. <4071507>Matthew 7:15-23. Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth, good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

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SUMMARY OF THIS GOSPEL:

1. Christ warns us of the teachings of Satan, who will come speaking lies in hypocrisy, <54042>1 Timothy 4:2; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof, <55305>2 Timothy 3:5, who profess that they know God; but in works (which they ascribe to righteousness) they deny him. These St. Peter in <61201>2 Peter 2:1 calls false teachers, who privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them: but there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, <40026>Matthew 10:26. Therefore the folly of these misleading teachers shall be manifest unto all men, <55309>2 Timothy 3:9.

2. Therefore one should not apply this here in the Gospel to coarse public sins, whose fruits we see today clearly, when God opens our eyes; but the Lord is speaking of those who come in sheep's clothing, and say: Lord, Lord, have we not cast out devils in thy name? Have we not in thy name done many wonderful works? These are the ones of whom Christ warns us, to whom he will say in the last day in terrible judgment: I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Why? Because they sought such works and through them they thought they were pleasing to God. and trusted in them to be saved.

PART 1. CONCERNING ANGER.

1. As the Lord in the three previous chapters, the 5th, 6th and 7th, explains the commandments of God, he finally concludes with these words: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," 5:12. This is a Christian doctrine, and the sum total of all Christianity. Immediately follows this Gospel lesson, in which the Lord exercises the office of a good shepherd and teacher, and warns us to beware of false prophets. As though he would say: Now you have heard the truth, from henceforth therefore beware of other doctrines. For it is certain that false teachers and false prophets will arise wherever this Word is preached.

2. We must boldly consider the two kinds of doctrine, the true and good, and the false and erroneous, and that they will always accompany each other, for thus it has been from the beginning, and thus it will continue to the end of the world. Hence it will not do for us to creep along in silence, and resort to a safe and secure manner of life. The evil teachings of men and the doctrines of devils, and all our enemies oppose us without ceasing, and hence we dare not think that the issue is settled. We are not yet across the river. Therefore the Lord diligently warns us and says:

"Beware of false, prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."

3. We should well consider this passage, for Christ our Lord here commands and gives all Christians the power to be judges of all doctrine, and he gives them power to judge what is right and what is not right. It is now well on a thousand years that this passage has been perverted by false Christians, so that we have had no power to judge, but had to accept what the Pope and the councils determined, without any judgment of our own.

4. Now this Gospel here overthrows the very foundation of popery and of all councils, for we are not bound to keep what the Pope commands and men decree. Therefore I say again, firmly grasp what this Gospel teaches, for the authority has never been given either to the Pope or councils, or anyone else, to sit and determine what is faith. For Christ says: "Beware of false prophets." Either the, Gospel lies, or the Pope and the councils do. Christ says we have the right to judge all doctrines, and whatever is proposed for us to keep or to reject. Here the Lord does not speak to the Pope, but to all Christians. And as the doctrine is proclaimed to all: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do even so to them;" so likewise the words exclude no one: "Beware of false prophets." From which it clearly follows that I may indeed judge of the doctrine.

5. Hence I can say: Pope, you together with the councils have resolved, and now I have to decide whether I may accept it or not. Why? Because you will not stand and answer for me when I die, but I must see to it myself how I stand before God, so that I may be certain of my fate.

6. For you must be so certain in regard to the matter, that it is God's Word, as certain and more certain than you are that you are living, for on this alone your conscience must rest. Even though all men should come, yea, even the angels and all the world, and pass a resolution, if you cannot

grasp it and decide for yourself, you are lost; for you dare not base your decision on the Pope or anyone else; you must yourself be prepared so that you can say: this God says, and that he does not say; this is right, and that is wrong, otherwise it is not possible for you to stand.

7. For when you are about to die, and you rely on the Pope and the councils and say: The Pope said this, the councils have resolved that, the holy fathers Augustine and Ambrose have thus determined, then the devil can easily lint a hole in your drum and insinuate: What if this were false? What if they had erred? And when such a temptation enters your mind, you are already overcome For this reason you must act conscientiously, so that you can boldly and defiantly say: This is God's Word, on this I will risk body and life, and a thousand necks, if I had so many.

This St. Peter also means when he says in his first Epistle <4004>1 Peter 4:11: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." And St. Paul says in <4002>1 Corinthians 2:3-5: "And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling; and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

8. Then they began to say: Yes, but how can we know what is God's Word, and what is right or wrong? This we must learn from the Pope and the councils. Very well then, let them conclude and say what they please, yet I will reply, you cannot put your confidence in that nor thus satisfy your conscience, for you must determine this matter yourself, for your very life depends upon it. Therefore God must speak to your heart: This is God's Word; otherwise you are undecided.

9. But our bishops, Caiaphas, Pilate and Herod insist upon it and rage so terribly, that a person must think them insane. They bring forth St. Augustine's declaration: I would not believe the Gospel, if the honor of the church did not move me; and think they have already won. Then you answer: What does it concern us whether St. Augustine or Jerome, St. Peter or St. Paul, or even the archangel Gabriel from heaven, who is still greater, said it; yet it will profit me nothing, for I must have God's Word, I will only hear what God says.

10. And God commands this Word to be told you through men, and especially has he permitted it to be proclaimed and written for you by the

Apostles; for St. Peter and St. Paul do not preach their own word, but God's Word, as Paul himself testifies in <5213>1 Thessalonians 2:13: "When ye receive the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." Surely, a person can preach the Word to me, but no one is able to put it into my heart except God alone, who must speak to the heart, or all is vain; for when he is silent, the Word is not spoken. Hence no one shall draw me from the Word which God teaches me.

Of this I must be as certain as two and three make five, for this is so certain, that if all the councils would say otherwise, I know they lie. Again, that a yard is longer than a half a yard is certain, even though all the world denied it, I still know that it cannot be otherwise. Who shall determine this for me? No one but the truth alone, which is so entirely and wholly certain, that no one can deny it.

11. Therefore you must come so far as to say: This is true, no man shall persuade me differently. When you hear: Thou shalt not kill; and again: Thou shalt do to others as you would have them do to you; then you must know in the face of all councils, that this is the teaching of Christ, although all men said otherwise. So also this doctrine: You cannot help yourself, but Christ is your Savior, who has obtained for you the forgiveness of your sins; this you must know and confess in your heart that it is true; and if you are not conscious of it, then you have no faith, and the Word only hangs about your ears and swims on your tongue like foam on water, as Hosea the prophet says, <2807>Hosea 10:7: "As for Samaria, her king is cut off as the foam upon the waters." All this you must now believe, not as a word that Peter preached, but that God has commanded you to believe. All this I say therefore, in order that we may return to the Gospel and observe where the foundation has its source, that ye must be judges, and have the power to judge over all things that are offered you; hence I can and dare not build on any man, for I must answer for myself when death comes.

12. Consequently do not allow yourselves to be persuaded that you must believe what the Pope says or the councils decree. When you know God, then you have the proper rule of judgment, the measure and rule by which you can judge all the doctrines of the fathers; namely, when you know that Christ is your Savior, who rules us sinners. So when one now comes and says: You must become a monk, and do so and so, if you want to be saved,

for faith alone is not sufficient for salvation; then you can truly and assuredly say: You lie, your doctrine is false; for whoever believes in Christ shall be saved. Who teaches you this? Faith in your heart, which believes this alone and nothing else. Therefore no one can beware of false doctrine unless he be spiritual. For Paul says this in <4602 15>1 Corinthians 2:15: “But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.” So no one can judge false doctrine, but the spiritual man.

13. Hence it is very foolish for the councils to wish to determine and establish what a man must believe, when there is often not a single man present who ever tasted the least of the divine Spirit. So it was in the Council of Nice, when they undertook to enact laws for the spiritual orders that they should not marry, which was all false because it has no foundation in the Word of God. Then a single man arose, by the name of Paphnutius, and overthrew the whole affair and said: Not so, that is not Christian. Then the entire council, in which undoubtedly were many distinguished and learned individuals, were compelled to drop the resolution, and give. way to this simple and honest man. For God is a great enemy to high titles and human wisdom, hence he allows them at times to be handled roughly, and puts them to shame in their speculations, that the truth of the proverb may appear: The learned are the most perverted.

14. Thus we are to remain free judges, to have the power to decide and judge, to accept or reject everything that the Pope establishes and the councils determine. But when we accept anything, we should so accept it, that it harmonizes with our faith and the Scriptures; and not just because the Papists say it. This St. Paul teaches in <4512 07>Romans 12:7’ “Whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith.” For all prophecy based on works, that does not lead to Christ alone as our only comfort, precious as it may be, is not according to the proportion of faith; as for instance to rely upon the revelations of hobgoblins, the mass, pilgrimages, fastings and the merits of saints.

Even here so many holy fathers have erred like Gregory, Augustine and others, in that they take from us this right of judgment, for this torment and misery began far back in history, that we must believe the Pope and the councils. Hence you must be able to say: God said this, and that God has not said. As soon as you say: A man has said this, or the councils have determined that, then you are building on sand.

15. Hence there is no judge upon the earth in spiritual things concerning Christian doctrine, except the person who has in his heart the true faith, whether it be a man or woman, young or old, maid Or servant, learned or unlearned. For God is no respecter of persons, since all are alike precious to him, who live according to his commandments, <44034>Acts 10:34, hence they alone have the right to judge.

16. But if one should come who knew the sense of the Word better than I, then I should close my mouth and keep still, and receive knowledge from him. This is what St. Paul desires in speaking to the Corinthians, <46429>1 Corinthians 14:29-30: “Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the others judge. If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.” That is to say, if the hearer knows and understands more than the preacher, then the preacher should allow him the privilege to speak, and he should hold his peace. In the worldly government of course the rule holds, that the older is wiser than the younger, a learned man than a layman; but in spiritual things a child era servant, a common woman or man can have the grace of God. as well as an old person or a lord, a priest or the Pope. To sum up, let no learned person take from you the right to judge, for you have this right as well as he.

17. Now let me tell you who the false prophets of our times are. For no one can judge or know this unless he has the Spirit. But the brief summary is, though much may be said on the subject, it: is the Pope with his entire government; for they all have taught what is opposed to God. A lengthy proof of this is not necessary, for you can observe this nearly everywhere you turn. Yet we will give a few examples. God commands in <02012>Exodus 20:12: The child shall honor father and mother and be subject unto them. But the Pope has approved the view that a monk or a nun is no longer under their father, and says: The child is now under spiritual dominion and in the service of God; God is more than father and mother; hence it is no longer bound to serve father and mother, and the father is bound to call it a nobleman by grace.

18. Well, when I ask, what is the service of God? they reply: Dear Sir: It is the ringing of bells; lighting of candles; putting on beautiful robes for the celebration of mass, and more such similar monkey tricks. Yes, indeed, you have surely hit the mark! But I say to honor father and mother and to keep God’s commandments, that is to serve God. Therefore you must say here that Antichrist has taught such things, and boldly say and declare he lies.

Do you not see here how God's commandment is opposed to the obedience of priors and abbots? God gave you father and mother that you should honor them, serve them and be subject unto them. The Pope gives you another, whom you must honor more than the father God has given you. If this is keeping God's commandment, I do not know what it is.

19. And so it is further with the other commandments of God. Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not hate or be angry. This God has commanded. But the Pope teaches thus: A man must defend the property of the clergy and the treasures of the church, and if he can not do it, he shall call to his aid the sword of the civil government to protect the papal chair and St. Peter's inheritance. Behold, thus these commandments are opposed to each other, which I hope every one easily understands. So also in regard to the married state.

20. God commanded, Genesis 2:24, that man and wife should be one flesh, and that no man should put them asunder. Now the Pope has given many commandments contrary to this. For instance, when a woman takes a husband who is not baptized, the marriage is to be dissolved.

21. Then again when those in spiritual orders marry, they are to dissolve their marriage, according to the demands of their order. Again, if any one falls into the sin of incest and marries either her friend or any of his friends, the Pope commands that they must stay together, yet both must live chaste together. Here he lets the two sexes lie naked in bed together, and neither shall have the right to require of the other the duties of married life. This is nothing else than putting straw and fire together, and then forbidding them to burn.

22. God says further: Thou shalt not steal. But who steals more than the Pope and his servants? They are the greatest thieves, because they appropriate unto themselves daily all the treasures of the world.

23. Again, look at the first commandment, which says that we should trust in God alone, and call upon him alone. But their entire doctrine is nothing else than to lead us to trust in human works, and to command us to call upon the saints. Do you not see that such people are the real false prophets, of whom we must beware? For they abolish the commandment which God has given. Now follows the other part of this Gospel where Christ speaks thus:

> "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth. forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cost into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

24. As I said before, no one knows others by their fruits, except he who is spiritually born again. Therefore, he who has not the Spirit, cannot have this knowledge. Let no one think that he can know this from the fruits unless he be spiritual. The fruit by which we are to know them is unbelief. One can know them to some extent by open sins, yet this judgment is deceptive, for Christians also fall.

25. Hence, the true fruit by which they are known is an inner fruit, here I must have the Holy Spirit and judge according to his guidance. The fleshly eye and reason are not sufficient. You may see two persons go to the Lord's Supper, the one is a believer, the other not, and yet their external work is the same. What then makes the difference? Faith in the heart and unbelief, because the one regards it. as a good work, the other not. In short, from external works you can decide nothing. Tauler also acknowledged that believers and unbelievers were often so similar in external appearance, that no one could distinguish them, nor is reason able to judge unless we have the Spirit of God. Yea, the unbelievers often appear far more excellent in their works than believers, as it is written in Job 39:13: "Givest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks? or wings and feathers unto the ostrich?" Yet the peacock can fly and the ostrich cannot. So also the believer and unbeliever are indeed similar to each other in their external appearance, but in their hearts they are quite different.

26. However, by the fruits of the Spirit true prophets are known, which fruits St. Paul mentions to the Galatians 5:20: "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Yet these fruits no one can see or know without the Holy Spirit. For this reason the decision and judgment of spiritual things should not be based on external things, as on the work and person, but on the inner condition of the heart. One knows another indeed by his fruits, but only in the Spirit. The fruits and good works do not make any one good or pious; but he must first be

good and pious at heart. As the apples do not make the tree, for the tree must first be there before the fruit.

27. If I understand this, then I notice there is no work so bad that it will necessarily condemn a man, nor none so good that it will save him. But faith alone saves us and unbelief alone condemns us. For one to commit adultery, the deed does not condemn him, for the adultery only shows that he has fallen from the faith, this condemns him, otherwise it could not be possible. Nor does anything make one good but faith, and nothing makes one wicked but unbelief. Therefore our Lord also says, that the tree shall be cut down. He does not say that the fruit shall be cut down. Thus the works of love do not make me good, but faith alone, in which I do these works and bear this fruit.

28. Thus we must begin with faith. But the Pope begins with works, and commands persons to do good works that they may become good. Just as if I should say to the tree: If you want to be a good tree, then begin and bear apples. Just as though I could bear apples before I was an apple tree. But I must say: If you want to bear apples, then begin and be an apple tree. Hence the tree must be there before it can produce fruit.

29. From all this it follows now that there is no sin on earth except unbelief, as Christ says in <BIBLE>John 16:8-9: “And the Holy Ghost, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin; because they believe not on me.”

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

SECOND SERMON: <4007515>MATTHEW 7:15-23.

This sermon first appeared in a separate tract entitled: A Sermon Giving Warning to Beware of False Prophets.

1. Two reasons why God sends among us divisions and sects.

2. The two-fold call to the ministry.

3. How we should in three ways prove and examine the spirits.

Martin Luther, Wittenberg, 1525. Printed at Wittenberg by George Rhaw, 1525.

N. B. It appears probable that this is the sermon which Luther preached on his journey occasioned by the peasants' war, according to the testimony of Lingke (see history of Luther's Journeys, p. 156), on Monday after Miseri. Dom. , May 1st, 1525, in the church at Wallhausen, near Eisleben, on the text <4007515>Matthew 7:15-23: "Beware of false prophets."

1. Christ our Lord preached this part of the Gospel in concluding his long sermon on the mount. After teaching his disciples all things necessary for them to know, he concludes by warning them against false prophets, as all good ministers are accustomed to do in closing their sermons, exhorting the people to abide in the true doctrine, and to beware of false teachers. As Paul also did when he departed from Ephesus, saying among other things: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord, which he hath purchased with his own blood. I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Wherefore watch ye, remembering, that by the space of three years, I ceased not to admonish everyone night and day with tears." <4402028>Acts 20:28-31.

2. Thus time and again, in all his Epistles, he adds an admonition, that they should beware of false teachers and false Apostles, as Peter also warns us in his second Epistle, 2:1-3: “But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also, there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their lascivious doings, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And in covetousness shall they with reigned words make merchandise of you: whose sentence now from of old lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.” So there shall at all times be false prophets and teachers.

3. In this manner also Christ here proceeds. Having finished his sermon he warns and admonishes his disciples and the people, ever to hold fast to what he told them, and watch that they be not misled by false teachers, and says: *“Beware of false prophets.”*

4. In the first place we perceive from this that we must be prepared, because it will always happen, that after the true ministers come the false ones; yea, they will indeed even enter along side of them and mingle with them. What other need was there that Christ should so faithfully warn us, saying: Beware, take care; if he had known that the doctrine would always remain pure? Therefore he warns us to be assured that we will have false prophets, and does this especially in closing this sermon. We have a similar example in the book of Judges 2:10, when they had died, whom God gave the people as teachers and judges, who knew what the will of God was, what was acceptable and not acceptable to him, then immediately the people of Israel began to turn from God and his Word One worshiped this idol, another that, and they were divided into factions so that they fell from the true doctrine, and departed from the ways of their fathers.

5. So it happened in the days of the Apostles. Then the church was still pure, but as soon as they died who held fast to the pure doctrine, then came the false prophets and the evil spirit, who desired to change everything, as the Epistles of St. Paul sufficiently show. And inasmuch as this is so, and as we can expect nothing else, Christ our Lord warns us here as a faithful shepherd and bishop should, that we beware, so that, when the Gospel comes, that we hold firmly to it and not depart from it, though it cost our life and our treasures. For it cannot be otherwise, as the time passes than that there will be changes.

6. Thus it will also happen with us. God be praised; we, as well as other cities, now have the Gospel in all its richness and purity, as men have never had it since the times of the Apostles. But as soon as we and others, who now assist in preaching it, are no longer with you, you will have other and false preachers, for they already begin to make their appearance. May the Lord consume them with the Spirit of his mouth. <5108>2 Thessalonians 2:8. And blessed are they, who in accordance with our Gospel lesson will be diligently on their guard and will not believe every wind of doctrine, but will remain constantly firm in what they have learned. This Christ teaches first by the word, "Beware," be warned, as though he would say: You certainly are now in possession of it.

7. Here you may say: Why does the Lord do this? Why does he permit false prophets to come among the faithful, and follow the true ministers? Is he not strong and powerful enough to prevent it, so that the Gospel might remain pure and in all its force? Verily, he could indeed do this; but he does not, and for this reason, that he might prove those who are his, and punish the unthankful. For St. Paul says, <4619>1 Corinthians 11:19: "For there must be also factions among you, that they that are approved may be made manifest among you;" that is, in order that those whose faith has been proved may become known, so that their spirit and word may appear and find a field of influence.

8. Since God gives us his Word, his Spirit and his gifts, he does not want us to be lazy, sleepy or idle. For if you have the true Word and the right understanding of it, the world will rise to oppose you. Then, on the other hand, the devil will labor to tear you from it, so that not only the tyrants of the world will persecute it with the sword, but also our own reason and the wisest heads in the world, in order that God may exercise you in his Word, and give work to the Spirit whom he has bestowed upon you, that you may learn that God's wisdom is more excellent than the wisdom of this world, and that God's strength is stronger than the strength and power of this world, which you will not be able to learn without a struggle like this.

9. When God permits a faction to oppose thee, he would thereby stir thee up, saying: Defend yourself, grasp firm hold of the Word and test God's wisdom and the powers of his Word, and learn how great is the folly of this world. Thus the power and wisdom of God's Word will become manifest, that you may learn that it cannot be conquered by human power and wisdom; but that it will conquer all power, and put to shame all knowledge

and wisdom, in order to awaken the truth and to show forth what is right, that the people may experience it. This is one reason God sends divisions and sects among us, who crowd in edgewise, as though they were useful and served to make the Word, the truth and spirit better and clearer; however in other respects, divisions and sects do harm.

10. Another reason is to punish the unthankful, who will not accept the Word, lest they be converted and saved, as Christ says to the Jews in <4054>John 5:43: “I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.” And as St. Paul says, <5021>2 Thessalonians 2:10-11: “Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

11. Thus severely God punishes this sin which we regard so lightly, for he punishes it with blindness and error, which are the greatest sins on earth. Men regard it as a small matter, that we now again have the Gospel by God’s grace. For how many are there who ever thank God for it? We forget it, cast it to the winds and become lazy and careless. It is approved by none; no one tastes it; no one lifts up his hands in thankfulness to God for it. We are so very richly overloaded with the Gospel that we become satiated with it, and St. Paul has rightly prophesied, <5043>2 Timothy 4:3-4: “For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts and will draw away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables.”

12. Here and there throughout the whole Scriptures we see how greatly it offends God, who regards it as the greatest sin when his Word is despised; which is so dear and precious, that it cost him the blood of his own dear Son, and we cast it to the wind as though it were of little importance. For this reason he sends us the severest calamities, which cannot be compared to the present calamity now going on in the world, that during and after the peasants’ war so many have been slain, of which there seems to be no end, for who knows when it will cease? Yet all this is but playwork in comparison to the misfortune when men are hardened, blinded and misled by false prophets, by which heaven is closed against them and hell opens to receive them, and everlasting life is lost forever. What does it matter, as die we must at any rate, if we are killed by the sword? But that the soul should

be forever given to the devil, this is an eternal calamity, an everlasting misfortune and torment.

13. I would gladly prevent it, if I could, by preaching, praying and writing. Now God has begun to visit us with the temporal and bodily calamity of the sword, but a far greater plague will come when the Holy Gospel is taken away from Germany. Then false teachers will be sent and will come to us. One will teach this, the other that. Then the kingdom of heaven will be locked up, and the false preachers will not allow it to be opened. On this account it would indeed be well worth while for us to pray earnestly. But our hearts are cold, for our walls are not yet on fire. Nevertheless, the devil intends to drown all Germany in blood and take away the Gospel, unless he be prevented and hindered by the prayers of pious Christians.

14. When the devil saw he could not accomplish anything by the Pope and his false apostles, he now begins to rage through the peasants and the rebels, and will entirely take the Gospel from us and make us its enemies, and afterwards cut off our heads and cast our souls into hell. For this reason I give warning, that we should not think so little of this matter but open our eyes, not regarding it merely as the word of a man. It is a precious Word, and if we sleep and snore and do not keep awake to hear it, we need not be angry when he strikes us on the head by sending us false prophets, but remember that we have richly deserved it.

15. Already there are but few who stand steadfastly. Sectarianism is rampant, and few there be who contend against it and preserve the true doctrine; their names could all be written on a little card. What shall come to pass when once it breaks out with force? Therefore let no one consider it child's play, for the Word is not an insignificant Word. It stands for something. The words of Christ leave an impression; they are meant for the whole world, when he says: Beware, be warned! that we receive the Word with fear and trembling hearts. So you have now heard why divisions and sects arise, namely, that those who are tempted and tried may become the more glorious, and that the others, the unthankful ones who despise the Word, may be punished. The Gospel lesson further says:

"Who come to you in sheep's clothing,
but inwardly are ravening wolves."

16. No one sends them. They come of themselves. This is the true description of false prophets, that they force themselves into the ministry.

Some, in order to find their bread and butter, which I do not consider of much importance, for even there they will not find a paradise. For those who intrude into this office with the pretension that they do so on account of Christian love, for the sake of the truth, and because the Holy Spirit urges them, and that they do it for the sake of love and the salvation of souls, and that they seek nothing else but their salvation; beware of all such people, for the devil has most certainly sent them, and not God. For those whom God sends are called or compelled to it. They do not boast greatly of themselves. Yet, when they do boast, they prove it by miracles. Hence beware, because the Lord says, they will come, not being sent or called, but they come and the devil calls them.

17. But do they not boast they have the Holy Spirit? I answer: Whoever would persuade you that the Holy Spirit moves him, and that he does it from a Christian suggestion, say to him: As you boast so much of the Spirit, give me a proof. You bear witness of yourself, and the Scriptures have forbidden me to believe you on your own testimony alone, for even Christ, the living Son of God would not bear witness of himself, as we read in the Gospel of <4053>John 5:31f. But when he did so he also did miracles besides, so that men might know that his Word and doctrine were true. And inasmuch as you say you have the Holy Spirit, give me a proof of your Spirit; prove it by real signs that a man may believe you, for here a divine witness is necessary to prove the Spirit of God, so that there may be two of you, yourself and God. This is a divine call, and unless it is forthcoming, cast the other away and let it go to pieces.

18. And even though I grant that such a one is really a true spirit, and has the Holy Spirit; even then you must not hear him. Nor will God be greatly angered at you for this, as he has commanded you to keep his ordinances, to ask for two witnesses, and to call for a miracle. For if he sends you one with a true spirit, he does it to test you, to see whether you will keep his ordinances, receiving no one unless he gives you a proof beforehand. Therefore say: I do not want you, even though you have the right Spirit. For God desires thus to prove me, whether I will abide by his order. Hence he is also satisfied and well pleased, when you do not accept his Spirit. For he tests us by offering us the contrary, to see whether you on this account would depart from his Word. He acts like a father who plays with his child, whom he has given an apple and takes it away again, in order to see whether the child loves him or not.

19. Then give heed here, whether he be right or wrong, and say: I will not go with you, I care not what you preach, I only ask whether you have been sent, or whether you came of yourself? If you came of yourself I will not hear you, even though you have the Holy Spirit. For the devil in the Gospel can also say: Let us alone; hold, "what have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Nazarene? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." <41024>Mark 1:24. Thus the common crowd also cries out: Here is the true and faithful Word of God, which this man preaches, let us hear him. But see thou first whence he cometh. The devil also can preach, but he does it to provide himself an opportunity to win adherents. Then he comes forth and sows his poisonous seed, so that the condition becomes worse than in the beginning. Hence these are nothing but warnings, by which Christ warns us against those who come of themselves. Therefore wait, until they are sent or called. For he drives and urges those whom he wants, so that in short they must come whether they will or not.

20. The other call is the request of the congregation or of the government to go. This is a call of love, which does not come down from heaven nor out of faith, but flows from love. For you and I owe it to each other to love our neighbor as ourselves. For when he needs my assistance and asks for it, I am in duty bound to come to his help, for the Word of God commands that I should serve my neighbor. Then this call does not require a miracle, because they themselves desire it, and the Word of God urges me thereto. This is to be in demand, to be called and to be driven. That which comes from heaven is called a sending, when the Holy Ghost comes and performs miracles. To the others, whether they boast of the Spirit or the flesh, reply' I care nothing for that. As our fanatics at present boast, that they have devoured the Holy Spirit, feathers and all, and are thoroughly filled with the Spirit and say, that the Holy Ghost has spoken to them from heaven, and has revealed something special to them, and the like. I myself cannot boast very much of the Spirit. They become Spirit all too soon for me. I boast of the Spirit of love, otherwise I am nothing but a poor, carnal sinner. I too ought to know something of the Spirit of which they boast. But alas, they are all too highly spiritualized for me.

21. However, what is this Christ says: They come in sheep's clothing? These sheep's clothing are, that they make an external exhibition of all things the true Christians and ministers teach. For we, who are the lambs of Christ, wear the sheep's wool. This is not only the works, the showy hypocritical life they lead, praying a great deal and wearing gray gowns,

walking with downcast countenances, carrying a *pater noster* about their necks, fasting often and going to church a great deal; but the worst of all is that they make use of God's Word and the Holy Scriptures, which in the prophets are called God's wool and linen. For preaching together with admonition and Scripture passages are the true clothing with which they would adorn and array themselves, saying: Here is Christ, here is Baptism, here is the name of God, here is he who quotes the Scriptures, which is the Word of God, and immediately they add to all this God's name, God's Spirit and Christ.

22. This then, is coming in sheep's clothing, namely, so to preach and to quote the Scriptures that it may appear as the true doctrine; for it is not said that they come in wolves' clothing, or with teeth and spears. They do not publicly preach anything destructive or without Scripture, otherwise people might recognize them, as for instance when they preached Aristotle in the high schools, and common law or the law of the emperor and said' There is no God in Christianity. Now, however, they do not only adorn themselves with external works, but also with the Holy Scriptures, with which God clothes and covers our souls; for if they would not do this, the unthankful would not be thus blinded, and we would not be so wretchedly deceived.

23. Therefore it is true as men say, the holy Bible is a book for heretics, that is, it is a book that heretics dare to claim for themselves most of all. For there is no other book which they so wickedly misuse, than just this very book. And there never was a heresy so bad or gross, that they did not try to patch up or cover with the Scriptures. Just as men say, God is the God of rogues, because they, who are the largest crowd in the world, claim for themselves the name of God, not that God is to blame, bat the rogues, who thus take the holy name of God in vain. Thus the holy Bible must be a book for heretics, not that the holy Bible is to blame, but the rogues, who so shamefully misuse it. Should I for this reason neglect the Bible and not read it? By no means! As men are accustomed to say in the proverb: "In God's name all misfortune begins," which is true. Well then, I will not use the name of God at all, and guard myself against misfortune. But what talk is this? What blame can attach to a name, which is given us in order that we might be saved? God will surely punish such rogues and knaves. Thus the Bible is a book for heretics, but I will not for this reason cast it away, but so much the more study and learn it, because these rogues oppose it.

24. Therefore let now every person be thus well prepared and thoroughly equipped, that he may not so easily be led astray by their showy life, although they even attempt to quote Scripture to you, for ravening wolves are most certainly back of it. And although they think they feed and satisfy you, they actually rend you, destroy and devour you. However, without spiritual eyes no one will be able so soon to decide or judge of this matter. The crowd and common people will not do it; the largest crowd despises the Gospel and are unthankful, while only the smallest flock accept it and can appreciate it. I have often said, and will always say it, that the greatest and most difficult contest is, for a person to contend with the Scriptures against the Scriptures; to strike aside another man's sword and wrench it out of his fist, to slay him with his own sword; to take from him his weapon, and with it strike him again. This no one can accomplish, except he who is enlightened by the Holy Spirit, so as to be able to recognize these rogues.

25. You have often heard from me the safest doctrine and rule, by which to prove the spirits, as John tells us in his first Epistle ⁶⁰⁰¹1 John 4:1-3. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not Jesus, is not of God: and this is the spirit of the Antichrist." The other rule is given by Paul in ⁶¹⁰⁶Romans 12:6: "Whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith." That is, all teaching must harmonize and agree with faith alone, so that nothing else be taught but faith. It follows that he, who has not faith, does not know Christ, and cannot judge of doctrine, for to do this the carnal minded are not required, who are worldly wise and smart, but pious, spiritual hearts. Many say: Christ is a man who is the Son of God, born of a pure, chaste virgin, became man, died, and rose again front the dead, and so forth; all this is nothing. But that he is Christ, that is, that he was given for us, without any of our works; that he without any of our merit has earned for us God's Spirit, and made us children of God, so that we might have a gracious God, and with him become lords over all things in heaven and on earth, and have eternal life besides through Christ: this is the faith, and this means rightly to know Jesus Christ. This is the touchstone, the level and the scales, by which all doctrine must be weighed, tried and judged. The others also know what to

call Christ, that he is the Son of God, died, rose again from the dead, with what follows. For this is the real sheep's clothing.

26. But pay attention to their dilemma: If they say Christ died for us, was buried and rose again and the like, then they must also conclude: therefore our works are of no avail. This point they will not touch, but flee from it, like the devil flees from incense or the cross, as it is said; although he does not really run away from it so very much. He permits them to preach that Christ was born, died anti. rose again, and sitteth at the right hand of his heavenly Father; but when in addition they also preach: thus and thus you must do, this and that you must omit; this is the devil who mingles his poison with the truth. As the Pope writes and puts on the sheep's clothing in his bulls, namely, that Christ by his death and shedding his blood has merited for us that we are the children of God and are saved, and have eternal life; but to all this he adds: Whoever is not obedient to the Roman church, is a child of perdition; but he, who is obedient and does what the church of Rome commands and appoints, shall be saved, his soul shall rise straight up to heaven. Does not the Pope require his rules to be more strictly observed than the Gospel? Only compare them and see. If the death of Christ does this, then my works cannot do it. It would be quite another matter if he would preach: You must obey me out of Christian love, but not to be saved thereby, for this the blood of Christ alone can do. But this nut he never tries to crack.

27. Therefore I warn you once again, to think of this when I am no longer with you in the flesh, and closely observe their doctrine whether they preach Christ correctly, that is, whether they boast of their own works before God: then you will be able to judge. I often said and repeat it, that you will find them always requiring some good little deed, not thereby to serve the people, but in order to merit salvation, that whoever does and keeps this shall be saved, but he who does not observe and do this, shall be damned. Thus they force you to trust in works, as the fanatics drove the mob to break up images by saying: Whoever breaks an image or tears down a painting does a good work, and proves himself a Christian. Soon the crowd rushed forth, thrust and broke to pieces by the wholesale, for they all wanted to be Christians, just as though the Jews, the heathen and the Turks, and the worst rogues could not do the same things.

28. Such fanatics do not destroy confidence in works, but rather give more value to works and permit confidence in them to be retained. Work there,

work here, only cut out of it all confidence and trust, and do not put your trust in works as in a god, but let them only serve your neighbor, that confidence in your works may be in your neighbor, that is, that he feels certain you will do him every kindness, and that you have like confidence in him. Your confidence for your salvation must rest alone in Christ, for which you dare not trust in your works a hair's breadth. When they preach thus, it agrees with faith. If it is according to the proportion of faith, then Christ is not annihilated nor broken to pieces, but remains whole in knowledge as he really is. And although the devil also pretends that he preaches Christ through his own apostles, do not believe him, he only seeks to win your soul through deceit and cunning, and will deceive you. Well, let this warning be sufficient; but it does not help any [among those who will not hear it]; [he who shall be lost, will be lost]. Yet it aids those who are to be reformed. Here follows the third proof and way of knowing the spirits, and reads:

"Ye shall know them by their fruits."

29. These fruits are their works and behavior. Yet spiritual eyes are needed to see this, that one may learn well to know the really good works, which Paul mentions to the <4052>Galatians 5:22, where he says: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control." These are the true fruits of the Spirit. But the works of the flesh are "fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revelings, and such like." <4059>Galatians 5:19-21.

30. Now, take heed rightly to distinguish works from one another. In all their works you will not find a single spark of love. You will indeed find that they are friendly within their own sect, calling one another Christians and brethren; but there is nothing in them but the very poison of the devil. They have neither mercy nor patience, nor friendship for any one who is not of their sect. For if they could destroy us body and soul in an hour or a moment they would do it. This fruit flesh and blood do not see, but in the meantime they wear gray gowns and belong to a quiet order, and observe the same rule and habit.

31. These are not works of love; for works of love are such as are exercised toward the needy, and toward our enemies, when we are merciful to sinners, instruct and teach the ignorant, and serve the poor bodily with our goods and honor, as Christ teaches in <4025>Matthew 25:35f. You will

not find these works in any false prophet. Any one may indeed conduct himself like a spiritual man by his extraordinary behavior, like barefooted and Carthusian monks do. But what benefit is all this to me? And that others break down cloisters and images, what good does that do their neighbor? All this merely makes a show and when you view it superficially there seems something in it; but there is no benefit in it. Love, however, requires works that will do some good.

32. Now watch and see if the false prophets give anything to the poor. To be sure, they accept gifts, being greedy and stingy. But I have not yet seen any who give cheerfully, for they only want to have, and that we should give to them. Dear me, ye golden friends, who would not like this? You speak much of good works and a good life, and do not know what it is, namely, to be of use and benefit to your neighbor. From these fruits you may know them. Again, they do not only not assist any one, nor help the poor, but rejoice and are glad at their neighbor's misfortunes. When one is in disgrace they will not protect him with their honor, nor help him out of his trouble, but plunge him still deeper down, spread the news and sing doggerels about him and laugh at him secretly besides.

33. Again, when one falls into sin, they have no tender heart for him; their heart being hardened they enjoy their neighbor's fall and use it to set off their own goodness. What shall we say to sum up this matter? They have rough, bitter, poisonous hearts; they have a black, poisonous tongue, and can cut up everybody on their slaughter bench, give every one a black mark and leave no one without blame; they judge, condemn and decry every one, and think little of anyone's injury. Alas, what pious spirits we have here!

34. Therefore open your eyes and see whether they do the works that are beneficial to men, and you will find out that you cannot gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles. A good grape on the vine does not devour itself nor us, but is eaten; it is useful only and harms no one. But no one enjoys the thorns; they prick, and scratch and injure every one. Mark then, whether they do such works which benefit others. That they wear gray gowns and shirts of hair-cloth, that they lie on woolen cloth, creep into a corner; for all this let the devil thank them! If, how. ever, they would lend me money in my distress and open their purses, and lend corn to those who have neither flour nor bread, into whose homes the sun enters before bread; here they are not found. Give me a coat, something to eat and drink;

visit me when I am sick; comfort me in my sins; this might help me. Yes, you may wait until you find such a person, or come again in the morning!

35. But to stand in the choir and howl and chant vociferously, to enjoy good easy days without work, to sleep, to feast and get drunk, all this they are willing to do. Oh! my dear, who could not do this? It would be easy to put a cap even on a donkey, girdle him with a rope, shave him a tonsure and stand him in a corner and make him fast and feast to the glory of the saints, so that in all things he may behave similarly to you and all your false works!

So likewise, when I fall into disgrace, and become guilty of murder or adultery, there is no grace for me, and no one is so merciful as to help me quiet and better my conscience, but they laugh at me, and all the world must know it, and have grand books written about it.

36. So in their whole body and soul, you will be unable to find one single good work. They are hateful, envious, stingy; such fruits of the flesh will ye observe in them. Let them quote the Scriptures and pretend to be holy as much as they please, only observe whether their doctrine harmonizes with the proof of faith; and see to it that Christ be not dethroned, that his knowledge remain entire and undisturbed, and in the third place see whether they exercise good works toward their neighbor or not. This they will doubtless omit, for the devil can do no good work. This is what Christ the Lord means when he adds:

> "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit."

37. Here we must notice what he says: "By their fruits ye shall know them." He does not say: Ye shall make them out of their fruits. For who ever made a pear tree out of a pear, or a cherry tree out of a cherry? It is, however, the law of nature that the tree should make the fruit, an apple tree the apple, and so forth. The tree is known by its fruits, but is not made by its fruits. Just as Abraham when he offered his son Isaac was previously good and obedient, yet, it was said to him, <01221 2>Genesis 22:12: "Now I know that thou fearest God." He does not say: Now you have become godfearing; but by this work it is revealed and made known that you fear God.

38. Hence these are two distinct things, to be or become something, and that something be made known, or revealed. There are many things that are known to God alone, but when it is revealed it also becomes known to man. Here Christ teaches that the fruits shall serve the purpose to know the tree, whether the tree be good or evil. Abraham became known by his works, as one who feared God and was pious and righteous. Therefore, before the fruits come they must be good, since they do nothing else but show forth the nature of the tree. To reveal a thing is by far a different matter from the existence of the thing itself. So my external works aid nothing to the end, that I am or become good, but make known and reveal the good treasure, and the heart in which it lies concealed. For this treasure that lies concealed in the heart, God desires to make known, and not to be left concealed.

39. Thus in so far the works make us good, pure and holy externally before the people, but not internally before God. For this Christ and faith alone must do. Speaking in this manner you will speak correctly and distinctly. However, if any one is so stiff-necked and stubborn that he will not allow himself to be instructed, let him go, for we cannot give good advice to such people, nor is such preaching meant for them; but we seek hearts gone astray, who eagerly desire to be good and to understand it correctly; they also accept our instruction, and to them we preach. Hence he further says:

"A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit;
neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit."

40. The work righteous are corrupt trees. But do they not perform many good works? Indeed, what is a good work? Here let me ask, whether their hands, pockets, cellars and farms are at the service of mankind to help them in body and soul? But they cannot. Again, a good tree bringeth not forth evil fruit, that is, a Christian, be he ever so weak and helpless, he will do his neighbor no harm. Do not understand me to say that he cannot fall; for David also was a good tree, and yet he fell, 2 Samuel 12, but he did not become a corrupt tree. As long as a Christian is true and remains in the faith, you must not expect he will do anything to harm his neighbor, but much rather to help him. And if at times things should occur as with David, you should not be offended at them, for God permits such mishaps to occur, that his saints at times stumble and suffer, by which their faith may be strengthened and increased, and that they may learn their own weakness. So far as the tree is good, so little is the harm it does; and the

more evil the tree is, the greater harm it does. We are not yet wholly good, but we labor to the end that day by day we may become better. But our consolation is that which the Lord adds, saying:

"Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."

41. Sects and factions will not last, if we are only able to await their destruction; but a faithful minister will be victorious and will endure. For the Word of God abideth forever. <2308>Isaiah 40:8. But what the devil sows runs like a mad dog, as David the prophet says in the first Psalm: "The ungodly shall not stand," they will be driven hither and thither, and will be dispersed like dust on the threshing flood. Thus they now run and break forth, but at length they will be cut down and cast into the fire. Here he closes and says:

"Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

42. This is one kind of knowledge, as I said. Paul speaks of a different kind in <4512>Romans 12:2; and John in his first Epistle, <6401>1 John 4:1 — that we should criticize and judge their doctrine according to the knowledge of Christ, also whether their teaching is in harmony with faith. But their works and life, of which he here speaks, we must measure and judge according to love. But whoever has not the first kind of knowledge and judgment, will easily be deceived by works.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY,

THIRD SERMON: [4007]MATTHEW 7:15-23.

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1. Christ our Lord preached this part of the Gospel in concluding his long sermon on the mount, When he had taught his disciples all they should know, he proceeds and warns them to be ever on their guard against false doctrine; as all good ministers try and should do at the close of their sermons, namely, warn the people to hold fast to the true doctrine and beware of false teaching.

Thus St. Paul also did, Acts 20:28-31, when he was about to depart from Ephesus, among other things, he said: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood. I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears."

Thus here and there in all his Epistles Paul always adds an admonition, to guard themselves against other teachings. Just as St. Peter also gives an admonition in his second Epistle, 2 Peter 2:1f, when he says: "But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many shah follow their lascivious doings; by reason of whom the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of. And in coveteous-ness

shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you; whose sentence now from of old lingereth not, and their destruction slumbereth not."

2. Christ here proceeds in like manner. When he finished his sermon he warns his disciples and the people and admonishes them ever to remain faithful to what he had told them, and to be very careful not to be misled by false teachers, and says:

"Beware of false prophets."

3. First from this we are to understand that we are under obligation to reflect upon this fact and that it will always be that after the true preachers depart false teachers will come; yea, they will even enter along with and mingle with them. Otherwise, why were it necessary for Christ so faithfully to admonish us when he says: "Beware," take care! if he had known that all his teachings would continue pure? Therefore he gives us this warning, that we may be certain of false prophets appearing after the true and pure doctrine is preached. For it has come to pass in all periods of the world's history that after faithful and true ministers, prophets and rulers of God's people labored, others followed who corrupted the pure doctrine, faith and worship; as the Book of Judges 2:10f, also describes. When those were gathered to their fathers whom God had given the people as teachers and judges, who knew the will of God, what was and what was not acceptable to him, immediately the people of Israel began to turn away from God and his Word. One worshiped this idol, another that, and they were divided into factions so that they fell from the true teachings and strayed from the ways of their fathers.

4. So it was also in the times of the Apostles. Then the doctrine was yet pure; but when they died who held to their true teachings, false apostles and factious leaders came. who perverted everything and desired radical changes in all things, as the Epistles of St. Paul sufficiently show. Now, inasmuch as this is so, and we cannot expect anything else, Christ our Lord warns us here in the spirit of a true shepherd and bishop, that we beware while we have the Gospel preached in its purity and simplicity, that we hold firmly to it and depart not from it, even at the risk of losing our life and possessions. For it cannot be otherwise than that God's Word will not continue always pure and unadulterated in all generations.

5. Thus it will come to pass also among us. God be praised, we and others have the Gospel in greater purity and abundance than at any time since the

days of the Apostles. But when we and those who now assist to promote it are gathered to our fathers, you will have false teachers enough, as many have already commenced and they already bestir themselves. And blessed are they who are diligently on their guard according to this Gospel and believe not every wind of doctrine, but remain steadfast in what they have learned. This Christ first teaches here with the words: “Beware,” be warned, as if to say: you will most certainly have to contend with false teachers.

6. Here you may ask: why does God permit false prophets to come among his pious people and be the successors of his true ministers? Is he not powerful and strong enough to prevent it, so that the Gospel may continue pure and in its power? Of course he is. But he permits it in order to prove and preserve his own people, and to punish the unthankful. It is as St. Paul in <46119>1 Corinthians 11:19 says: “For there must be also factions among you, that they that are approved may be made manifest among you.” This means, that those whose faith is approved may become manifest, so that their spirit and word appear, and testify that they are true.

7. When God gives us his Word, his gifts and Spirit, it is not his will that we should be lazy, sleepy and idle. For if you have the true Word and its true meaning, the world will attack you on one side, and the devil will attempt to tear you from it on the other, not only by means of worldly tyrants who persecute the Word with the sword; but also by means of our own reason and the wisest people in the world. Thus God desires to develop you by his Word, and to give the Holy Spirit whom he has bestowed upon you something to do, so that you may learn that God’s wisdom is wiser than the world’s wisdom, that God’s strength is stronger than the strength and power of the world, which you will not learn unless you pass through this conflict with false teachers.

8. Wherever he permits the devil to create factions, he would thus stir you up, and say: Defend yourself, lay hold of the Word, and learn to experience God’s wisdom and power against the wisdom of the world and the lies of satan. Thus the strength and wisdom of God’s Word will appear, that you may learn that it is not to be conquered with power and wisdom; but it conquers, and puts to shame all power, cunning and wisdom opposed to it. This is one reason why God permits factions and sects among us, who enter in as it were edgewise, as though they were beneficial and served to the end that the Word, the truth and Spirit prove themselves to be better

and plainer; however aside from this factions and sects serve no good purpose.

9. The second reason is, that he may punish the unthankful, who will not accept the Word, that they may be converted and saved. As Christ also said to the Jews, <4054>John 5:43: “I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.” Paul also says in <5020>2 Thessalonians 2:10: “Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” Thus God severely punishes these sins with blindness and error, which are also the greatest and worst sins, although we regard them to be so insignificant.

10. We consider it a small matter, that the Gospel of God’s grace is again restored to us. How many are there, who never even once thanked God for it? We forget it, cast it to the winds, become lazy and careless, no one welcomes it, no one relishes it, no one lifts up thankful hands to God for it. Yes, we are so richly overflooded with the Gospel that we have now become tired of it, and are almost turned against it, as Paul prophesied in <5043>2 Timothy 4:3-4: “For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables.” Thus we see time and again throughout the whole Scriptures, how highly it offends God and that he considers it the greatest sin, when his Word is despised which is so dear and precious that it cost him the blood of his dear Son, while we so lightly cast it to the winds. For this reason he also visits us with the worst of all calamities, which is not to be compared with the other calamities in the world, so that the people become so hardened, blindfolded and misled by the false prophets, that heaven itself is closed against them and hell opens to receive them, and life eternal is lost forever. Even though you fall under the sword of the Turk or of tyrants, if you only die in the true knowledge of God’s Word and in true faith, what is that but a blessed death, devoutly to be desired? But to deliver the soul forever to the devil, is eternal wrath, an everlasting calamity and hell itself.

11. God has now begun to visit us with manifold temporal and bodily calamities. But a far worse calamity will await us, when the holy Gospel is

banished from Germany, or other false teachers appear, when one teaches this, another that. Then heaven will be closed, and the false preachers will not permit it to be opened. Hence there is great need that we pray earnestly. But, alas, how very cold our hearts are, and the reason of this is that our walls are not yet on fire, and we do not feel the loss. Nevertheless the devil has determined to drown all Germany in blood, and to take the Gospel from us, unless he be prevented beforehand and held in check by the prayers of pious Christians.

"Who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves."

12. No one sends them. They come of themselves. And this is the real nature of false prophets, that in order to preach they force themselves upon us. Some do this for a living, which I do not value very highly, for they will not have it quite as easy as they think. But those who force themselves upon us with the boast that they do it for the sake of Christian love, on account of the truth and that the Holy Spirit constrains them to do so; and that they seek nothing but the salvation of souls; of all such be on your guard, for the devil has most certainly sent them, and not God. For those whom God sends are called and constrained to enter upon their work. Nor do they boast much of themselves. But of whatever they do boast, they prove by their work. Therefore, the Lord would say, beware of those you see are neither sent nor called, but come of themselves at the devil's call.

13. Yet they ever boast they have the Holy Spirit? Answer: whoever would convince you that he is moved by the Holy Spirit and does this from Christian motives, say to him: As you boast so much of the Spirit, give me proof of it. For you testify of yourself, and the Scriptures forbid me to believe anyone who only testifies of himself. For even Christ, the Son of the living God, would not bear witness of himself, as we read in the Gospel of John 5:31 and John 8:14. However, he furnished testimony by which men might know that he was sent from God, and that his Word and doctrine were true. As you then say you have the Holy Spirit, give us evidence of your Spirit, prove it with facts that we may believe you. For here a divine testimony is necessary to prove the presence of the Spirit of God, in order that there may be two witnesses, you and God. If you will not do this, then we can neither hear nor believe you.

14. For, if we grant it is true, that one is a true spirit and has the true Holy Spirit; even then you should not hear him. For God has commanded that you should observe his order, and ask for two witnesses, and demand the

proof and record of his call. Therefore say: I will not listen to you on the ground of your pretenses and boasting, even though you should have the true Spirit, for God would thus test me, whether I wish to remain in the order he has established. Therefore God is satisfied and well pleased, if you do not receive such a spirit; for God thus acts with us to try us, to see whether we will continue in his Word; as a father who plays with his child, gives it an apple and takes it again.

15. Therefore, when a spirit comes self-called and brings something new, then know how to guard yourself and say: I do not ask what you preach, but whether you are sent, or you come of yourself? If you come of yourself, I will not hear you, even though you have the Holy Spirit; for the devil in the Gospel can also say: “What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? I know thou art the Holy One of God.” <4024>Mark 1:24.

So the vulgar crowd also say: Here is the real and true Word of God which this man preaches, let us hear him. Yes, look out beforehand whence he comes. The devil can preach too, but he does it for an occasion to win adherents; then he comes forth and sows his poison among the good grain, so that it becomes worse than at the beginning. Therefore Christ so diligently warns us against those who come of themselves.

16. Another call is when the congregation or civil authority calls one for the sake of the Church. This call proceeds out of the debt and duty of love; for when people need me for the ministry, provided I am fit for it, and they require it of me, it is then my duty to obey, for God commands me to serve my neighbor. Therefore, this call requires no proof, because the people desire it, and the Word of God constrains me. This means “brought,” “called” and “urged.” But the other call, like that of Christ and the Apostles, comes immediately from God, and is called “sent,” because it is accompanied by the testimonies of the Holy Spirit. Others, though they boast of the Spirit or of the flesh, you are not to hear. As our fanatical, erratic spirits now boast, who have devoured the Holy Spirit feathers and all, and say: the Holy Spirit has spoken to them from heaven and revealed to them many wonderful things, and so forth. I cannot boast much of the Spirit; they become spiritual entirely too soon for me. I boast of the Spirit of love, otherwise I am a poor carnal sinner. However, I ought indeed to know something also of the Spirit, of whom they boast; but they are all too highly spiritualized for me.

17. What is meant when he says: They come in sheep's clothing? These sheep's clothing are, that they employ everything for an outward show that true Christians and true ministers teach. For we, who are the lambs of Christ, are covered with the sheep's wool. These are not only works, an outward, hypocritical life they lead, in that they pray much and wear gray frocks, go about with bowed heads, fast much and lead a strict life; but the worst of all is that they make use of the Word of God and the holy Scriptures for selfish ends, which in the prophets are called God's wool and linen. For preaching, likewise admonitions and Scripture passages, are the real clothing with which they desire to adorn and pride themselves, saving: Here is Christ, here is baptism, here is the name of God, here is he who interprets the Scriptures which are the Scriptures of God, and their whole pretense is nothing but God's name, God's Spirit and Christ's Spirit.

18. This now is meant by coming in sheep's clothing; namely, so to preach and so to make use of the Scriptures that it may be esteemed as the true doctrine. For he does not say: who come to you in a wolfs hide, or with spears and showing their teeth. They do not preach any poisonous doctrine publicly or without the Scriptures, for then men might know them; as for instance they have preached Aristotle in their high schools, that there is neither civil authority nor the right of the emperor, wherein they said, there was no God in Christianity. On the contrary, they adorned themselves not only with works, but also with the holy Scriptures, by which God clothes and covers our souls; For if they would not act thus, the unthankful would not be so easily blindfolded or misled by them.

19. Hence the saying is true, the holy Scriptures are a book for heretics, that is, they are a book to which heretics most of all lay claim. For they misuse no other book so much, yea, they do not know any other worthy of praise, and no heresy was ever so wicked or gross, that did not attempt to strengthen itself and recommend itself by the use of the Scriptures. Just as a man might say: God is the God of all rogues and rascals, because the largest crowd in the world take his part. Not because their rascality comes from God or is acceptable to him, but because they thus take his holy name in vain. So then, the holy Scriptures must be a heretic's book, not that the book is to blame, but because of these rogues who so shamefully misuse it. In like manner people are accustomed to say in the proverb: All misfortune begins in God's name. This is also true. Well, you say, then I will be careful not to make use of God's name. What is that you utter? How can you blame the name, that is given in order that I might be saved? He will indeed

find and punish these rogues and rascals. Well, then, the Bible is a heretic's book, but I will not throw it away on that account; on the contrary, I will study and read it much more, so that I may know how to avoid the misuse of it.

20. Then let every one be prepared and armed, that he may not so easily allow himself to be misled by the brilliant pretentions of false teachers, although they at the time quote the Scriptures. For within certainly lie concealed ravenous wolves. And when you think they will feed and satisfy your soul, then they rend you, murder and devour you. But no one will so readily judge or decide this matter, except with spiritual eyes. The common man and the rabble cannot, for the largest multitude despise the Gospel and are unthankful, while the smallest flock receive it and can appreciate it. And this is the greatest and severest contest, when one must contend with Scripture against Scripture, to strike one's sword away and get the advantage of him, to pluck his weapon out of his hand and slay him with his own sword, which no one can do except he who is enlightened by the Holy Spirit so that he sees this rogue.

21. I have often told you the surest doctrine and rule, with which to prove the spirits. It is that St. John gives in his first Epistle (6041)1 John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God. Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God."

22. Also St. Paul in (6127)Romans 12:7 says: "Whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith." That is, all doctrines must harmonize and agree with faith, so that nothing be taught but faith. He who has not this faith cannot judge of any doctrine correctly, for here the carnal minded who are smart and worldly wise are incompetent, only pious spiritual hearts can do that.

Of course there are many who say: Christ is the son of God, born of a chaste virgin, died and rose again from the dead, and so forth. However, they do not believe that he is Christ, that is, that he was given for us, without any effort of ours, and has won for us the Spirit of God and makes us his children without any merit on our part, so that through him we might have a gracious God and eternal life. This is the faith that is called, to know Christ. This is the touchstone, the judgment-disk and the balance, by which all doctrine must be weighed, proved and judged. It is therefore not sufficient that a teacher or preacher should merely know the creed

concerning Christ, that he is the Son of God, died and rose again from the dead and so forth. This of course is all sheep's clothing.

23. But observe the difficulty: when they say, Christ has died, was buried and rose again, and did the like for us, then they must also conclude that we do not deserve the forgiveness of sins and eternal life and God's grace by virtue of our own merit. This point the false spirits most certainly never touch or enforce, but avoid it, as they say the devil does incense or the cross. He allows them to preach of course, how Christ was born, died and rose again, ascended to heaven and sitteth at the right hand of his heavenly Father, yet they mingle other things with it, as thus and thus you must do, this or that you must leave undone, if you want to be saved and please God. This is the devil who administers his poison in a sugar coated form. 24. The Pope also robes himself in such sheep's clothing, that Christ has indeed merited for us by his death and by shedding his blood, that we are saved and become God's children. He adds however to this: Whoever is not obedient to the Romish church is a child of eternal condemnation; but whoever obeys will thereby be saved and ascend straight to heaven. Does not the Pope insist on his own affairs as strongly as on the Gospel? But compare the two. If the death of Christ does it, then my works cannot do it. It would be quite a different thing if he would preach thus: You are to obey me out of Christian love, but not to be saved thereby, which takes place through the blood of Christ. But he will not bite this nut.

25. Therefore learn well to be on your guard, and thoroughly examine all doctrines, whether they rightly teach and apply this chief and fundamental doctrine, that is, whether they preach Christ correctly and purely. For you will certainly find among all factions and sects, that they always either omit this article entirely, or bring something with it to which they lead the people as though that were particularly necessary to salvation. Thus our fanatics and image-breakers also at first drew the crowd with them by the pretense that nothing was more necessary than to break images. Whoever breaks an image or destroys a table does a good work, and proves that he is a Christian Soon the people as a mass rushed in crowds and all wanted to be Christians; just as though the Jews, Gentiles and Turks and the worst rogues could not do the same thing.

26. Such fanatics do not shake our confidence in works, but rather strengthen it and rest in them. Where there are true teachers their preaching agrees with faith. If it be in the proportion of faith, then Christ

will not be neglected or divided, but will remain entire in his knowledge as he is. And although the devil pretends to preach Christ through his apostles, do not believe him, for he would entrap you with his cunning and deceive you. Indeed this is warning enough, but it is in vain for those who will not hear. Yet it assists those who are to be changed for the better. Now follow the third test and way to know the spirits, which reads thus:

"By their fruits ye shall know them."

27. All our outward behavior and works are fruits. But in order to learn to know thoroughly the truly good works, one must have spiritual eyes. St. Paul mentions such works to the <4052>Galatians 5:22: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control." These are the true fruits of the Spirit. But the works of the flesh are: "fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revelings and such like." <4019>Galatians 2:19-21.

28. When you carefully distinguish the works of the flesh from the works of the Spirit, you will not find in all the works of the false prophets a single spark of the Spirit. In the first place you will certainly not find any true fruits of faith or works of love among them. But you will find, that they are very friendly among themselves and call each other brethren; but this is nothing but poison and the devil within them. For whatever does not belong to their faction they have no mercy, no patience or friendliness; but if they could, they would destroy them body and soul in an hour or a moment. Flesh and blood do not see the fruits, hence in the meantime they of course wear their gray frocks, are a quiet order and observe the same customs and principles.

29. These are not works of love. On the contrary, works of love are those we do in behalf of the suffering and toward our enemies, also in showing mercy to sinners, in instructing and teaching the ignorant, and in serving the poor with our own body, goods and honor, as Christ relates in <4025>Matthew 25:25f. You will not find these works in any false prophet. tie may indeed conduct himself like a Christian in his extraordinary behavior, like the bare-footed friars and Carthusians; but what benefit is that to me? Likewise, what benefit is it to a neighbor that others destroy monasteries and pictures. This is only a show and appears as if it were something, but there is no benefit in it whatever. Love, however, requires works that are beneficial to your fellow men.

30. Again, you will further note how proud and impudent these spirits are, who only desire to be honored and worshipped; and are full of greed and know nothing of mercy. They not only refuse to give to anyone and to help the poor; but they also rejoice and are pleased to see that their neighbors do not prosper. If a person be found in disgrace they will not help with their own honor to rescue him from his disgrace; but plunge him still deeper into it and publish it abroad, sing a song about him and laugh at him in their glee. And when one falls into sin, their hearts have no sympathy for him; but they harden their hearts and are only tickled over their neighbor's downfall and adorn themselves by it. And what more shall we say? These are rude, bitter hearts, full of poison, which have only a black, baneful tongue, and can hew everyone to pieces upon the slaughter block. They must turn men into demons, leave no one uncensored, judge, condemn and despise everyone, and regard everyone's disgrace with scorn. Christ therefore says of them:

> "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit," etc.

31. Here note, he says: "By their fruits ye shall know them." He does not say: By their fruits they become good or evil. For when was there ever a pear tree made out of a pear; or a cherry tree out of a cherry? However, it is natural, that the tree bears the fruit, an apple tree bears apples, and so on. The tree of course is known by its fruits, but it is not made by its fruits. Like Abraham when he offered his son Isaac was already God's worshiper. And yet God said to him, <0122 12>Genesis 22:12: "For now I know that thou fearest God." He does not say: Now you have become godfearing. On the contrary, by your work it becomes known and public, that you fear God.

32. Hence these are two different things; to be or become something, and that something be known or be made public. There are many things that are known to God alone; but when he makes them manifest, they become known also to men. And Christ says, the fruits serve to the end, that by them men may know the tree whether it be good or evil, as Abraham was known by his works that he feared God, and was good and righteous. Consequently, before the fruit becomes manifest it must grow out of the tree, that it may also thus become known what kind of a tree it is. However, to make a thing known is quite different from the existence of the thing itself. Consequently, the work I do, does not serve to the end that

I may become good and just before God, but it only makes known and manifests the treasure and the heart, in which it is concealed. For this treasure hidden in the heart, God does not desire to leave neglected, but to make it known.

33. So far works make us good, pure and holy externally before men; but not internally before God; for this Christ alone and faith must accomplish. Thus this matter is correctly and variously explained. But if one is so stiff-necked and stubborn, and will not allow himself to be instructed, we let him go his own way. For to such we cannot explain anything, and nothing can be preached to them. But we seek erring hearts who desire rightly to understand and to please God. These are teachable, and to these we preach. Hence Christ says further:

"Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

34. This he repeats to teach and warn us, that we may know how to guard ourselves against such characters, and take good care to rightly know them; not by their name and self-praise, which mean the pure truth, spirit and salvation of souls, but by their fruits. For they all to be sure come adorned with the name of Christ, the Church and God's Word, by which they blindfold the people with their continual noise and apparitions, so that the ignorant become terrified at such names, and cannot check or endure it. But Christ says, pay no attention to their pretensions and boasting. For this can deceive all, there is nothing common to them except the misuse of God's name, Spirit, truth and Church, so that Paul is forced to declare, Galatians 1:8: "But though we (who in truth could boast that he was an Apostle sent by Christ), or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any Gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be accursed."

35. Now might not others misuse those precious names, or be unable to deceive and mislead, by what they present and boast of in the name of the Church? Since we are to believe no one who teaches anything else, although he came with the credentials of an Apostle, yea, even if he were an angel from heaven, not to say anything of the Church, which has not yet the high understanding and clear intelligence, nor the perfect purity and holiness of the angels in heaven.

36. Therefore, not to be misled by such glorious names and boasting, it is necessary that Christians, as I have said, should have and know the true

doctrine of Christ in the first place; and then according to Christ's doctrine judge all other teaching, whether it agrees with and is built on the true foundation or not. For as he requires his Christians to beware of false teachers, and thus constitutes them judges, yea, commands them to prove and judge all doctrines, he also demands that they be wise and intelligent Christians, who know what the true doctrine is, and can distinguish between it and the false. For such testing and judging of doctrine must not be according to their own thoughts, or according to their own shrewdness or boast of the Spirit of holiness and the like. As the Pope with his councils falsely claims the only right to judge everything, and that everyone is bound to submit to his judgment, on the ground that they say they have the Holy Spirit, and cannot err. On the contrary we must have a sure, clear rule by which to judge, which is called the Word of Christ. This alone must be the great standard and test, as I have said often enough.

37. But since the multitudes of hearers are not all so intelligent and informed as to be able to make a clear distinction, and as sect spirits conceal themselves for a time among the true sheep, cover themselves with their wool and pretend to hold with the true Christians, and teach nothing but God's Word, which the true Church teaches; therefore Christ here adds another thought, by which he teaches how we are to examine and know them, namely, by their fruits. And he warns us not to act hastily and accept whatever is offered us as God's Word; but we should first well consider, inquire and investigate whether it is according to God's true Word, as the Bereans did, <44171>Acts 17:11. Again, you are to inquire as to the kind of fruit such doctrine produces; for the fruits cannot long be concealed, but must show themselves and let themselves be seen, as Christ here says: "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" And: "The corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit."

38. But he does not speak here chiefly of fruits which are coarse and readily perceived, so that everyone, though not a Christian, can easily judge and know them, and even before the world are publicly condemned sins and vices; but especially of the fruits of false doctrine Christ here speaks, which do not publish before the world the public works of an evil or criminal life, but present a fine appearance, (otherwise no one would be deceived), and yet they are opposed to God's Word. Such fruits are not difficult for a Christian to know and to judge, when he diligently considers and judges them according to God's Word and command. For here reason alone is not sufficient to investigate these things; but a spiritual

understanding is necessary, which is able to distinguish what is, and is not, in harmony with the sure and clear teachings of holy Writ, or else a man would be deceived by the beautiful show of reason and human wisdom, with which all sects chiefly adorn and sell themselves, so that the fruits and life built on false doctrine, are regarded as genuine holiness.

39. So Popery and even Mohammed make a fine show with their mockery and worship, which they call a holy life, and hence conduct themselves in an exceptional way and manner, do not eat, drink or clothe themselves like other people, which they regard as great severity, earnestness and discipline, and call it the service of God and the way to heaven. With this name and pretended worship, holy life, great devotion and good intentions, reason is easily blinded and taken captive, so that it cannot judge such things as evil fruit. Hence more is needed here than the understanding and judgment of reason, namely, that a person hold and estimate all life that false spirits regard good to be against God's Word and command, which is the rule of all works and life that are good and pleasing to God. This rule shows the difference between the hypocritical works and fruits of false doctrine, and the good, honest works of the true doctrine. For it will readily appear that the works and life of hypocrites and false teachers do not agree and harmonize with God's work.

40. Christ himself notes and censures the doctrine and life of the scribes and Pharisees because of their fruits, that they forsook God's commandment and put in its place their own works and worship; yea, they verily abolished the commandments of God by their traditions. Just so has Popery also done, which did not only abolish one, but almost all God's commandments, and instead not only taught and introduced something else, so that God's command was no longer esteemed, and their own works held much higher, and they taught and practiced in their lives just the contrary, as I have abundantly demonstrated elsewhere.

41. For this is certainly the character of all sect spirits; they cannot avoid it, they must produce something of their own and different from God's Word, and to boom it, so that it has a much greater reputation and appearance, and thus God's Word and command take a second place. This is already a sure sign that their doctrine is false. As the Pope with his own doctrine praises his own worship and holy life, that his spiritual order and monasticism are much higher and better than other lives and works in the common vocations, where they live according to God's Word. Again, they

invent works which they call works of supererogation, superfluous works, which they pretend are much more costly and higher, than the works of the ten commandments of God.

Thus all other religious tendencies act, aside from the true doctrine of the Scriptures, as Mohammed of the Turks, the Talmud of the Jews, as also our Anabaptists, are almost the same; all forsake and abandon the true works and life God's Word requires and urges, and instead slaves after other hypocritical holiness with special works and writings, wearing grey frocks, looking sad, abstaining from wine, afflicting their body with remarkable fasting, repeating many and long prayers, and the like.

42. Therefore, I say, do not allow anyone to cause you to gape in astonishment, or to make a continual noise in your presence with the false appearance and erring trash of great and excellent works, holiness, etc.; but come hither with such fruits to the true light which is God's Word, from which we must learn and know what God requires and calls a true and good life, and according to it conclude both what is a good tree and good fruit, or what is the contrary. It avails nothing, what you may think is great, beautiful and precious. But if you would not err and be deceived, you must come to God's Word, that you may not fancy but hear and know what God says is right, good and pleasing to him.

43. This is said. in general of the fruits of false teaching, which indeed appear precious, and yet are evil at heart. Besides these, however, there are other fruits that are coarse and easier to recognize. And Christians have this advantage that they can also publicly and practically discern and overthrow them, as the real and legitimate fruits of the doctrine and lies of the devil.

44. For every sect has always had one or more particular hobbies and articles which are manifestly wrong and can easily be discerned to be of the devil, who publicly teach, urge and defend them as right, certain and necessary to believe or to keep. For the spirit of lies cannot so conceal himself, but that he must at last put forth his claws, by which you can discern and observe the ravenous wolf. Of this you have an example and testimony in all the well known fanatics and false spirits; as in our time the Anabaptists, of whom it is manifest that they are wrong in their teaching concerning Christ, faith and the sacraments. They regard baptism as a common, naked, empty sign, despise the external spoken and written Word and Scripture, pretend to have special revelations independent of the

witness of God's Word. They disgrace and rend asunder holy wedlock, because they teach: a man may indeed leave his wife who is not of his faith, and take another, one or more. Again, they would make all property common, acknowledge no civil authority or government, nor approve of it, except what is of their special faith, etc.; as in former times the Manichean heretics also advocated the same theories.

45. Therefore, it must follow that such people come forth with gross errors, by which their spirit is easily discovered. For as they taught that there can be no civil authority except that which is holy and Christian (this means that of their own faith), by which they have already withdrawn all obedience, and claim the right and power to oppose the government, and even to overthrow it with violence and put themselves in its place, as Thomas Muenzer and the Muenster prophets for this reason publicly undertook to do. And because they desire property to be generally and equally distributed; again, because they forsake their wives and take others; from this it also follows that they might grab into the goods and possessions of other people, steal and rob whatever they wish and can. Again, that as often as they desire they can abandon their wives, take others and abandon them in turn, and thus carry on among themselves all debauchery, shame and vice. Behold, here you observe both, in doctrine and in life, there is nothing but evil, rotten, bad fruit, which cannot be hid, but must finally become public, so that the tree may be known by it.

46. Fruit like this you will surely find as the result of all doctrine and belief, not of the pure Word of God. I will not speak here of Mohammed's Koran, for he is entirely too gross with abominable, blasphemous and shameful lies, together with the permission of public murder, whoredom, debauchery, the dissolving of wedlock, without saying anything of all his other disgraceful abominations and deceptions. It would also take too long to relate the sorrowful fruits of all popery, but it is fully treated elsewhere.

47. I will omit the papal doctrines which are somewhat subtle, that they do not correctly teach the ten commandments, and out of what these require they have formed their own decrees, which before God no one is in duty bound to do, except those who would be perfect and do something special and superfluous, etc. In like manner they have taught nothing correctly of the Gospel and faith in Christ, which first of all must be known and urged in the churches, how hearts may possess true and certain comfort; but directly contrary to the faith and comfort of Christ, they have so misled the

people that, if they already believed in Christ and did everything, nevertheless, they should and must still doubt concerning grace. Again, I will not speak of what public, shameful, unchristian abomination and idolatry they carried on in their mass, the invocation of departed saints, indulgences, lies and frauds about purgatory; which are all evidently fruits by which the tree may indeed be known, for these are no sweet grapes or figs, but are mere sour, bitter late grapes, wild plums and berries.

48. But only observe the grossest doctrines they themselves cannot beautify with paint, how they proceed publicly and without shame against God's Word and command, when they, for instance, declare the children free from the authority and obedience of their parents as soon as they only think of becoming priests, monks or nuns; when they against the will of their parents confirm the marriage vow or again dissolve it. In like manner they forbid young people to marry, whom they have enticed to become priests or to enter a cloister, and compel them to live without hope of marriage, and thereby have filled the world with disgraceful, unutterable debauchery, shame and vice, and have plunged souls into the bonds and destruction of the devil; therefore St. Paul also in <5401>1 Timothy 4:1-3 because of such fruit condemns those forbidding to marry, and calls it the doctrine of devils.

49. What is still more shameful to hear in Christendom, they go to work and want to defend their shameless action with self-condemned consciences, and even at the present day they are bold to say that their public whoredom and scandalous life is not so bad that a poor priest should marry a wife so that he may not be compelled to live unchaste with an evil condemned conscience. Yes, all this they confirm besides by persecution, murder and bloodshed of poor, pious and harmless people, only because they marry, or celebrate the sacrament according to the institution of Christ, and do not all worship the lies and abominations of the Pope in opposition to God's Word. Besides, in all this they claim to be doing right, and want to pass as obedient members and leaders of the Christian Church. And those who censure or oppose them, they curse and condemn, and command to be destroyed with fire and sword as the worst heretics.

50. Tell me, now, if these are not public, known fruits of the corrupt tree, which is the real Antichrist doctrine and government, the sediment of all the infernal poison of the devil? For what else can it be but the devil's herd, who condemn and murder the people in the name of the Church for no

other reason, than because they preach or confess and obey God's Word? And yet they claim to be doing right! For God has not commanded to persecute and murder pious, harmless people; but to praise, honor and treat them well, especially those who keep God's Word and commandments. Without any doubt the Christian Church does and observes God's Word. Wherefore it is an easy matter for every Christian to know and to judge what kind of spirits they are, and no great skill nor further questions nor disputations are needed, if one only distinguishes the boasting or the name from the fruit.

51. We should answer for ourselves the cries and blasphemies of the Papists against our doctrine, which they desire to criticize as to its fruits from this Gospel and conclude: Because evil fruit is also seen among many of our people, therefore our doctrine is also false and wrong. But they call that evil fruit, because we will not, like they, obey the Pope, and observe all the diabolical nonsense of his decrees and the doctrines of monks, which are nothing but evil fruits of the rotten tree, mere human prattle, yes, the doctrine of devils, on account of which they persecute and would gladly murder us all; or wherever they can discover anything to show that among us also there are wicked rogues who do not live as they should, but rob, steal and commit adultery; or when some of our people who at first held to us and afterwards gave offense and produced factions and heresy.

52. True, Papists are unworthy of an answer from us on these things. For we have proved enough against them, that both their doctrine is wrong, and their life, which they regard as holiness, is only corrupt fruit, because it is against God's Word. Besides they claim to have defended their public idolatry, lies and disgraceful life as right and virtuous. Wherefore, by this Gospel they are already condemned as a corrupt, useless tree along with their fruit. And we should not suffer them, so publicly self-condemned, to judge our doctrine or its fruits, because they are not the judges who should or are able to do it. For wherever they as it were could censure us in the highest degree, they do no more than seek for the mote in our eyes, and do not want to see the beam in their own eyes.

53. On the contrary we can easily prove before the whole world, that our doctrine is not our own forged trifles or dreams, but the Scriptures and the plain Word of God. We also teach not to accept, believe or observe anything else as necessary unto salvation. From this the good fruits are also manifest, which harmonize with the doctrine, with our baptism and faith.

For we claim and know that in baptism we are cleansed by the blood of Christ and receive the forgiveness of sins and the grace of God. Through such faith we also experience comfort and joy of conscience against the terrors of sin and death, and, God be praised, we see with our own eyes many pious Christians joyfully leave this world in this comfort and faith, and publicly bear witness to the same by their confession and death. This is surely a fruit of the Holy Spirit and of faith.

54. Moreover, we teach how everyone should live and behave in his earthly calling, according to the Word and commandment of God, that he should avoid sin, obey God, be chaste and patient, serve his neighbor and do good. Such a doctrine can in itself bring forth no corrupt fruit, and no one can justly be offended at it, and some. are even thereby compelled to live a better life. That all do not live in harmony with it, and many among us are yet wicked, unthankful and false Christians, cannot be attributed to the Gospel; for it does not indeed allow of wickedness, but censures and opposes it. But the real cause of it is the devil, for this he has always done to the true Church and God's children, and thus sows his tares among the good wheat.

But because of this the good seed and its fruit, that . is, the Word of God and true Christians, do not become evil. Just as a good apple tree does not become evil, because the noxious insects and caterpillars destroy some of its fruit. Otherwise you would have to censure and condemn the doctrine of Christ and the Apostles, because even among them there was a Judas, and many of their disciples became false Apostles and factious spirits, as St. Paul before had prophesied, 2 Timothy 3:4, that among themselves there would arise false teachers; and St. John in his first Epistle, 1 John 2:19, confesses: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us."

55. Therefore the Gospel is falsely blamed, because among some to whom it is preached factions and heresies arise, and many misuse it; and although we must endure such things among us, as even St. Paul was obliged to do in his churches, yet for all this we neither approve nor allow it; but punish and oppose it as much as possible, so as either to improve or put away from us everything that is against sound doctrine. This the Papists and other sects will not do, because they cannot. For their doctrine in itself is neither good nor honest, and for this reason can bring forth no good fruit.

> "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven."

56. This is exactly what was just said, that it depends not upon boasting, and one should pay no attention to what men pretend with beautiful sacred names, of God, of Christ, of the kingdom of God, of the honor of God, the worship of God and the like. For all this is but to say: Lord, Lord! But you should give heed to what God himself says and requires. For whoever would enter the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God, must not only use the names and words, about which people can speak and boast; but he must also do what God wants done in his kingdom.

57. If we are to do his will, we must first know for a certainty what it is, and how to do it. This our own wisdom and thoughts do not teach, or all men, heathen anti Turks, could do it as well, and every fanatical spirit would come and pretend that whatever pleases him was God's will, just as the monks have hitherto taught us, it is God's will which brings you into the kingdom of heaven that you wear a grey cap, and worship St. Christopher, Franciscus, Barbaras or others.

58. Therefore, we must in this case hear God's Word alone, which reveals and shows plainly unto us, what the will of God the Father is. First, that he has sent his only begotten Son into the world, to reconcile us sinners unto God by his death, and without our merits to purify and sanctify us through his blood, and this he has proclaimed to everyone by the Gospel, and requires you to believe and accept it. As Christ himself declares the same in plain words, <4860>John 6:40: "And this is the will of my Father, that everyone that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

59. In the next place, when we have received such grace and salvation, have been baptized into Christ and believe, his will is that we should afterwards live accordingly, obey God and do what is commanded us in the ten commandments, and everyone in his calling confess God's Word, honor and support it, avoid and flee from sin, and be good, patient, chaste, modest, kind, faithful and true, etc.

60. This he will not only have preached or spoken by the mouth, but done in the heart and in the deed. Consequently, whoever neglects this or teaches, believes and does the contrary, should also know that he has not

done God's will, and is judged already, that he does not belong to the kingdom of heaven, because he is without faith and love. And it will not help him to boast of Christ as though he served him so faithfully, preached so much and did great wonders. On the other hand, if you earnestly do this will of God, cheerfully hear and believe God's Word and live in his obedience, to honor him and benefit your neighbor; and although you should fall but rise again, and not continue impenitent, to defend your sins, to boast against God's Word or maliciously to persecute your neighbor, then you can bravely and joyfully say before God: Lord, Lord, and comfort yourself with the Kingdom of heaven which God has given you. Whether on this account the world reviles and condemns you or puts you under the ban in the name of the Christian Church, should not trouble you. For now you hear that God does not require or wish you to seek praise and a name when you say: Lord, Lord', But you are to seek the deed and fruit of him, who does the will of God. Then be directed according to this rule, and measure all doctrine and life with it which comes to you in the name and praise of God, if you desire not to be deceived.

61. Various and many spirits have come to myself, so that I may here confess to my own experience, they really tempted me with great, excellent words, to lead me in a different course, and at times presented it so plausible that I was almost brought to a stand, and had I not been cautious, I would also have been misled. I could do nothing else in order to remain undeceived and remove such apparitions of the devil, than as the prophet David teaches, 19905Psalm 119:105: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and light unto my path." Then I went to this light which teaches me what the will of God is, and compared it to these talkers and spiritual boasters, whether it harmonizes with the clear doctrine of the ten commandments and faith in Christ. When I found this was not the ease, I immediately east it away, and bravely upon this admonition of Christ judged and condemned it as evil, useless fruit and a corrupt tree. Do thou likewise, and hold fast to the true standard by which all doctrine must be judged, which is God's Word and command, then you can neither err nor fail, and can overthrow the boast and pretensions of all false spirits. For Christ by this sentence: Not he who saith: "Lord, Lord," but he who does the will of my Father, directs and leads us alone to his Word, that we may know that those alone are good fruits who walk according to that Word.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

This, sermon appeared under the title: “A sermon for the second Sunday after Mary’s Ascension. Preached at Wittenberg by Dr. Martin Luther, 1522.” As Easter in the year 1522 came on the 20th of April, the 9th Sunday after Trinity came on the 17th of August.

Text. <4216 01>Luke 16:1-9. And he said also unto the disciples, There was a certain rich man, who had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he was wasting his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, What is this that I hear of thee? render the account of the stewardship; for thou canst be no longer steward. And the steward said within himself, What shall I do, seeing that my lord taketh away the stewardship from me? I have not strength to dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the steward ship, they may receive me into their houses. And calling to him each one of his lord’s debtors, he said to the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, A hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bond, and sit down quickly and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, A hundred measures of wheat. He saith unto him, Take thy bond, and write fourscore. And his lord commended the unrighteous steward because he had done wisely: for the sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light. And I say unto your, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness: that, wheat it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.

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SUMMARY OF THIS GOSPEL:

1. This parable does not teach us how one should cheat another; for Christ calls him an unrighteous steward, and numbers him among the children of this world, therefore his wisdom is praised, not his unrighteous dealings.

2. Spiritual wisdom distributes temporal possessions to those who need them, and in their place Christ welcomes the givers into the eternal tabernacle. For he himself says, <4010>Matthew 10:20: “Whosoever giveth a cup of cold water unto one of the least of these my disciples in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward,” an. d in the day of judgment he will say, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” <4025>Matthew 25:40.

3. But the flesh and hypocrisy can not do this, for the children of the world look only to what is their own, even when they think in their way, that is, according to the flesh, that they do the very best possible and perform great deeds of kindness in behalf of other people.

4. Therefore the Lord says here to those who are born again: “Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.” Thus the

workrighteous persons and hypocrites can not here seek any merit whatever and found a righteousness upon good works. He says: “Make to yourselves friends,” they are not the papal works and offerings and the like, unless you would understand thereby the rich canons and the rich monks.

1. This is truly a Gospel for priests and monks, and will bring them money, unless we prevent it. Before entering upon the consideration of it, we must accustom ourselves to the language used, especially the word *mammon.* The Jews were acquainted with this word from the Hebrew, and it has come down to us, just like other Hebrew words, as Halleluja, Amen, Kyrie eleison. In German mammon means riches, not simply riches, but a superfluity of riches, whatever is beyond our needs. However, that which is called mammon and that which is not called mammon are distinguished in a twofold way. First, if the estimate be according to that of our Lord God and of the truth, there are many who possess mammon. But if the estimate be that of the world and of man’s mind, there are few who possess it. For our leaders in thought have taught in the high schools and even from the pulpit, that everyone should see to his station in life, what he needs, and adjust his possessions accordingly. If he be a man with wife and children, he needs more, for where many persons are there much will be needed. And when we reckon thus, no one has anything to spare, but everyone would rather have more. If one has two thousand guilders he says, this I need for my family, to support myself, my wife and children.

2. In the second place they have taught that one is not bound to help, except in cases of the greatest need. Such teaching entirely overthrows the Gospel, so that no one has been helpful to another; but they have in the meantime built churches; and yet in doing so they did not even wait for the greatest need, until the arches were rent asunder and churches became roofless, but they gave to great excess, spreading their gold upon the walls. To sum up the whole matter, mammon properly means, that a man has more than he needs for his support, so that he can help others without injuring himself.

3. Hence the Lord calls it “The mammon of unrighteousness,” because it is daily made use of by the wicked; as it is said: riches develop courage, and the heathen have also called it *irritamenta malorum,* riches tempt to evil. Again St. Paul says, <5460>1 Timothy 6:10: “The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil,” whence cometh strife, pride, war and bloodshed.

Therefore it is also called here the unrighteous mammon, because it is applied to such evil uses, and is a great cause of evil to men.

4. Nevertheless it is God's creature like wine and corn, and the creatures of God are good. Why then does he call them evil? Because they tempt us to so much evil, as Paul says to the Ephesians 5:16: "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." Not that the time or days in themselves are evil, but because great evil is done in them. He also says to the Romans 2:5: "The day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." Although the day is good, but because God's wrath will be revealed on that day, the day must take its name from it. And thus, since mammon runs into the service of evil, Christ calls it mammon of unrighteousness, namely, that which we have above our needs and we will not use in helping our neighbor; for this we possess unrighteously, and before God it is stolen goods, for in the presence of God one is bound to give and lend, and suffer himself to be deprived of it. Therefore as the saying runs, the greatest owners of property are the greatest thieves; because they possess far more than they need, and give the least possible to others. So much on the meaning of the word; we now return to the Gospel.

5. We take this parable in a common sense way, without seeking any subtleties in it, as Jerome has done, for it is not necessary to. seek a subtle meaning, the pure milk is sufficient. The parable in itself teaches how the steward deprived his master of his property, and artfully, but deceitfully and falsely, appropriated it to himself. For it is not right, that he, who previously cheated his master out of his property, should also act most deceitfully to secure for himself easy days all his life; let us abide by this explanation. For the Lord concludes that the unjust steward did wisely. He does not praise the thing in itself as good, but blames him for previously squandering his master's goods, and afterwards shrewdly appropriating his property. This however the Lord commends, namely, that he did not forget himself, praising nought but his cunning and shrewdness. Just as when a flirt draws the whole world after her, and I say: she is a clever flirt, she knows her business. The Lord further concludes, that just as the steward is wise and shrewd in his transactions, so should we also be in obtaining eternal life.

6. And that you may understand this, take the passage of St. Paul to the Romans 5:14, Adam a type of Christ. How can the Apostle compare Adam to Christ, since Adam brought upon us sin and death, and Christ

brought righteousness and life? He compares Christ to Adam in regard to origin and source, but not in regard to the fruit and work. For as Adam is the source and chief of all sinners, so Christ is the source and head of all the saints. For we have inherited from Adam nothing but sin, condemnation and the eternal curse; but from Christ we have obtained righteousness and salvation. Now these two are not alike, for sin is punishable, and righteousness is praiseworthy. But he compares them in regard to their origin; just as by Adam sin and death came upon all men, so by Christ righteousness and life come upon us.

7. Thus he compares here the unjust to the just. As the unjust man acts shrewdly, though wrongly and like a rogue, so we also should act shrewdly but righteously in godliness. This is the proper understanding of this parable. For the Lord says: "The children of this world are wiser than the children of light." So that the children of light should learn wisdom from the children of darkness or the world. Just as they are wise in their transactions, so should also the children of light be wise in their transactions. Therefore he adds, "in their generation." Here are truly three great questions, in which our adversaries quote this Gospel against us, when the Lord says:

"Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles."

8. From this they try to conclude, that we must first of all do works to become good. For they say, here we read: "Make to yourselves friends," and this surely means to do works. Secondly, they say, that God here even desires to praise works, and not only that, but also to reward them. For here we read of work and its reward, and nothing is said of faith. In the third place they claim that Christ here wishes to establish the comfort and help of the saints, when he says: "Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." Thus this Gospel is made to directly oppose us, for it says: "Make to yourselves friends." That is, do good works, that they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles. This appears to mean that we should previously merit our reception by them into the eternal tabernacles. These three points the Pope and his priests have claimed strongly for their side, and he has even called his indulgences the mammon of iniquity, *mammon iniquitatis*, unrighteous mammon.

9. If they thus attack us we must answer. Above all things it must be remembered that there is indeed no doubt whatever, that faith and love are the only source, as you have ever learned, that through faith we become inwardly pious, and we outwardly prove our faith by our works of love. For I have often said, that the Scriptures speak of man in a twofold manner. At one time of the inner man, and then again of the outer man. For the Scriptures properly make distinctions, just as when I speak of a foot, I do not mean a nose. So the Scriptures at one time speak of us as of the Spirit, spiritual, how we must stand before God by faith, for this purpose he sends forth his Word to which we hold, and afterwards he follows or endows with his Spirit. Thus the tree must be good beforehand, as you have recently heard.

10. This godliness cannot be attained by anyone without grace in his heart. If I am to make for myself friends by means of mammon, I must first be godly. For compare these two statements: A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit, and again, a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit. From which judge for yourself: if I am to do good and give away mammon, I must indeed be first good at heart, for God looketh upon the heart, and as he finds the heart, so he estimates our works. This I say, that . men should not cram works into the heart, but let the heart first be good through faith, that the works may flow forth, otherwise you do no one any good; for if you have before given a person anything, it did not come from the heart. Hence the conclusion is, that I must first be good before I can do good. You cannot build from without inward, you do not commence at the roof, but at the foundation. Therefore faith must first be present.

11. Hence the Scriptures speak of us as the outer man, as we in our flesh and blood live among men. Now, that I am good, you do not know, nor do I. Renee I must establish my faith to the satisfaction of myself and of the people, and I must do good to my neighbor in order to prove my faith; thus the outward works are then merely signs of the inner faith. Works do not make me good, but show that I am good, and bear witness that the faith in me is genuine. In this manner must you understand the Scriptures here also, when they say: Give of your mammon and thus make to yourselves friends; that is, do good, that your faith may become approved. So we must also distinguish what pertains to the Spirit and what is the fruit of the Spirit.

12. Luke has described the fruit of faith thus: Give to the poor and make to yourself friends. As though he would say: I will not now speak of faith, but how you should prove your faith. Wherefore do good to your neighbor, and if you can give from the heart you may be assured that you believe. Thus the Scriptures speak at one time of fruits, at another time of faith. Again, they also speak of fruits, when they teach, <40254>Matthew 25:42, how the Lord will speak to the lost on the last day: "I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was athirst, and ye gave me no drink," and the like. This means, you have not believed, as I will prove to you by your own works.

13. The Scriptures in some passages speak of the outward conduct, and in others of the inner. Now if you will apply that which is said of the outward to the heart and confuse matters, you pervert it and do wrong. Hence you must let the distinction remain, and observe it. These expressions: I have been hungry, thirsty, shelterless, naked, sick and in prison, and you have shown me no work of mercy, refer to the external conduct, and signify as much as: you have never exhibited any outward conduct by which you have shown your faith; and to prove this, I appeal to the poor as witnesses. Therefore, faith alone must be present first to make us good, after that good works must follow to prove our piety. This now is one point, namely, concerning works.

14. The second point is far more difficult, when the Lord says: "Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." You say, our adversaries cry: you say a person shall not do good works to obtain eternal life; behold, here it reads differently. Now, what shall we answer? There are many passages here and there, showing how we wish to have merit on our part. By quoting these passages they intend to disprove to us God's mercy, and to lead us to satisfy God's righteousness by our good works. By all means beware of this, and insist that it is nothing but pure grace and mercy alone, and say: I am a poor sinner, O God, forgive me my sins, gladly will I say nothing about my merit, only say thou nothing of thy judgment! Thus David said: "Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight no man living is righteous," <19E302>Psalm 143:2. And just for this reason Christ is given to us as our Mediator. If we wish to enter into judgment before God with our good works, we cast Christ aside as our Mediator, and cannot stand before God. Therefore let him remain our Mediator and abide thou under the shadow of his wings, as <19104>Psalm 91:4

reads: “He will cover thee with his pinions, and under his wings shalt thou take refuge.” Therefore speak thus: O God, I would not merit anything before thee by my own works, but will employ them only to serve my neighbor, and I will depend only upon thy mercy.

15. You must hence remember that eternal life consists of two things, faith and what follows faith. If you go and believe and do good to your neighbor, everlasting life must follow, although you never think about it. Just as when you take a good drink, the taste will follow as soon as you drink, even though you do not seek it. So it is also with hell, the damned do not seek it, but it follows unsought and undesired, and he must inherit it whether he will or no. This St. Paul also says, <5125>1 Thessalonians 2:15-16, of the persecuters of the Gospel: They “drove out us, and pleased not God, and are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved; to fill up their sins always, but the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.” As though he would say: They only persecute us to fill the measure of their sins and fairly to deserve hell, and ever urge their sins more and more until they become entirely hardened, and finally have no regard for either God or man.

16. Thus the Scriptures declare here, that we should do good, so that we may be saved; and this is not meant to say, that we must first earn salvation by our works, but that we must believe, and it will follow of itself. Therefore mark well, that you do not take what follows for what goes before, and keep yourself free from the merit of works. Should God give us heaven for our works? No, no, he has a1ready given us heaven freely, out of mere mercy. Therefore give unto the poor, in order that the eternal tabernacles may follow, and not that you may merit them by your works.

17. Observe then that these passages are explained in two different ways. First, that a man should seek salvation by works, which is false. Second, as a consequence of faith, which is right. Therefore, you are not to seek heaven with any kind of works, but only to do the works freely, then the result, eternal life, will follow of itself without your seeking. For if I should see heaven standing open and could merit it by picking up a straw, I would not do it, lest I might say: Behold, I have earned it! No, no, not to my deservings, but to God be the glory, who has given me his Son to abolish sin and hell for me.

18. In the third place, you should faithfully hold fast to the following words: “That they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.” Behold,

they say, here it stands written that they receive us into heaven, how then can you say that we dare not place the saints as mediators before God, and that they cannot help us to heaven? Here observe, that we have but one Redeemer before God, and he is Christ. For thus St. Paul speaks, <5405>1 Timothy 2:5: “For there is one God, one Mediator also between God and man, himself man, Christ Jesus.” Again, Christ himself in <4814>John 14:6 says: “I am the way, no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” Therefore we must not seek our consolation in any of the saints, but in Christ alone, through whose merits alone we and all saints are sated. Therefore I will not give a penny for St. Peter’s merits, that he should help me. He cannot help himself, but whatever he has he has from God by faith in Christ. Now then, if he cannot help himself, how then can he do anything for me? Consequently I must have another, who is Christ, God and man in one.

19. But how can he say: “Make to yourselves friends, that they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles?” This passage we understand from <4025>Matthew 25:37-40, where Christ tells us how the King will answer them who will say on the last day: “Lord, when saw we thee hungry, athirst, homeless, naked, sick and in prison? Verily I say unto you,” he will say, “inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, ye did it unto me.” Here the Lord shows who those friends are, namely, the poor and needy. As though to say: when you make them your friends, then you have me as your friend also, for they are my members.

20. Now one thought remains: How will they receive us into the eternal tabernacles, as the text here says? Will they lead us in by the hand? No, but when we come before the judgment seat of God, poor persons whom we have assisted here, will stand in heaven and say: he has washed my feet, he gave me drink, food, clothing and the like. He will certainly be my friend and a witness of my faith, whatever words he may use to declare it. Then a beggar will be more useful to me than St. Peter or St. Paul, for there none of these can help. But when a beggar comes and says: My God, this he has done unto me as thy child! that will help me, for God will say: Whatsoever you have done unto these, you have done unto me. Therefore these poor people will not be our helpers but our witnesses so that God shall receive us. By this I would not object to your honoring St. Peter and other saints, for he is a member of Christ and of God. But you do better by giving your neighbor a penny, than by building a church of gold for St. Peter. For to help your neighbor is commanded, but it is not commanded to build a church to St. Peter. Now everything is twisted the wrong way, one goes

to a certain passage in St. James, another to Aix-la-Chapelle, another to Rome, to seek help from the departed saints. But the poor people, who are the real sainthood, are left behind 1ying in the streets. Let this be sufficient on this Gospel.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

SECOND SERMON — <4216 01>LUKE 16:1-9.

This sermon appeared during the years 1522 and 1523 in eight editions. It was translated first into Latin in 1522, and again in 1525.

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1. Although in my Postils hitherto, and in my little book, Christian Liberty and Good Works, I have taught very extensively, how faith alone without works justifies, and good works are done first after we believe, that it seems I should henceforth politely keep quiet, and give every mind and heart an opportunity to understand and explain all the gospel lessons for themselves; yet I perceive that the Gospel abides and prospers only among the few; the people are constantly dispirited and terrified by the passages that treat of good works; so that I see plainly how necessary it is, either to write Postils on each gospel lesson, or to appoint sensible ministers in all places who can orally explain and teach these things.

2. If this Gospel be considered without the Spirit by mere reason, it truly favors the priests and monks, and could be made to serve covetousness and to establish one's own works. For when Christ says: "Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles;" they force from it three points against our doctrine of faith, namely: first, against that we teach faith alone justifies and saves from sin; second, that all good works ought to be gratuitously done to our neighbors out of free love; third, that we should not put any value in the merits of saints o,' of others.

3. Against our first proposition they claim the Lord says here: "Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness," just as though works should make us friends, who previously were enemies. Against the second is what he says: "That they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles;" just as though we should do the work for our own sakes and benefit. And against the third they quote: "The friends may receive us into the eternal tabernacles;" just as though we should serve the saints and trust in them to get to heaven.

For the sake of the weak we reply to these:

I. FAITH ALONE MAKES US GOOD, AND FRIENDS OF GOD.

4. The foundation must be maintained without wavering, that faith without any works, without any merit, reconciles man to God and makes him good, as Paul says to the <4521>Romans 3:21-22: “But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe.” Paul at another place, <4509>Romans 4:9, says: “To Abraham, his faith was reckoned for righteousness;” so also with us. Again, 5: “Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Again, 10:10: “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” These, and many more similar passages, we must firmly hold and trust in them immovably, so that to faith alone without any assistance of works, is attributed the forgiveness of sins and our justification.

5. Take for an illustration the parable of Christ in <4007>Matthew 7:17: “Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.” Here you see that the fruit does not make the tree good, but without any fruit and before any fruit the tree must be first good, or made good, before it can bear good fruit. As he also says, <4033>Matthew 12:33-34: “Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by its fruit. Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things?”

Thus it is the naked truth, that a man must be good without good works, and before he does any good works. And it is clear how impossible it is that a man should become good by works, when he is not good before he does the good works. For Christ stands firm when he says: “How can ye, being evil, speak good things?” And hence follows: How can ye, being evil, do good things?

6. Therefore the powerful conclusion follows, there must be something far greater and more precious than all good works, by which a man becomes pious and good, before he does good; just as he must first be in bodily health before he can labor and do hard work. This great and precious something is the noble Word of God, which offers us in the Gospel the grace of God in Christ. He who hears and believes this, thereby becomes good and righteous. Wherefore it is called the Word of life, a Word of grace, a Word of forgiveness. But he who neither hears nor believes it, can in no way become good. For St. Peter says in the <4409>Acts 15:9: “And he

made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith." For as the Word is, so will the heart be, which believes and cleaves firmly to it. The Word is a living, righteous, truthful, pure and good Word, so also the heart which cleaves to it, must be living, just, truthful, pure and good.

7. What now shall we say of those passages which so strongly insist on good works, as when the Lord says: "Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness?" And in <4042>Matthew 25:42: "For I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat." And many other similar passages, which sound altogether as though we had to become good by works. We answer thus:

8. There are some who hear and read the Gospel and what is said by faith, and immediately conclude they have formed a correct notion of what faith is. They do not think that faith is anything else than something which is altogether in their own power to have or not to have, as any other natural human work. Hence, when in their hearts they begin to think and say: "Verily, the doctrine is right, and I believe it is true," then they immediately think faith is present. But as soon as they see and feel in themselves and others that no change has taken place, and that the works do not follow and they remain as before in their old ways, then they conclude that faith is not sufficient, that they must have something more and greater than faith.

Behold, how they then seize the opportunity, and cry and say: Oh, faith alone does not do it. Why? Oh, because there are so many who believe, and are no better than before, and have not changed their minds at all. Such people are those whom Jude in his Epistle calls dreamers, 5:8, who deceive themselves with their own dreams. For what are such thoughts of theirs which they call faith, but a dream, a dark shadow of faith, which they themselves have created in their own thoughts, by their own strength without the grace of God? They become worse than they were before. For it happens with them as the Lord says in <4017>Matthew 9:17 "Neither do men put new wine into old wine-skins; else the skins burst, and the wine is spilled." That is, they hear God's Word and do not lay hold of it, therefore they burst and become worse.

9. But true faith, of which we speak, cannot be manufactured by our own thoughts, for it is solely a work of God in us, without any assistance on our part. As Paul says to the <4505>Romans 5:15, it is God's gift and grace, obtained by one man, Christ. Therefore, faith is something very powerful,

active, restless, effective, which at once renews a person and again regenerates him, and leads him altogether into a new manner and character of life, so that it is impossible not to do good without ceasing.

For just as natural as it is for the tree to produce fruit, so natural is it for faith to produce good works. And just as it is quite unnecessary to command the tree to bear fruit, so there is no command given to the believer, as Paul says, nor is urging necessary for him to do good, for he does it of himself, freely and unconstrained; just as he of himself without command sleeps, eats, drinks, puts on his clothes, hears, speaks, goes and comes.

Whoever has not this faith talks but vainly about faith and works, and does not himself know what he says or whither it tends. For he has not received it; he juggles with lies and applies the Scriptures where they speak of faith and works to his own dreams and false thoughts, which is purely a human work. Whereas the Scriptures attribute both faith and good works not to ourselves, but to God alone.

10. Is not this a perverted and blind people? They teach we cannot do a good deed of ourselves, and then in their presumption go to work and arrogate to themselves the highest of all the works of God, namely faith, to manufacture it themselves out of their own perverted thoughts. Wherefore I have said that we should despair of ourselves and pray to God for faith as the Apostle did. <4205>Luke 17:5. When we have faith we need nothing more, for it brings with it the Holy Spirit, who then teaches us not only all things, but also establishes us firmly in it, and leads us through death and hell to heaven.

11. Now observe, we have given these answers, that the Scriptures have such passages concerning works, on account of such dreamers and self-invented faith; not that man should become good by works, but that man should thereby prove and see the difference between false and true faith. For wherever faith is right it does good. If it does no good, it is then certainly a dream and a false idea of faith. So, just as the fruit on the tree does not make the tree good, but nevertheless outwardly proves and testifies that the tree is good, as Christ says, <4007>Matthew 7:16: “By their fruits ye shall know them”--thus we should also learn to know faith by its fruits.

12. From this you see, there is a great difference between being good, and to be known as good; or to become good and to prove and show that you are good. Faith makes good, but works prove the faith and goodness to be right. Thus the Scriptures speak in the plain way, which prevails among the common people, as when a father says unto his son: “Go and be merciful, good and friendly to this or to that poor person.” By which he does not command him to be merciful, good and friendly, but because he is already good and merciful, he requires that he should also show and prove it outwardly toward the poor by his act, in order that the goodness which he has in himself may also be known to others and be helpful to them.

13 So you should explain all passages of Scripture referring to works, that God thereby desires to let the goodness received in faith express and prove itself, and become a benefit to others, so that false faith may become known and rooted out of the heart. For God gives no one his grace that it may remain inactive and accomplish nothing good, but in order that it may bear interest, and by being publicly known and proved externally draw every one to God; as Christ says, <40516>Matthew 5:16: “Even so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” Otherwise it would be but a buried treasure and a hidden light. But what profit is there in either? Yea, goodness does not only thereby. become known to others, but we ourselves also become certain that we are honest, as St. Peter in <610110>2 Peter 1:10 says: “Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure.” For where works do not follow a man cannot know whether his faith is right; yea, he may be certain that his faith is a dream, and not right as it should be. Thus Abraham became certain of his faith and that he feared God, when he offered up his son. As God by the angel said to Abraham, <012212>Genesis 22:12: “Now I know, that is, it is manifest, that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.”

14. Then abide by the truth, that man is internally, in spirit before God, justified by faith alone without works, but externally and publicly before men and himself, he is justified by works, that he is at heart an honest believer and pious. The one you may call a public or outward justification, the other an inner justification, yet in the sense that the public or external justification is only the fruit, the result and proof of the justification in the heart, that a man does not become just thereby before God, but must previously be just before him. So you may call the fruit of the tree the

public or outward good of the tree, which is only the result and proof of its inner and natural goodness.

This is what St. James means when he says in his Epistle, <3026>James 2:26: "Faith without works is dead." That is, as the works do not follow, it is a sure sign that there is no faith there; but only an empty thought and dream, which they falsely call faith. Now we understand the word of Christ: "Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness." That is, prove your faith publicly by your outward gifts, by which you win friends, that the poor may be witnesses of your public work, that your faith is genuine. For mere external giving in itself can never make friends, unless it proceed from faith, as Christ rejects the alms of the Pharisees in <4002>Matthew 6:2, that they thereby make no friends because their heart is false. Thus no heart can ever be right without faith, so that even nature forces the confession that no work makes one good, but that the heart must first be good and upright.

II. ALL WORKS MUST BE DONE FREELY AND GRATUITOUSLY, WITHOUT SEEKING GAIN BY THEM.

15. Christ means this when, in <4008>Matthew 10:8, he says: "Freely ye receive, freely give." For just as Christ with all his works did not merit heaven for himself, because it was his before; but he served us thereby, not regarding or seeking his own, but these two things, namely, our benefit and the glory of God his Father; so also should we never seek our own in our good works, either temporal or eternal, but glorify God by freely and gratuitously doing good to our neighbor. This St. Paul teaches the <5005>Philippians 2:5: "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross." That is, for himself he had enough, since in him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and yet he served us and became our servant.

16. And this is the cause; for since faith justifies and destroys sin before God, so it gives life and salvation. And now it would be a lasting shame and disgrace, and injurious to faith, if any one by his life and works would desire to obtain what faith already possesses and brings with it. Just as

Christ would have only disgraced himself had he done good in order to become the Son of God and Lord over all things, which he already was before. So faith makes us God's children as <4001 2>John 1:12 says: "But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become the children of God, even to them thai: believe on his name." But if they are children, then they are heirs, as St. Paul says, <4508 7>Romans 8:17, and <4804 7>Galatians 4:7. How then can we do anything to obtain the inheritance, which we already have by faith?

17. But what shall we say of passages that insist on a good life for the sake of an external reward as this one does: "Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness?" And in <4019 7>Matthew 19:17: "But if thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments." And <4060>Matthew 6:20: "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." We will say this: that those who do not know faith, only speak and think of the reward, as of works. For they think that the same rule obtains here as in human affairs, that they must earn the Kingdom of heaven by their works. These, too, are dreams and false views, of which <3901 0>Malachi 1:10, speaks: "Oh, that there were one among you that would shut the doors, that ye might not kindle fire on mine altar in vain!" They are slaves and greedy self-enjoying hirelings and day laborers, who receive their reward here on earth, like the Pharisees with their praying and fasting, as Christ says, <4061 2>Matthew 6:2.

However, in regard to the eternal reward it is thus: inasmuch as works naturally follow faith, as I said, it is not necessary to command them, for it is impossible for faith not to do them without being commanded, in order that we may learn to distinguish the false from the true faith. Hence the eternal reward also follows true faith, naturally, without any seeking, so that it is impossible that it should not, although it may never be desired or sought, yet it is appropriated and promised in order that true and false believers may be known, and that every one may understand that a good life follows naturally of itself.

18. As an illustration of this take a rude comparison: behold, hell and death are also threatened to the sinner, and naturally follow sin without any seeking; for no one does wickedly because he wants to be damned, but would much rather escape it. Yet, the result is there, and it is not necessary to declare it, for it will come of itself. Yet, it is declared that man might know what follows a wicked life. So here, a wicked life has its own reward

without seeking it. Hence a good life will find its reward without any seeking it. When you drink good or poor wine, although you do not drink it for the taste, yet the taste naturally follows of itself.

19. Now when Christ says: make to yourselves friends, lay up for yourselves treasures, and the like, you see that he means: do good, and it will follow of itself without your seeking, that you will have friends, find treasures in heaven, and receive a reward. But your eyes must simply be directed to a good life, and care nothing about the reward, but be satisfied to know and be assured that it will follow, and let God see to that. For those who look for a reward, become lazy and unwilling laborers, and love the reward; more than the work, yea, they become enemies of work. In this way God's will also becomes hateful, who has commanded us to work, and hence God's command and will must finally become burdensome to such a heart.

III. IT IS NOT THE SAINTS, BUT GOD ONLY WHO RECEIVES US INTO THE ETERNAL TABERNACLES, AND BESTOWS THE REWARD.

20. This is so clear that it needs no proof. For how can the saints receive us into heaven, as every one himself must depend on God alone to receive him into heaven, and every saint scarcely has enough for himself? This the wise virgins prove, who did not wish to give of their oil to the foolish virgins, <40259>Matthew 25:9, and St. Peter, <60418>1 Peter 4:18, says: "The righteous is scarcely saved." And Christ in <43313>John 3:13: "And no one hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of Man, who is in heaven."

21. What then shall we reply to: "Make to yourselves friends out of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles ?" We say this: that this passage says nothing about the saints in heaven, but of the poor and needy on earth, who live among us. As though he would say: why do you build churches, make saints and serve my mother, St. Peter, St. Paul and other departed saints? They do not need this or any other service of yours, they are not your friends, but friends of those who lived in their days and to whom they did good; but do service to your friends, that is, the poor who live in your time and among you, your nearest neighbors who need your help, make them your friends with your mammon.

22. Again, we must not understand this reception into the eternal tabernacles as being done by man; however, men will be an instrument and witness to our faith, exercised and shown in their behalf, on account of which God receives us into the eternal tabernacles. For thus the Scriptures are accustomed to speak when they say: sin condemns, faith saves, that means, sin is the cause why God condemns, and faith is the cause why he saves. As man also is at all times accustomed to say: your wickedness will bring you misfortune, which means, your wickedness is the cause and source of your misfortune. Thus our friends receive us into heaven, when they are the cause, through our faith shown to them, of entering heaven. This is enough on these three points.

23. In this connection we will explain three questions, that we may better understand this Gospel. What is mammon? Why is it unrighteous? And why Christ commands us to imitate the unjust steward, who worked for his own gain at his master's expense, which without doubt is unjust and a sin?

24. First, mammon is a Hebrew word meaning riches or temporal goods, namely, whatever any one owns over and above what his needs require, and with which he can benefit others without injuring himself. For Hamon in Hebrew means multitude, or a great crowd or many, from which Mahamon or Mammon, that is, multitude of riches or goods, is derived.

25. Second, it is called unrighteous, not because obtained by injustice and usury, for with unrighteous possessions no good can be done, for it must be returned as <2610>Isaiah 61:8, says: "For I, Jehovah, love justice, I hate robbery with iniquity." And Solomon, <2027>Proverbs 3:27, says: "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thy hand to do it." But it is called unrighteous because it stands in the service of unrighteousness, as St. Paul says to the <4016>Ephesians 5:16, that the days are evil, although God made them and they are good, but they are evil because wicked men misuse them, in which they do many sins, offend and endanger souls. Therefore, riches are unrighteous, because the people misuse and abuse them. For we know that wherever riches are the saying holds good: money rules the world, men creep for it, they lie for it, they act the hypocrite for it, and do all manner of wickedness against their neighbor to obtain it, to keep it, and increase it to possess the friendship of the rich.

26. But it is especially before God an unrighteous mammon because man does not serve his neighbor with it; for where my neighbor is in need and I do not help him when I have the means to do so, I unjustly keep what is

his, as I am indebted to give to him according to the law of nature: “Whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them.” <4072>Matthew 7:12. And Christ says in <4042>Matthew 5:42: “Give to him that asketh thee.” And John in his first Epistle, <6217>1 John 3:17: “But whoso hath the world’s goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?” And few see this unrighteousness in mammon because it is spiritual, and is found also in those possessions which are obtained by the fairest means, which deceive them that they think they do no one any harm, because they do no coarse outward injustice, by robbing, stealing and usury.

27. In the third place it has been a matter of very great concern to many to know who the unjust steward is whom Christ so highly recommends? This, in short, is the simple answer: Christ does not commend unto us the steward on account of his unrighteousness, but on account of his wisdom and his shrewdness, that with all his unrighteousness, he so wisely helps himself. As though I would urge some one to watch, pray and study, and would say: Look here, murderers and thieves wake at night to rob and steal, why then do you not wake to pray and study? By this I do not praise murderers and thieves for their crimes, but for their wisdom and foresight, that they so wisely obtain the goods of unrighteousness. Again. as though I would say: An unchaste woman adorns herself with gold and silk to tempt young boys; why will you not also adorn yourself with faith to please Christ? By this I do not praise fornication, but the diligence employed.

28. In this way Paul compares Adam and Christ saying: “Adam was a figure of him that was to come.” <4514>Romans 5:14. Although from Adam we have nothing but sin, and from Christ nothing but grace, yet these are greatly opposed to each other. But the comparison and type consist only in the consequence or birth, not in virtue or vice. As to birth, Adam is the father of all sinners, so Christ is the father of all the righteous. And as all sinners come from one Adam, so all the righteous come from one Christ. Thus the unjust steward is here typified to us only in his cunning and wisdom, who knows so well how to help himself, that we should also consider in the right way the welfare of our souls as he did in the wrong way that of his body and life. With this we will let it suffice, and pray God for grace.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

This sermon appeared first in the year 1525, and was issued in pamphlet form in nearly a dozen separate editions. From this we conclude that it awakened a great interest among the people, as it certainly ought to have done. It bore the title: “A sermon on the destruction of Jerusalem. In like manner will Germany also be destroyed, if she will not recognize the time of her visitation. What the temple of God is. Martin Luther. Wittenberg, 1525.”

Text. <2941>Luke 19:41-48. And when he drew nigh, he saw the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, when thine enemies shall cast up a bank about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall dash thee to the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

And he entered into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold, saying unto them, It is written, And my house shall be a house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of robbers.

And he was teaching dally in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people sought to destroy him: and they could not find what they might do; for the people all hung upon him, listening.

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THE SUMMARY OF THIS GOSPEL:

1. This Gospel teaches us faith and love. It reminds us of faith in that it pictures to us Christ the Lord, who he is, and how he is disposed. Here view the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9.

2. It teaches us love in that Christ forgets his own praise which men gave him, when he entered Jerusalem riding upon an ass and wept over the misfortune which should come upon the people.

3. The time of their visitation they knew not, who now, since the Gospel is preached to them, do not accept Christ. Therefore they must also perish, and this is given as a warning and an admonition.

4. What is the church today but a house of merchandise, where people sell everything, even the forgiveness of sins. Woe to us!

PART 1. THE PROPHECY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

1. This Gospel presents that which took place on Palm Sunday, when Christ rode into Jerusalem. On this occasion, he preached two or three days in the temple, which was more than he ever did before at one time. The sum and substance of this Gospel is, that Christ grieves and laments over the afflictions of those who despise God's Word.

2. Now you have often heard what the Word of God is, what it brings us, and what kind of scholars it has. Of all this nothing is said here. Only the punishment and distress which shall come upon the Jews because they would not recognize the time of their visitation, are here described. And let us well consider this, because the time of their visitation also deeply concerns us. If they are punished who do not know the time of their visitation, what will be done to those who maliciously persecute, blaspheme and disgrace the Gospel and the Word of God? However, here he only speaks of those who do not know it.

3. There are two methods of preaching against the despisers of God's Word. The first is by threats, as Christ threatens them in Matthew 11:21-24: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they would have repented long' ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shail be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And thou, Capernaum (which was his own city, where he performed most of his mighty works), shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? thou shalt go down unto hell; for if the mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in thee, it would have remained until this day. But I sos' unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee." With these threatening words he would frighten them to their senses, and not to cast to the winds the Word which God sends them.

4. The other method the Lord gives here when he weeps, and shows his sympathy for the poor blinded people, and rebukes and threatens them, not as the hardened and stubbornly blind; but when he melts in love and compassion over his enemies, and with great heart-rending pity and cries, he tells them what shall befall them, which he would gladly prevent, but all

is in vain. In the passage just quoted, 40 12 Matthew 11:21-24, where he rebukes them, he does not treat them in love, but in the severity of faith. However here, it is all sincere love and mercy. This is worthy of our consideration.

5. First, as he approached the city they went before and followed him with songs of great joy, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David? and spread their garments in the way and cut branches from the trees and strewed them in the way; the whole scene was most glorious. But in the midst of all this joy he begins to weep. He permits all the world to be joyful, while he himself was bowed with grief, when he beheld the city and said:

"If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things that belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

6. As though he would say: Oh, if you only knew what belongs to your peace, that you might not be destroyed, but be preserved with both temporal and eternal peace, you would yet this day consider, and redeem the time! And now it is high time for you to know what is for your highest welfare. But you are blind, and will neglect the opportunity, until there shall be neither help nor counsel. As though to say: Here you stand, firmly built, and within you are strong and mighty men, who, secure and happy, think there is no danger! Yet, about forty years more, and you shall be utterly destroyed. The Lord plainly says this in these words:

> "For the days shall come upon thee, when thy enemies shall cast up a bank about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side and shall dash thee to the ground, d and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation."

7. But the Jews were stubborn, and depended on God's promises, which they thought meant nothing else than that they should continue forever. They were secure, and vainly thought: God will not do such things to us. We own the temple; here God himself dwells; besides we have mighty men, money and treasures enough to defy all our enemies! For even the Romans, and the emperor after he had conquered the city, confessed that the city was so well and firmly built, that it would have been impossible to take it, had God not especially willed it. Therefore they trusted in their own glory, and built their confidence on a false delusion, which finally deceived them.

8. The Lord, however, saw deeper into the future than they when he said: O, Jerusalem! if thou hadst known what I know, thou wouldst seek thy peace. Peace in the Scriptures means, when all things go well with us. You now think you have pleasant days, but if you knew how your enemies will encamp round about you, compass you about and hedge you in on every side, crush you to the ground and demolish all your beautiful buildings, and leave not one stone upon another; you would eagerly accept the Word, which brings to you solid peace and every blessing. [The woeful history of the destruction of Jerusalem you can read in books, from which those who wish will easily understand this Gospel.]

9. God caused his threats to be executed even thus, that the city was besieged at the time of the Easter festival, when the Jews were assembled within the walls of Jerusalem from every land, and as the historian Josephus writes, there were together at that time about three million people. This was an enormous multitude. Only one hundred thousand people would have been enough to crowd the city. But all this great multitude God in his wrath intended to bake, melt and weld together into one mass of ruin. Yet, the Apostles and Christians were all out of the city, they had withdrawn into the land of Herod, Samaria, Galilee, and were scattered among the heathen. Thus God separated and saved the good grain and poured the chaff into one place. There was such an immense multitude of Jews present, that they were sufficient to devour a whole kingdom, to say nothing of only one city. They also fell into such distress and famine, that they devoured everything and had nothing left, until they were at last compelled to eat their leather bow-strings, shoe latchets and shoe leather; and finally mothers moved by their distress butchered their own children, which the soldiers snatched from them, for they smelt the odor of the boiling meat through the squares of the city. They used dove’s dung for salt, which commanded a high price. In short, there was distress and bloodshed enough to melt a rock to tears; so that no one could have believed that God’s wrath could be so horrible and that he would so unmercifully martyr a people. The buildings and the streets were piled full of the dead, who perished from starvation, and yet the Jews were so raging that they defied God and refused to yield, until the emperor was compelled to use force and capture the city, when they could no longer maintain their ground.

10. And as some Jews were such rogues as to swallow their money so that it could not be taken from them, the soldiers thought that they all had

swallowed their money; therefore they cut them open by the thousands, hunting for it. The slaughter and destruction were so great, that even the heathen were moved to compassion, and the emperor was forced to give orders no longer to destroy them, but to take them prisoners and sell them as slaves. The Jews then became so cheap, that thirty were sold for a penny; and thus they were scattered throughout the whole world, and were everywhere despised as the vilest people on earth, and thus they are everywhere regarded at the present day, everywhere dispersed, without a city or a country of their own, and they can never meet again as they vainly believe to establish their priesthood and kingdom. Thus God avenged the death of Christ and all his prophets, and paid them back because they knew not the day of their visitation.

APPLICATION TO GERMANY.

11. Here let us learn a lesson, for this concerns us, not us alone who are here present, but the whole country of Germany. It is not a mere jest, nor should we think that it will go different with us. The Jews would not believe until they experienced it and became conscious of it. God has now also visited us, and has opened the precious treasures of his holy Gospel unto us, by which we can learn God's will, and see how we were held by the power of the devil. Yet no one will earnestly believe it, yea, we much more despise it and make light of it. No city, no officer of the government is thankful for the Gospel; and what is still worse the great majority persecute and blaspheme it. God has great patience; he waits to see how we will deal with his Gospel; but when we once let the opportunity slip, he will take his Word from us, and then the wrath which consumed the Jews will also con-st, me us. For it is one and the selfsame Word, the very same God, and the identical Christ, the Jews themselves had; therefore the punishment in body and soul will also most certainly be the same. [We, of course, regard it as mockery, and care nothing for it. This is only an evidence of our own blindness. We ought to perceive that God is hardening us; for there is not a single city that is concerned about it; no officer of the law shows any zeal in its favor. It is most deplorable.] And I fear the time will yet come when Germany will lay in a heap of ruins. The evil winds have already begun to blow destruction in our peasant war. We have already lost many people. Nearly one hundred thousand men, only between Easter and Pentecost! It is an awful work of God, and I fear it will not stop

at this. It is only a foretaste of a threat to frighten us, that we may prepare ourselves for the coming ordeal. So far it is but a fox's tail, but God will soon come with a terrible scourge, and lash us to pieces.

12. But we will act just like the Jews, and care nothing for it, until all help and counsel are lost forever. Now we might check it, for now it is high time for us to know what is best for us, and accept the Gospel in peace, while grace is brought, and peace is offered unto us. But we permit one day after another, one year after another to pass, and do even less than formerly. No one prays now, no one is in earnest. When the time is past, prayers will be of no avail. We do not lay it to heart, and think we are safe, and do not see the awful calamity which has already begun, and are not aware that God so dreadfully punishes us with false prophets and sects, which he sends us everywhere, and who preach so securely as though they had swallowed the Holy Spirit whole. Those whom we had thought were the very best among us, go to work and lead the people astray, until they scarcely know what to do or leave undone.

13. But this is only a beginning, although it is frightful and terrible enough. For there is no greater distress and calamity than when God sends us sects and false spirits, because they are so impudent and daringly bold, that they are really to be pitied. On the other hand the Word of God is such a great treasure, that no one can sufficiently comprehend its worth. For God himself considers his treasure immensely great, and when he visits us with his grace, he earnestly desires that we should gladly and freely accept it, and does not compel us as he is able to do, but it is his will that we should gladly obey it from choice and love. For he does not wait until we come to him, but he comes first to us. He comes into the world, becomes man, serves us, dies for us, rises again from the dead, sends us his Holy Spirit, gives us his Word, and opens heaven so wide that all men can enter; besides he gives us rich promises and assurances that he will care for us in time and in eternity, here and there, and pours out into our bosoms all the fullness of his grace. Therefore the acceptable time of grace is now at hand. Yet, we neglect it, and cast it to the winds, so that he will not and cannot give it to us.

14. For when we fall and sin in other ways, he can better spare us and be lenient, he of course will spare us and forgive; but when we despise his Word, it calls for punishment, and he will also punish us, even if he delays a hundred years. But he will not wait that long. And the clearer the Word is

preached the greater the punishment will be. I fear it will be the destruction of all Germany. Would to God I were a false prophet in this matter. Yet it will most certainly take place. God cannot permit this shameful disregard of his Word to go unpunished, nor will he wait long, for the Gospel is so abundantly proclaimed that it has never been as plainly and clearly taught since the days of the Apostles, as it is at present. God be praised! Hence it applies to Germany, as I fear it will be destroyed, unless we act differently.

15. We, who have heard the Gospel for a long time, ought earnestly to pray God that he continue to grant us peace. The princes and officers want to settle everything with the sword, and too impudently interfere with God's office, until God himself shall smite them down. So it is high time faithfully to beseech God to permit his Gospel to be further spread through Germany, to those who have not yet heard it. For if the punishment came suddenly upon us, all will be lost, and many souls will be taken before the Gospel comes to them. Therefore I wish that we would not so terribly despise the Gospel, the costly treasure, not only for our own sakes, but also for the sake of those who have not yet heard it. It has become a little quiet, God grant that it may so continue, and that both the princes and the citizens may become more sane; for if it should begin afresh, I fear it would have no end.

16. But we act just like the Jews, who cared more for the belly than for God. They were more concerned how to fill their stomachs than how to be saved. For this reason they have lost both, and have been served just right. Because they would not accept eternal life and peace, God took their bodily life, so that they have lost both body and soul. They also immediately put forth the excuse, just as our own people do to-day. We would of course gladly accept the Gospel, if it would not place our bodies and property in jeopardy, and if thereby we would not hazzard the loss of our wives and children. For the Jews said, if we believe in him, the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation, <4811 48>John 11:48. As nothing will happen sooner than what the wicked fear, as Solomon says, <2010 24>Proverbs 10:24: "The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him."

This prevented the Jews to believe God, and they did not consider the great and rich promises God bestowed upon them. So we also pass them by, and are not aware of the all powerful and comfortable promises Christ gives when he says, <4019 29>Matthew 19:29: Ye shall receive a hundredfold here, and there ye shall inherit eternal life. Let wife and child go, I will care

for them, and restore them again to you. Only courageously trust in me. [Do you not think that I can build you another house? Do you regard me as being a hard man': Yet I will give you heaven; will you not risk it on my Word?] If you are robbed of your treasures, blessed are ye, heaven and earth are mine, I will reward you a hundredfold.

17. We pass over these and many like passages, and besides despise them, and depend only on what we have in our banks, and how we may keep our purses filled, and do not consider that God has also given us what we have, and will still give us more; nor do we consider that when wo lose Clod, the stomach will also be lost. Therefore we are served just right in losing both the creator and the creature besides.

18. But believers in God risk all in him and transfer all things into his care, for him to do according to his pleasure, and think thus: God has given you your home and wife, you have not produced them yourself; now because they are God's, I will entrust them all to his care, he will keep them from all harm. I must otherwise leave all at any rate, therefore I will bravely trust him with them, and for his sake give up all I have. If God wants me here, he will give me other treasures, for he has promised to give enough for this life and for the life to come. If he does not want me here, I owe him a death, which will bring me into eternal life; when he calls me, I will go trusting in his Word.

19. Whoever is not thus disposed, denies God, and must at the same time lose both, the present and the eternal life. The belly with its foul odors is our God, and prevents us from clinging to God's Word. First, I will be certain how I shall feed, and where my supplies are. The Gospel says: Trust in God; and your stomach shall most certainly be provided for, and have enough [without believing or trusting in it]. But if I have only five dollars they give me so much courage to think I have anyhow enough food for ten days, that I trust in such limited provisions, and do not trust God who fed me hitherto, that he will care for me to-morrow.

20. Is it not a shameful vexation or calamity that I trust in a penny that I will have something to eat to-morrow? How contemptible this carcass! Shall a penny have more weight in my heart and give me more courage than God himself, who holds heaven and earth in his power, who gives us the air we breathe and the water we drink, who makes our corn to grow and gives us all things? It is so scandalous that it cannot be uttered, that God should not amount to as much with us as a hundred guilders. Why not

think that God, who has created me, will surely feed me, if he wants me to live? If he does not want this, very well, I shall be satisfied.

21. Yes, says the stomach, I find no God in my chest! You silly donkey, who assures you that you will live tomorrow? You are not certain whether you will have a belly to-morrow, and you want to know where to find the bread and the food! Yes, you have a fine assurance! When our hearts are thus prompted, we see what a government of hell there would be on earth; yes, it would be the devil himself. Is it not a thing most abominable, that God who feeds so ninny mouths, should be held in such low esteem by me, that I will not trust him to feed me? Yea, that a guilder, thirty-eight cents, should be valued more highly than God, who pours out his treasures everywhere in rich profusion. For the world is full of God and his works, He is everywhere present with his gifts, and yet we will not trust in him, nor accept his visitation. Shame on thee, thou cursed world! What kind of a child is that, who cannot trust in God for a single day, but trusts in a guilder?

22. Now, I think, we see what the world is. how on account of the belly the world despises God, and yet must lose the belly together with body and soul. Oh, what godless people we are, and yet we are to spit upon or despise the world. If one would consider that he is such a godless wretch, that he cannot trust in God, he would not wish to live. Only choke away; for as captives we stick too deeply in the old Adam. The world is hell in prospect, yea, the real kingdom of Satan, a court yard in hell, except that the body is still here, otherwise it is true hell.

23. For this reason Christ admonishes us with tears to know our salvation and accept his visitation, that the calamity may not follow, which will surely come upon those who do not accept it, who are secure, until swift and sudden destruction comes upon them. May God give us grace, that we may know ourselves! The Gospel further reads:

> “And he entered into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold, saying unto them: It is written, And my hoarse shall be a house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of robbers.”

PART 2. THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE.

24. This is the second part of our Gospel, where the Lord takes hold of matters in earnest with his powerful hand, when he goes into the temple and casts out those who bought and sold there. For the first part was nothing but an admonition and incentive unto faith. Here the Lord now tells us what the temple of God is, and quotes passages from the Scriptures, and especially from the prophet Isaiah, 56:7, where God says: "For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." You, however, have made it a house of merchandise. This is a strong passage which the prophet utters: "for all peoples, for all Gentiles," is against the Jews, who trusted in the temple of God at Jerusalem, and thought that this material house in Jerusalem would stand forever, and that it was impossible for God to demolish this temple or destroy this city. The Word of God does not lie. For this reason they also murdered Stephen, because he spoke against that holy place and said, <4064>Acts 6:14: "Jesus shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us." And they said: have not the prophets praised this house, and Christ himself says here, that it is a house of prayer, and you Apostles say, he will destroy it.

25. But we must rightly understand this expression, that the city of Jerusalem, the temple and the people, should remain until the time of Christ. With this agree all the prophets, who have given all things into the hands of Christ; as he would then dispose of it, so it should be and remain. Hence the passage in Isaiah goes no further than unto the times of Christ, as also all the prophets say, that after that there shall come a kingdom extending over the whole world, as in <3910>Malachi 1:10-11 we read: "For from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the Gentiles, saith Jehovah of hosts." Here the prophet speaks of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, who shall build himself a house of prayer as extensive as the whole world.

26. It is true that God himself has established the temple at Jerusalem, not because it consisted of beautiful stones and costly buildings, or because it was consecrated by bishops, as at present men employ such foolery and juggling tricks; but God himself had consecrated and sanctified it with his Word, when he said: This house is my house: for his Word was preached in

it. Now, wherever God's Word is preached, there is God's own true house, there God most certainly dwells with his grace. Wherever his Gospel is, there is a house of prayer, there men shall and may truly pray, and God will also hear their prayer, as Christ in <BIG2>John 16:23-24 says: "If ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it you in my name. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be made full." Here again, where the Word is not found, there the devil has full sway.

27. That we have imitated the Jews and built so many churches, would be well enough, if we had done it in order that the Word of God might be preached there; for where the Word goes there God is present, and looks down from heaven and pours out his grace. Therefore he says to the Jews here: I will not that you should make out of my house a den of robbers. For there were money changers in it who sold sheep and oxen, that strangers might buy them for their offerings in divine service. Why then does he call it a den of robbers? Surely, he gives it a scandalous name. He does it however because they no longer appreciate the house as the house of God, but as a market house; that is, the priests did not inquire how the Word of God was preached in it, although they sang, they babbled and read the prophets and Moses; but God cares nothing for such a murmuring of Psalms; that belongs to children.

28. They did just as our priests and monks do now, who have also made dens of robbers of our churches and cloisters, and have preached poison, and held masses only that the people might give them money and presents for holding them that they might thus fill their stomachs. They made the church a market house, in which they carried on their idle talk, corrupted and destroyed the sheep of God's pastures by their scandalous false doctrine, that it may well be called a robber's den for the soul. This title we should write on all churches in which the Gospel is not preached, for there they mock God, destroy souls, banish the pure Word and establish dens of murder; for he who listens to their words must die. Oh, how shamefully we have been deceived! Now, however, we should praise God, that this Word again brings us life, drives out the murderers, and teaches us how to pray aright; for an honest heart must pray, not with the mouth, but with the heart.

THE CONCLUSION.

29. Thus we have heard the second part of our Gospel, how Christ drove out the merchants that pandered to base appetites, and made room for his Word. It would be a good thing, in this same way to cleanse our cloisters, and turn them into schools or preaching places; if this is not done they will be and continue to be nothing but dens of robbers; for if Christ calls Iris own house a den of robbers, how much more will our churches and temples, not consecrated by God, be called dens of robbers?

30. I have often requested you to pray God to turn his wrath and restrain the devil now in the world. For you have undoubtedly heard of the great calamity, how many have been slain in the insurrection. We fear they have all been lost, for God requires obedience, and has himself pronounced the sentence, 4265 Matthew 26:52: “For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.” The devil has taken possession of the world, who knows when our turn will come. Therefore let us pray that God’s kingdom may come and Christians may be multiplied, that he send wise and intelligent ministers to care for the people and listen to their wants, he who knows the gift of God prays for others who have not yet heard the Word, it is high time to do so. [Pray the Lord’s Prayer.]

31. Well, wherever this calamity begins and prevails, that the people maliciously despise the day God visits us with his Word and grace, for the sake of the belly and a little temporal benefit and advantage; there must follow as a consequence of such treatment the final punishment and wrath of God, who will utterly destroy them, remove the foundation of their trust, and overthrow the country and the people, so that both temporal and eternal interests go down together. For how shall he otherwise treat us, because of our scandalous ingratitude for his great love and mercy which he publicly declared unto us by his gracious visitation? How shall or can he do more for us, while we with wantonness and defiance spurn his help, and ever struggle and strive after wrath and destruction? For if those are not free of punishment who transgress the law and sin against the ten commandments; how much less will he permit those to go unpunished, who blaspheme and despise the Gospel of his grace, seeing the law by far does not bring as many good things as the Gospel?

32. If we will not wish to enjoy this happy day which he gives us unto grace and our salvation, he can also instead permit us to see and experience

nothing but the dark and terrible night of all affliction and misfortune. And since we will not hear this precious Word and the proclamation of peace, we will be forced to hear the devil's cry of murder ring in our ears from every direction. Now is the time for us to know the day, and well employ the rich and golden year, while the annual fair is before our very doors, and acknowledge that he has severely punished us. If we neglect it and allow it to pass, we can never hope for a better day or expect any peace; for the Lord, who is the Lord of peace, will be with us no longer.

33. But if Christ be no longer with us, our hope will vanish; and wherever this beloved guest is rejected, and his Christians no longer tolerated, government, peace and everything shall perish, for he too desires to eat with us, to rule and to provide bountifully. However, he desires also to be known as such a Lord, in order that we may be thankful to him, and also permit this guest and his Christians to eat with us, and give him his due tribute; if not, we will then be forced to give it to another, who will so thank and reward us for it, that we shall not be able to retain a bite of bread or a penny in peace. But the world will not believe this, just as the Jews also would not believe it, until they experienced it, and faith came to their assistance. For God has ordained, that this Christ shall be Lord and King upon the earth, under whose feet he has put all things, and whoever would have peace and good days, must be kind and obedient to him, or he will be dashed to pieces like a potter's vessel. Psalm 2:9.

THE SECOND PART OF THIS GOSPEL.

> "And he entered into the temple, and began to cast out those that sold, saying unto them: It is written, And my house shall be a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of robbers."

34. Here he shows the aim of his great activity, and what concerns him most of all, which was also the cause of his weeping. It is indeed a terrible history, that he who so recently wept out of great sympathy and compassion, so soon can change and come forth in great anger, (for our beloved Lord burns with great devotion and zeal), and goes into the temple as in a storm, and strikes with his uplifted arm as the Lord of the temple, of course with an excellent and warm spirit by which he is moved, beholding the chief cause of distress and the destruction, of which he spoke and over which he wept; namely, that the chief government, which should be God's

own and be called his temple, is all perverted and desolate, God's Word and true worship entirely suppressed and corrupted, even by those who would be leaders and teachers of the people, on account of their disgraceful greed and their own glory. He would say by this: Yes, it is this, that . will completely bring on the calamity, and make an end of everything among this people.

35. Therefore, as merciful and compassionate as he showed himself to be to the poor multitude of people who are so wretchedly misled to their destruction; so great was the anger he showed against those who are the cause of this destruction. Otherwise he did not often resort to physical force and cause an uproar, as he does here, so that it is a strange act for an excellent and kind man, so full of love. But the cause of it is the great and powerful zeal and fervency of Spirit, which sees whence all affliction and sorrow come, namely, because the true worship of God is abolished and the name of God is so blasphemed that it is used merely for a show.

36. For the temple and the whole priesthood were or-dained for the purpose of enforcing God's Word, to praise his grace and mercy, etc. ; and to testify to this and thank him for his Word by an external worship of offerings. However, they did not teach praise and thanksgiving to God, but instead they perverted it into the doctrine of monks and works, so that with such offerings one merited the grace of God, and if they only offered a great deal, God would give them heaven and every good thing on earth. And hence they built their hopes for everything, which they ought to look for out of pure grace and mercy of God, on their own works and merits. And besides they were misled so far in the devil's name, that their avarice set up there in the temple tables for bankers and counters for traders in doves and all kinds of cattle used for offerings, so that those coming from distant lands and cities could find enough there to purchase, or if they had no money, they might barter for or borrow it, so that there might by all means be as many and as great offerings as possible.

Thus under the name of divine worship the true worship of God was overthrown and rooted out; and they substituted for God's grace and goodness their own merits, and for his free gift their own works, which he was obliged to accept from us and thank us for them, and allow himself to be treated as an idol, compelled to do what pleases us, be angry or laugh, just as we wish it; and besides satiate their outrageous greed, by such

idolatrous . doings, and without any sense of shame carry on a public annual fair.

37. Just as our Pope's crowd, priests and monks, also did, who taught nothing but to trust in human works, and on this doctrine constructed everything in their church government, So that the people are compelled to purchase these things from them, who thus established a daily public fair over the whole world. And nothing was omitted that could be made to serve their greed, and for money they sold God, Christ, the Sacrament of the mass, absolution, and forgiveness of sins, the losing and binding key. And. to this must be added their own invented human nonsense, which they pretend is divine worship, such as the brotherhood of monks, and their own superfluous merits; yea, even to put upon the dead a monk's hood and cords; likewise the bishop's and priest's nasty oil, all kinds of bones of the dead which they call holy, letters of indulgence to eat butter, married women, children of priests and the like. All this had to bring and yield them money daily.

38. And especially the great rat king at Rome with his Judas purse, which is the great money gulch that in the name of Christ and the church has appropriated to itself all the possessions of the world. For he has reserved unto himself the power to forbid whatever he pleased and again to allow it for money, even to take and give kingdoms, whenever and as often as he pleased, and taxed lords and kings as it suited him.

This is a much more infamous and barefaced perversion of the temple of God into a house of merchandise, than was perpetrated by the Jews at Jerusalem. For it belonged to Antichrist, as is prophesied of him, to levy and collect for himself the treasures of the world; and St. Peter. speaking of such a hoard in <GOD>2 Peter 2:3 says: "And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose sentence now from of old lingereth not, and their destruction slumbereth not."

39. Therefore Christ is justly angry at such desecration of his temple by these bloated misers, who do not only despise and forsake the true worship of God, but also pervert it and trample it under their feet. And thus they truly make out of the temple which God ordained for the purpose of teaching the people the Word of God and guiding them to heaven, nothing but a den of robbers, where nothing but the destruction and the murder of immortal souls take place, because they silence God's Word, through

which alone souls can be saved, and instead they are fed on the devil's lies, etc.

This is truly the chief sin and principal cause, why the Jews with their temple and all they had, deserved to' go to destruction and ruin. For, as they destroyed the kingdom of God itself, he will no longer build up their kingdom for them. Wherefore he says: Because you go to work, and instead of my kingdom you build the kingdom of Satan, so will I also work against you, and will destroy everything utterly, that I have built for you. This is an example he began to do on that very day when he rushed among them in the temple, as his last public act before his death, which after his departure the Romans would effectually complete; namely, they with all they had would be totally swept away, as he cleanses his temple of them, that they may no more possess either their worship, temple nor priesthood, country or people.

40. He has, God be praised, even commenced to overthrow our idols and spectres, and Popery's abominable merchandise of perfidy, and to purify his churches through the Gospel, also as a prelude, that it may be seen that he will also make an end of them, as before our eyes they have already begun to fall, and they must daily fall more and more, and they will be much more horribly dashed to the earth and everlastingly destroyed, than the Jews were destroyed and exterminated, because theirs is still a much more shameful abomination. This shall first properly begin when the Gospel has departed on account of their disgraceful, horrible blasphemy; but it will finally come to an end on the last day and be completely and forever destroyed.

41. Let Germany, which, praise to God, now has the Gospel, beware, that she may not meet the same fate, as it already so strongly everywhere indicates she will. For we dare not think that the contempt and unthankfulness, which are gaining control among us as great as among the Jews, will remain unpunished. After that he will let the godless world complain and cry: If the Gospel had not come, such things would not have come upon us; just like the Jews at Jerusalem blamed all their calamities to the preaching of the Gospel, and they themselves at the risk of their own necks prophesied that if Christ with his Gospel should continue, the Romans would come and take away their place and nation. And afterward also, even the Romans blamed their destruction to this new God and new

doctrine. Just as it is said at present, since the Gospel has appeared things have never been right.

42. And thus it will also go with the world; as its people despise and persecute God's Word, and become so hardened and blinded, they will blame no one as the cause and merit of their destruction but the precious Gospel itself; which nevertheless alone preserves, thank God, what is still preserved; otherwise all things would long since lay in one common heap of ruins. And yet it must bear the blame for everything that the devil and his clans transact. Because people continue to blaspheme and will not recognize what our sins deserve and the grace and mercy which we have in the Gospel, God must thus repay such blasphemers, so that they become their own prophets, and for a double wickedness receive a double reward.

This premonition has already gone forth, except that it is yet withheld on account of the faithful few; just as he beforehand admonished the Jews by this example when he cast those that sold and bought out of the temple, and afterwards went into the temple himself and finally taught until the day of his death, and yet for a time withheld as long as he could, and afterwards by his Apostles until they would no longer tolerate them; so now we, who cleave to Christ, restrain punishment as long as we live; but when these too shall lay down their heads, then the world will realize what it once had.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY’.

This sermon appeared first in the year 1522 under the title: A sermon on the hypocrite, etc. ; but it differs so much from the text of the Church Postil, that the Erlangen Edition gives the text of this first print: among the miscellaneous sermons for the year 1522. A medium position between the first edition and the Church Postil is held by this sermon as printed in the collection of 27 sermons, on which account we take notice of it here, as well as of the reissues of the first copy. This sermon is also printed in the selection of 14 sermons and in the writing: “Passion or Suffering,” etc. Also, “A Sermon on the Gospel of Luke 18 on the hypocrite and publican.” Wittenberg.

Text. ²⁸⁹Luke 18:9-14. And he spake also this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and set all others at nought: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get. But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, God, be thou merciful to me a sinner. I say unto you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

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SUMMARY OF THIS GOSPEL:

1. Luke the evangelist explains to us this parable in his introduction, when he says: “And he spake also this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and set all others at nought.”

2. In the Pharisees you see an example of those who have no faith, and yet because of their works they esteem themselves the most holy.

3. The Publican is justified without any merit on his part, alone through faith, by which he appropriates righteousness from God alone, and doubts not the goodness of our loving, gracious Father.

4. Therefore this parable shows that we are justified through faith alone without any work and merit whatever on our part.

1. Here again we have a picture and an example of the divine judgment on saints and good people. Two extraordinary persons are presented to us in this Gospel; one thoroughly good and truly pious; and one hypocritically pious. But before we take up the example and consider the terrible sentence, we must first notice that Luke here makes the impression as though righteousness came by works. For Luke is most accustomed to do this, as when we at present preach that faith alone saves, he observes that people are led to desire only to believe, and to neglect the power and fruit of faith. This John also does in his Epistle and James, where they show that faith cannot exist without works.

Thus Luke, in the beginning of his introduction, would speak as follows: I see indeed that many have preached how faith alone saves, by which they have brought the people to strive for a fictitious faith; hence I must also speak of works by which they can be assured of their faith, and prove it to the people by their acts. Consequently it sounds as though Luke everywhere taught that righteousness came by works; as you have recently heard: Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven; and, make unto yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. And here it appears as though the publican had obtained his goodness by praying and smiting his breast. So this Gospel appears as though we should become good or pious by our works.

2. Now you have heard that a man, before he can do anything good, must by all means first be good. For the truth must always stand: “A good tree

cannot bring forth evil fruit;" and again, "An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit." Thus a man must first be good, before he can do good. So he also firmly concludes that the publican smote his breast, which proves the conclusion, that he had been good.

3. This has taken place and has been written to the end that we should open our eyes and not judge the people according to their outward appearance. To do this in this instance it is necessary to examine the hearts of both, and not judge according to mere external works. For when the heart is good, the whole man is good. For if I judged the publican according to his works, my judgment would soon be false. For nothing appears in him but sin. Again, if I judge the hypocrite or Pharisee according to his works, I will also miss the mark. For he stands at the holy place, makes the best prayer imaginable, for he praises and thanks God with grand works, he fasts, gives the tenth of all his goods, harms no one; in short, everything, both outwardly and inwardly, appears well with him.

4. As he judges, all men judge; no one can condemn such an upright and virtuous life. Who dare say that fasting is not good; or that to praise God and give everyone what we owe them is evil? When I see a priest, monk, or nun with such apparent noble conduct, I regard them as pious. Who can say otherwise? Hence if I am to judge whether this one is good and the other evil, I must be able to look into the hearts of both. But I cannot see into the heart, and must make the proper distinction from their works, as Christ says: "By their fruits ye shall know them." <4072>Matthew 7:20.

5. He speaks of the publican as though he must have previously heard a word from God that touched his heart so that he believed it and thus became pious, as St. Paul says, <5107>Romans 10:17: "So faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." When the Word falls into the heart, then man becomes pure and good. But the Evangelist does not indicate that he now first heard the Gospel here, but that he heard it somewhere, it matters not where. For he says: "God be merciful to me a sinner." This knowledge is above the powers of reason. And yet it must previously have been known to him that God is merciful, gracious and friendly to all those who confess their sins, who call upon him and long for grace. As he heard that God is gracious by virtue of his very nature, to all those who humble themselves and seek comfort in him. But to preach thus is always the pure Gospel.

6. Hence the beginning of goodness or godliness is not in us, but in the Word of God. God must first let his Word sound in our hearts by which we learn to know and to believe him, and afterwards do good works. So we must believe from this that the publican had learned God's Word. If not, it would certainly have been impossible for him to acknowledge himself to be a poor sinner, as this Gospel reports. Indeed, it has a different appearance here, because St. Luke seems to insist more strongly on external works and appearances than on faith, and lays the emphasis more on the outward character and conduct than on the root and on the faith of the heart within. Nevertheless we must conclude that the publican had previously heard the Gospel. Otherwise his smiting his breast and his humble confession would not have occurred, had he not previously had faith in his heart.

7. This is also proper fruit, since it promotes God's honor; as God desires nothing but the offering of praise, as

Psalm 50:23, says: "Whoso offereth the sacrifice of thanksgiving glorifieth me, and to him that ordereth his way aright, will I show the salvation of God." In this way the publican also proceeds, gives God the offering of thanksgiving and secures to himself the forgiveness of sin, and praises God, puts himself to shame and exalts the truth above himself. Therefore we must praise and commend his work, because he gives God the highest honor and true worship. For he says: "God, be thou merciful to me a sinner." As though he would say: I am a rogue, this I confess, as you yourself know. Here you see that he confesses the truth, and is willing that God should reprove and revile him; yea, he does this himself, and casts himself down the very lowest, and with God he again rises upward, gives glory to God that he is gracious, kind and merciful. But in himself he finds nothing but sin. Wherefore these are the true fruits of faith.

8. Thus we have learned from his fruits the publican's faith. But how shall we understand what Christ says: "This man went down to his house justified," as he had already been just through faith, before he smote his breast? He certainly must have been just before. Why then does Christ say here: "He went down to his house justified?" This is what I have often said, if faith be true, it will break forth and bear fruit. If the tree is green and good, it will not cease to blossom forth in leaves and fruit. It does this by nature. I need not first command it and say: Look here, tree, bear apples. For if the tree is there and is good, the fruit will follow unbidden. If faith is present works must follow. If I confess that I am a sinner, it must follow

that I will say: Alas God! I am a rogue, do thou cause me to be good. So this publican cares for nothing and speaks freely, though he puts himself to shame before all people, he does not care for that, as <19B610>Psalm 116:10 says: “I believe, for I will speak. I was greatly afflicted,” and says: “God, be thou merciful to me a sinner!” As though he would say: I now see that I am lost, for I am a bad man, and acknowledge my sins. Unless I believe and hold to God’s mercy, and take the cup of the Savior and call upon God’s grace, I will be ruined.

9. Thus faith casts itself on God, and breaks forth and becomes certain through its works. When this takes place a person becomes known to me and to other people. For when I thus break forth I spare neither man nor devil, I cast myself down, and will have nothing to do with lofty affairs, and will regard myself as the poorest sinner on earth. This assures me of my faith. For this is what it says: “This man went down to his house justified.” Thus we attribute salvation as the principal thing to faith, and works as the witnesses of faith. They make one so certain that he concludes from the outward life that the faith is genuine.

10. We find this also in Abraham when he offers his son Isaac. Then God said: “For now I know that thou fearest God,” <012212>Genesis 22:12. Surely, if he had not feared God, he would not have offered his son; and by this we know the fruit to be thoroughly good. Let us now heartily apply this to ourselves.

11. This is why St. Luke and St. James have so much to say about works, so that one says: Yes, I will now believe, and then he goes and fabricates for himself a fictitious delusion, which hovers only on the lips as the foam on the water. No, no; faith is a living and an essential thing, which makes a new creature of man, changes his spirit and wholly and completely converts him. It goes to the foundation and there accomplishes a renewal of the entire man; so, if I have previously seen a sinner, I now see in his changed conduct, manner and life, that he believes. So high and great a thing is faith.

For this reason the Holy Spirit urges works, that they may be witnesses of faith. In those therefore in whom we cannot realize good works, we can immediately say and conclude: they heard of faith, but it did not sink into good soil. For if you continue in pride and lewdness, in greed and anger, and yet talk much of faith, St. Paul will come and say, <461402>1 Corinthians

4:20, look here my dear sir, “the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.” It requires life and action, and is not brought about by mere talk.

12. Thus we err on both sides in saying, a person must only believe, then he will neglect to do good works and bring forth good fruits. Again, if you preach works, the people immediately comfort themselves and trust in works. Therefore we must walk upon the common path. Faith alone must make us good and save us. But to know whether faith is right and true, you must show it by your works. God cannot endure your dissembling, for this reason he has appointed you a sermon which praises works, which are only witnesses that you believe, and must be performed not thereby to merit anything, but they should be done freely and gratuitously toward our neighbor.

13. This must be practiced until it becomes a second nature with us. For thus God has also introduced works, as though he would say: if you believe, then you have the kingdom of heaven; and yet, in order that you may not deceive yourselves, do the works. To this the Lord refers in John 15:17, when he says to his disciples: “These things I command you, that ye may love one another.” And previous to this at the supper he said, John 13:34-35: “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another: even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” And shortly before this he said, 5:5: “For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you.”

As though he would say: Ye are my friends, but this the people will not know by your faith, but when you show the fruits of faith, and break forth in love, then they will know you. The fruits will not save you nor make you any friends, but they must show and prove that you are saved and are my friends. Therefore mark this well, that faith alone makes us good; but as faith lies concealed within me, and is a great life, a great treasure, therefore the works must come forth and bear witness of the faith, to praise God’s grace and condemn the works of men. You must cast your eyes to the earth and humiliate yourself before everyone, that you may also win your neighbor by your services; for this reason God lets you live, otherwise nothing would be better for you than to die and go to heaven. This you now also observe clearly in the good publican.

14. So you find two judgments: one according to faith, the other according to outward works. The foundation you have in that faith is concealed; this

he feels, who believes; but that is not enough, it must express itself as you see above in the publican, who breaks forth in humility, so much as not to lift his eyes to heaven, smites on his breast and praises God, by which he helps me to say when my sins oppress me: Behold, the publican also was a sinner and said: “God, be thou merciful to me a sinner;” thus too, I will do. By this will I also be strengthened so that when I see my sins I will think of his example, and with it comfort and strengthen myself, so that I can say: Oh God, I see in the publican that thou art gracious to poor sinners. Faith the believer keeps for himself, but externally he communicates its fruits to other people.

15. The publican is on the right road and is twice justified; once through faith before God, and again by his works to me. Here he gives unto God his glory, and by faith repays him with praise. Also toward me he performs the duty of love, and puts words into my mouth and teaches me how to pray. Now he has paid all his debts toward God and man. So faith urges him to do; without however requiring anything from God as a reward of faith.

16. This is one character of the publican, who, according to faith which is the spiritual judgment, is acknowledged justified, while according to the flesh he is unprofitable. For the Pharisee passes and does not notice him, sees not his faith, lets him stand way back, and sees him alone in his sins, and knows not that God has been gracious to him, and converted and reformed him. So when a carnally minded man would condemn a sinner according to his sins, it is otherwise impossible, he must fail.

17. Let us now consider the fool, the Pharisee. Here are most beautiful works. In the first place he thanks God, fasts twice in the week, and all this to honor God, not St. Nicholas or St. Barnabas, he gives the tenth of all his goods, nor has he at any time committed adultery, has never done any one violence or robbed him of his goods. Thus he has conducted himself in an exemplary manner. This is a beautiful honest life, and excites our wonder and surprise. Truly, after the fashion of the world no one could find fault with him, yea, one must praise him. Yes, to be sure he does this himself.

18. But God is the first to come and say, that all the work of the Pharisee is blasphemy. God help us, what an awful sentence this is! Priests and nuns may well be terrified by it, and all their bones quake, as you scarcely ever find one of them as pious as this Pharisee. Would to God we could have

many such hypocrites and Pharisees; for then they could be taught better things.

19. Well, what is the matter with the good man? Only this, he does not know his own heart. Here you see that we are our own greatest enemies, who close our eyes and hearts, and think we are as we feel. For if I should ask any such hypocrite: Sir, do you mean just what you say? he would take an oath, that it is not otherwise. But behold, see how deep God's sword cuts, and pierces through all the recesses of the soul, ⁵⁸⁰⁴²Hebrews 4:12. Here everything must go to ruin, or fall to the earth in humiliation, otherwise nothing can stand before God. Thus a pious woman must here fall down and kiss the vilest harlot's feet, yea, her footprints.

20. Now let us better see and hear what the Lord says to this. There stands the publican and humbles himself, says nothing of fasting, nothing of his good works, nor of anything. Yet the Lord says that his sins are not so great as the sins of the hypocrite; even in spite of anyone now exalting himself above the lowest sinner. If I exalt myself a finger's breadth above my neighbor, or the vilest sinner, then am I cast down. For the publican during his whole life did not do as many and as great sins as this Pharisee does here when he says: I thank thee God that I am not as other men are; and lies enough to burst all heaven. From him you hear no word like: "God, be thou merciful to me a sinner?' God's mercy, sympathy, patience and love are all forgotten by him, while God is nothing but pure mercy, and he who does not know this, thinks there is no God, as in ¹⁹⁴⁰¹Psalm 14:1: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." So it is with an unbeliever who does not know himself. Therefore I say one thing more, if he had committed the vilest sin and deflowered virgins, it would not have been as bad as when he says: "I thank thee God, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican." Yes, yes, do I hear you have no need of God and despise his goodness, mercy, love and everything that God is? Behold, these are thy sins. Hence the public gross sins that break out are insignificant; but unbelief which is in the heart and we cannot see, this is the real sin in which monks and priests strut forth; these lost and corrupt ones are sunk head and ears in this sin, and pretend to be entirely free from it.

21. Further, since he has now blasphemed God and lied to him, because he is unwilling to confess his sins, he falls further and sins against love to his neighbor, in that he says: "Even as this publican." He could not bear his

presence without blaming and condemning him. Here all commandments are abolished and transgressed, for he denies God and does his neighbor no good. In this way he goes to ruin, because he has not obeyed a letter of the law. For if he had said: Oh God, we are all sinners, this poor sinner is also like myself and all the rest: and had he joined the congregation and said: Oh God, be merciful unto us! then he would have fulfilled God's commandment, namely, the first, in that he gave God the honor and the praise, and had he afterwards said: Oh God, I see this one is a sinner, in the jaws of the devil; dear Lord, help him. ' and had he thus brought him to God and prayed to God for him, he would then also have obeyed the other commandment of Christian love as Paul says, Galatians 6:2, and teaches: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

22. Now he comes and praises himself that he is just. He has a poisonous, wicked heart, who praises himself most gloriously on account of his pretended good works, how he fasted and gave the tenth of all he had. Hence he is so full of hatred to his neighbor, if God allowed him to judge, he would plunge the poor publican down into the deepest hell. Behold, is not this a wicked heart and terrible to hear, that I would all men should go to ruin, if only I be praised? Yet all this is so finely decorated and adorned by external conduct, that no one can censure it. Here we see how we are to know the tree from its fruits. For when I view his heart with spiritual eyes, I recognize it is full of blasphemy and hatred to his neighbor. From these fruits I know that the tree is evil. For works would not be evil in themselves, but the evil root in the heart makes them evil. This is set before us that we may beware and guard ourselves against it.

23. Again, on the other hand, examine the heart also of the publican. Here we find that he believes. Hence his works are good and of service to the whole world, for he teaches that a man should humble himself and praise God. On the contrary the other with his works makes saints who are puffed up and proud of heart; for he is entrapped in sins, his soul is condemned, and is fast in the jaws of the devil, and the high minded knave steps forth and praises himself, because his neighbor over there is a sinner. To sum up all, he misleads the whole world with his hypocritical life. Thus we must judge the fruits with spiritual eyes as we have now judged these two; then we will know the tree whether it be good or evil.

24. Now, where did I obtain this judgment? Here: God has given me his law like a mirror, in which I see what is good and evil. It says: Love the

Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself," <0606>Deuteronomy 6:5, <4022>Matthew 22:37. 'Now the works of the publican praise God and benefit the whole world, because they teach us to know, and show us the way of God our Savior. Therefore they are good because they praise God and benefit our neighbor. On the other hand, the hypocrite struts forth and blasphemes God, and with his corrupt life misleads the whole world.

25. I should also speak of the great and shameful vice of slander, when one belies another, exposes him and speaks evil of him; while we are all alike after all, and no one has a reason to exalt himself above another. But that the government judges and punishes crime, it does by virtue of its office. For it wields the sword to make the transgressor fear. For God will not tolerate sin, and desires that the wicked have no rest, as the prophet Isaiah says, Isaiah48:22: "There is no peace, saith Jehovah, to the wicked." Therefore where God does not internally disturb sinners, he will wipe out sin by fire and water, that they can have no peace from without. When such sins are to be punished, the officers, judges and people should think thus: Oh God! although I myself am a poor sinner and a much greater one than this person, and a much greater thief and adulterer than this one; still I will execute my office and leave him no rest in his sins and belabor him; for this is thy divine command. Concerning this I have said more on other occasions, especially in my book on the Civil Government, which you can road yourself; for the present let this suffice, and pray God for grace.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY,

This sermon appeared in place of the preceding sermon in Edition c of Luther's Works.

SECOND SERMON — 2180 LUKE 18:9-14.

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1. This Gospel brings two extraordinary persons to our notice, or two kinds of people from the multitude called the people of God, who would be God's servants and come before him seeking righteousness. And the two kinds of righteousness, which are found on earth, are also represented; the one, which makes a great show before all the world and in the eyes of men, and yet before God it amounts to nothing, and is therefore condemned; the other, which is not known among men, and yet before God it is called righteousness and is pleasing in his sight. The one is that of the beautiful, proud saint, the Pharisee; the other, that of the poor, humble, sorrowing sinner, the publican.

2. We also hear two wonderful, strange sentences of judgment, wholly and entirely opposed to human wisdom and the whims of reason, hard and terrible to all the world, which condemns the great saints as unjust, and declares the poor sinners acceptable, righteous and holy. But, as the text itself shows, he speaks of such saints who trusted in themselves to find a righteousness in their own lives and works, which God was bound to respect; and again of such sinners, who from their hearts desired to become? free from their sins, and long for forgiveness and the grace of God. For nothing is said here of that other great multitude in the world, who are like neither this publican nor this Pharisee, who care nothing at all, either for sin or grace, but continue in security and wickedness, without inquiring after any God, heaven or hell.

3. Of the two kinds of persons among the Jews, the Pharisees and publicans, we have sufficiently heard in another place, namely, that the name Pharisee means the very first, most upright and pious people, who with all earnestness endeavored to serve God, and to keep the law, as St. Paul also boasts of himself, that before his conversion he was one of them, Philippians 3:5.

4. Again, the name "publican" among them meant a man living in open sin and vice, and served neither God nor man, and was only busy to rob, to oppress and harm his neighbor, as they were forced to do in their

occupation which they bought from the Romans for great sums of money, if they desired fully to take advantage of it. In short, they were people who were regarded as no better than public, godless heathen, even though they were Jews by birth, as Christ also compares them to Gentiles, <4018 17>Matthew 18:17: “And if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican.”

5. It is indeed wonderful that Christ brings two such persons together, who are so entirely different and the farthest removed from each other; and still more wonderful, and even offensive, that he expresses such weighty Judgments, wholly condemning the Pharisee and declaring the publican just. Although he plainly speaks thus of both, nevertheless he shows that he does not reject, nor desire to have rejected such works of which the Pharisee here boasts; for he represents and sets him forth as a beautiful saint, with works that are neither to be rebuked nor punished, but that are good and worthy of praise, On the other hand he can neither boast of nor praise the publican for his life and works, for he is himself forced to confess before God, and to condemn himself as a sinner, and can think of no good he has done. And yet Christ thus searches, proves and examines both, and finds nothing good in the holy Pharisee, although he did many costly works, not on account of the works, which in themselves are not wrong; but because the person was not good but full of iniquity. While on the other hand in the publican who hitherto had been a public, condemned sinner, he now finds a real good tree and good fruit, although he does not shine forth with the great works of the Pharisee. Wherefore let us in brief consider both persons.

6. First of all you must properly magnify and adorn the Pharisee, as Christ presents him with his beautiful life; for here you have a man who dares to stand before God, and praise his life in the divine presence. This can never be intended as a false praise, but is meant in all earnestness and truth. He appeals to himself as a witness, and is willing to announce himself before God and be found in the true worship, and give an account of his entire life, that it is spent in obedience to God. He begins with the highest and first commandment, and shows himself as one who worships the true and only God, and seeks first of all his kingdom and his will; he confesses that he has everything from God, what he is and lives, he brings all back to him and thanks him for all he has given him, especially for. this particular grace and kindness that he preserves him from sin and shame, that he is not like the public sinners and publicans, and prays that God may preserve him in

this, and further grant unto him his grace and goodness. Here you see nothing but beautiful works of the first table of the law, of all three commandments; for hereby he also observes the Sabbath, because he goes into the temple only to seek God and to pray.

7. He later goes further into the second table, and purifies his conscience before God and the world, in that he is not unjust, a robber, adulterer, like the great major. ity of people. Here the other five commandments are taken together, so that he is a man who can boast of himself before all the world, that he has done no one wrong, violence or pain, nor oppressed or offended against the fifth, sixth and eighth commandments, and in this connection he dares to defy everyone to prove anything different against him. Besides he has strictly kept the sixth commandment, he has not committed adultery or led an unchaste life, but kept his body in subjection and discipline, and also fasted twice every week, which was not a false fasting, as that of our priests and monks chiefly is, but a real fasting as the Jews observed from morning until evening, to the going down of the sun.

Above all this, that he was not only not unjust, nor an extortioner of his neighbor's goods and honor, but gave the tenth of all he had honestly and fairly earned, and by this also yields his obedience to God, and gives for the support of divine worship and the priestly office of all that God gave him, and does not lay up anything in a niggardly or miserly spirit.

8. Here you view all the commandments together, and he appears to the world a paragon of godliness, a fine, pious, godfearing and holy man, who is to be applauded as a mirror and an example for the whole world, that they might well desire, and it would indeed be well to desire, and the world would be very lovely if it had many such people.

9. Now contrast the publican with this picture, and you will see there is no resemblance to the holy Pharisee; for even his name at once indicates that little virtue or honor can be found in him, and no one could regard him as inquiring much after God or his commandments; and he does not only fail to give any of his goods for the service of God, but even publicly robs and steals from his neighbor; and in short he is a man who with his sinful life is a public and known example; as the Pharisee also informs him, that he is depraved and godless, his conscience is depraved, and there is no good to hope from him.

10. Now how does it happen so contrary, that the Pharisee is condemned of God and the publican is justified? Will God now speak and decide against his own law, which justly prefers those who live according to it, to those who live opposed to it in open sin? Or does God delight in those who do no good and are nothing but robbers, adulterers and unjust? By no means, but we have here quite another and higher law than the world or flesh and blood understand, which looks deeper into the hearts of both these persons, and finds in the Pharisee a great evil principle which destroys all that otherwise might be called good, which the Evangelist calls, to trust in self and despise others.

11. Such is the reproach of this fine man and rogue, who is great before the world. Would to God that this one were the only one, and he had not left so many children and heirs. For the whole world with the best there is in it, is altogether drowned in this vice; it will not and cannot forsake it. Where it knows of any good it possesses, it exalts itself, and despises others who have it not, and exalts itself above God and man; and even though they pretend to keep God's commandments they transgress them, as St. Paul says of his Jews, Romans 9:31, that they truly, in striving after the law of righteousness, have not attained to righteousness.

What a wonderful thing it is, that those who diligently hold to the law, and worship God to a great extent, are not those who keep the law, as Paul in Galatians 6:13 says: "For not even they who receive circumcision do themselves keep the law," etc. Those are strange saints indeed, who even in doing according to the law, do not keep it but violate it. Who then are those who keep it?

12. This Pharisee and those like him, with their fine discipline and honor, which is truly an excellent, glorious and beautiful gift, which must be praised and esteemed in the world above everything else as the greatest gift of God, more beautiful than all other beauty and ornament, gold and silver, yea, than even the light of the sun. Of him, I say, the sentence is spoken, that before God he is worse than a robber, a murderer and an adulterer. Whither shall we now go with this doctrine among the great multitude of this world, whom we ourselves condemn on account of their public contempt of God and all wickedness against God and the people, which also cries to heaven and drowns everything that the earth can scarcely bear it?

13. Well, I said before, that the Pharisee is neither censured nor condemned because he does the works of the law, or else we would have to condemn God's gift and his law, and praise the contrary. Yet this I say, that here the person is placed before the judgment seat of God, and finds it different there than before the judgment of this world, that although he has indeed some beautiful, praiseworthy gifts, yet a great blot of shame cleaves to them, because he misuses these gifts, and in God's sight is entirely destroyed by them.

For with these gifts he is here accused of transgressing against both God and man, against both tables of the law. For in the first commandment especially and in the highest terms, presumption is forbidden, that a man should not trust in himself or in his own gifts, or take pleasure in himself; as this work righteous person does, who struts forth and is tickled with the gifts he has received from God, and makes an idol of them and worships himself, as though he were the excellent holy man, whom alone God is bound to respect and honor.

14. This is already the great sin and vice where he runs counter against God himself, of course blind and hardened, like an unbelieving heathen or Turk, who knows nothing of God, is without repentance, and on account of his great holiness will know nothing of sin, and fears not the wrath of God. Fie presumes to stand firm by his own works, and does not see that he and all men, even the true saints themselves with all their own righteousness and life, cannot stand before God; but are guilty of his wrath and condemnation, as David testifies in Psalm 130:3: "If thou, Jehovah, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?" And Psalm 143:2: "Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight no man living is righteous." Therefore he does not seek either grace or forgiveness of sins, nor does it occur to him that he stands in need of them.

15. Now since he sins so monstrously against the first and highest commandment, in shameful and horrible idolatry, presumption and defiance, depending on his own holiness, and as there is here no fear of God, neither trust nor love, but he seeks only his own honor and praise, we must conclude that he does not honestly and from the heart observe any of the other commandments, and all is false and lies that he pretends with his prayers and worship, and thereby in the highest degree misuses and disgraces the name of God to adorn his lies, and thereby only brings down

upon himself God's wrath and severe condemnation; as God has declared that whoever taketh his name in vain shall not go unpunished.

For what-else is it, but to blaspheme and defy the lofty majesty of God, when he prays and says: I thank thee, God, that I am so holy and good, that I never need thy grace; but I find so much in myself, that I have kept the law, and you cannot accuse me of anything, and i have deserved so much, that you are bound to repay and reward me again for it in time and in eternity, if you would keep your own honor, and be a just and truthful God.

16. In like manner see how he rumbles and blusters also in the second table of the law against his neighbor; for neither is there here any Christian love or faithfulness by which one could trace that he sought and favored his neighbor's honor and salvation; but he basely goes to work and tramples him under his feet by his shameful contempt, and does not consider him worthy to be regarded as a human being; yea, when he should help and serve his neighbor, so that no wrong or harm be done him, he himself does him the greatest wrong. For when he sees and knows that his neighbor sins against God, he does not think how he can convert and save him from the wrath of God and condemnation, that he may reform; he has no mercy or sympathy in t, is heart for the distress and affliction of a poor sinner, and thinks that he is rightly and justly served, in that he is left in his condemnation and destruction, and withdraws from him all the duties of love and service God has commanded him to perform, that above all things he might bring his neighbor from his sins and condemnation into the kingdom of God by teaching, admonition, rebuke and reformation, etc. ; and what is the worst of all, he is glad and of good courage, because his neighbor is under the power of sin and the wrath of God. Thus one can indeed trace what desire and love he has for God's law, and how much of an enemy he is to vice.

17. For of what use can such a man be in the kingdom of God, who can still rejoice, yea, laugh and be heartily pleased at the sins and disobedience of the whole world against God; and who would be sorry if anyone were good at heart and observed God's commandments, and even if able he would be unwilling to help him in the least to this, or prevent the evil and condemnation of his neighbor? What good should we seek or hope for in him who is so wicked as not to desire the salvation of his neighbor?

The heathen themselves know of no greater wickedness, or how to paint a more wicked man, than he who is so hateful and envious, as only to delight and rejoice when his neighbor meets adversity. Like some who are so wicked that they willingly suffer harm themselves, if only another thereby suffer greater injury. Such devilish, hellish wickedness cannot be greater in anyone than in such false saints, who alone want all honor before God and the world and wish to be pure and holy, and all others to be obnoxious and filthy.

18. If in bodily ills it be said of a physician who claims to be an honorable and good man, who when he visits a person sick unto death, instead of giving him good advice and helping to restore him to health, does nothing but laugh and make fun of the wretched man; who would not take him for the most desperate villain that walks the earth, in that he not only withdraws his assistance from an unfortunate person in his greatest distress, but even laughs at his sufferings and wreaks out his anger upon him? How much greater villainy is that of a false saint, who sees his neighbor's soul in danger and in the fear of eternal condemnation, whose duty it would be to risk his body and life to save him; but he refuses not only to do this when he could save him only with one word or a sigh of sympathy, but instead casts it up against him and as much as he is able gladly plunges him still deeper into condemnation.

19. What should such a man do or wish to him who is his enemy, or who has done him some wrong, whom nevertheless he is in duty bound to love and assist as far as he permits him. How would he in this case burst out with anger, curses, blows, so that he would not consider murder as a sin but as holiness, especially in him who would not admit that he was good and holy, like the good brother murderer Cain did with his brother Abel, and his children at all times still do, as Christ himself says of such, <43162>John 16:2: "The hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God."

20. Just as little will you find that such a person observes in his heart any other commandment; for just as little would he try to prevent the disgrace of his neighbor's wife or child, or assist to preserve their honor; yea, when it is lost he would be glad of it and laugh in his sleeves, or had he an opportunity he would do it himself, or even lend a hand. That he avoids such public evil work, is not out of his love to virtue or to obedience to God; for if he does not try to prevent the loss and distress of his neighbor's

soul, how can you expect him to protect his honor or the honor of his family? Much less would he lament or think to prevent harm to his neighbor's goods, that they be not robbed, stolen, or otherwise destroyed, but would rather rejoice over it and say: It served him right. I will say nothing of his duty to help him in his poverty with his own property, or gratuitously aid him with money. He will neither guard his neighbor's good name when he hears it slandered and belied, nor try with his own honor to cover and adorn his dishonor; but will rather rejoice and help to belie him and make him out the worst, as such saints especially are accustomed to do, as this one here before God and other people belie this poor publican, whom he in truth cannot accuse of anything.

21. Now see, what a disgraceful, monstrous devil is in such a beautiful saint, who can cover himself with a thin appearance of a few works which he performs before the eyes of the people, and what he does in his worship, thanks and prayers, whereby he blasphemes and dishonors the high majesty with outrage and defiance in the open public, that he dares to boast before God of such scandalous vices, and be so brave as though God were bound to treat him as a model saint, and as a debt and duty give him heaven and everything he might ask. Or if he knew that God would not do it, and accept the poor publican in preference to himself, he would be so enraged with anger and hatred against God, as to publicly take the word out of God's mouth and say, that he is not God but the devil from hell, and would gladly if he could, thrust him down from his throne red usurp his seat. And in all this he will not suffer himself to be punished by any one and will claim he did just right; whereas he deserves more than all other blasphemers, that God should at once open the earth and devour him alive.

22. Here you see what a man is and does, who is moved by his own free will or by the power of nature. For this Pharisee is set up by Christ as the highest example of what a man eau do by his own strength according to the law. And it is certain that all men are by nature and from Adam no better, and just such vices manifest themselves in them, when before God they want to be holy and better than other people; and that there is nothing but a mischievous contempt for God and all mankind, and are filled with joy and pleasure when men sin against God. Such are twofold:, yea, manifold worse than the publican and open sinners like him, because they do not only not keep God's law, but they do not want anyone else to keep it; they do not only not help anyone or do good, but rejoice over their destruction and condemnation; and above all this they adorn themselves and pretend to

be exceedingly holy, and with a condemned conscience dare to blaspheme and lie before God's majesty, that they are not like other men, and have kept God's law, so that heaven itself might fall to pieces before them.

23. But now see in contrast this publican, who also comes into the temple to pray, but with quite other thoughts and with a different prayer than those of the Pharisee. For in the first place he has the advantage in that he confesses himself a poor sinner, convinced by his own conscience and condemned, in that he has nothing of which he can boast or be proud before God or the world, but must be ashamed of himself; for the law has so smitten his heart that he feels his misery and distress, and is terrified and filled with anguish at the judgment and wrath of God, and sighs from his heart to be delivered, but finds no comfort anywhere for his evil plight, and can bring nothing before God but mere sin and shame. With this he is so burdened and oppressed that he dare not even lift up his eyes; for he understands and feels that he has deserved nothing else than hell and eternal death, and must condemn himself before God, as he shows and confesses this before God by smiting his breast.

In short, there is truly nothing here but sins and condemnation, as much so before God as those of the Pharisee; except that the Pharisee does not confess his filthiness, but will make purity out of it, while the publican so feels his sins that he cannot stand before them, but must confess that he daily offends God with his disgraceful unthank-fullness, contempt and disobedience for all his mercies and goodness, and that he has permitted him to live to this hour. Therefore he cannot trust in himself for comfort himself in his own works, but must wholly and entirely despair in himself, if he find not grace and mercy with God.

24. Nor can he despise any one or exalt himself above his fellow; for he feels that he alone is most deeply condemned, and regards all others as happier and better, especially this Pharisee, who in spite of this is full of pollution before God. To sum up all, you see here already the beginning of true repentance in such a person, who is heartily penitent and sorrowful over his sins, and heartily desires deliverance from them, and seeks grace and mercy from God, and besides resolves in his heart to lead a better life.

25. But mark how the publican's word and prayer bar. monize when he says: "God, be thou merciful to me a sinner!" Where did he learn to speak thus to God, or how dare he conceive, arrange and express such words? For according to reason and human judgment they do not agree, and no

man can force such a prayer out of his own heart and thoughts, short as it is. The words of the Pharisee: “God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust,” etc., are what a pious man can truly say, and should say.

For no one dare be such a liar that his conscience does not accuse him of being a robber, adulterer, etc.; but must say the truth, and not allow the reputation of a good conscience to be taken from him, and he must be a pious man, who says this in truth. On the other hand, a villain can of course also speak these words: “God, be thou merciful to me a sinner!” as they are oftener spoken by rogues than by the truly penitent, pious people. Yet, who else would speak them but a sinful and condemned person? Nevertheless the sentence here changes and threatens to become false on both sides, you may turn and shift it as you please.

26. But taken in a fundamental sense it is a speech and example that belongs to the schools and to the theology of Christians, which the world calls heretical. For as I said, no reason can harmonize it, nor can any man, be he as high, wise and learned as he may, harmonize what this publican has here put together, to form and construct a prayer from words entirely opposed to each other: “God, be thou merciful to me a sinner?’ Yes, surely, this is the art of a great master, which is wholly and entirely foreign, high and far above human understanding.

27. For there never were such words uttered since God in the beginning permitted his voice to be heard, and he spoke unto man. The Scriptures say that in Paradise God said to man, <010217>Genesis 2:17: “For in the day thou eatest thereof (of the forbidden fruit, that is, the day in which you sin against my commandment), thou shalt surely die.” On Mount Sinai when God gave the law it read as follows, <022005>Exodus 20:5: “I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God,” that is, an angry God, “visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me.” In short that man should know that sin is condemned, and God’s wrath and punishment are declared against it.

With this it does not at all agree or harmonize that such a sinner and condemned person dare come before God and pray: “Be thou merciful to me a sinner?’ For these two, sin and mercy, are opposed to each other, like fire and water. Mercy does not belong where sin abounds, but wrath and punishment. How then does this man discover the art to unite the two and harmonize them, and how dare he desire and call for grace to cover his

sins? To this belongs more than to know the law and ten commandments, which the Pharisee also knew, and it is a different art, of which the Pharisee knew nothing at all, and all men of themselves know nothing.

28. This is preaching the precious Gospel of God's grace and mercy in Christ, which is published and offered to condemned sinners without any merit of their own. This publican must have heard of this also, and the Holy Spirit must have touched and moved his heart with it, as he feels his sins through the law, that he comes before God and offers this prayer, that he certainly believes and holds as he has heard from the Word of God, that God will forgive sins and be merciful, that is, turn away from them his wrath and eternal death for the sake of his Son, the promised Messiah. Such faith united and bound together in this prayer these two contrary elements.

29. Now, this preaching the Gospel is indeed heard by many, and it appears an easy matter to say this; but it is not as common as men think, that everyone knows it; and no one better understands how difficult it is, than the few who study and exercise themselves in it, that they also might believe and pray like the publican. The reason of this is, because the pious rogue and hypocrite, the Pharisee, is still within us, who hinders and prevents us from thus uniting them.

30. Yea, this must also not be according to our external, worldly nature and its piety, for here we must say and teach nothing else than that grace is not for a sinner, but wrath and punishment, etc. , otherwise no one could live on earth; and God could not defend his majesty, if he would not insist that sin must be punished and good works rewarded; for then everyone would soon say: let us only boldly commit sin, for then we will receive more grace! But here in his spiritual kingdom it is altogether different, so that he who is a rogue receives grace and is declared righteous, and he who is called good is a rogue and is condemned.

31. This takes place here since God's judgment and the judgment of the world are different, and as far apart as heaven and earth. Before the world it must be thus: If you are good, you shall enjoy it; are you a thief, you are hanged on the gallows; if you commit murder, you are beheaded. Upon this government God himself must insist, otherwise there would be no peace on the earth. But in his own government where he alone is Lord and Judge without any mediating agents, he is merciful only to poor sinners; for here

there is nothing except sin, and before him no one is innocent, as the Scriptures say.

32. Yet it is also true, that sinners are not all alike, so that we must here further distinguish and picture forth those under judgment, and those under grace. For there are some gross and bold sinners, robbers, murderers, thieves, knaves, whoremongers, who act so grossly and are drunk with sin, always rush ahead and never think or ask how they may obtain mercy with God, and go about without any care, as though they were in no danger. To these St. Paul preaches, <46069>1 Corinthians 6:9: “Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” And Christ says, <42130>Luke 13:3-5: “I tell you nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish.” For such are not like this publican, because they are entirely without repentance and live wickedly, and do not yet belong to God’s gracious government, but to the government of this world.

33. Besides there are other rogues who try to imitate this publican, and who use the Lord’s Prayer; they have heard the words that God will be merciful to poor sinners, and have learned to repeat these words and smite their breasts, and can present themselves so humble and penitent in words and questions, that a man could swear, and they themselves would swear, that they are just like this publican, and yet it is all false and a delusion. For they are no better than the Pharisee, and God will be as merciful to them as to him, so that they do not feel his wrath, and he does not strike with his rod among them to punish them, but lets them continue in their wicked state.

These are false Christians and disturbers, false brethren, of whom there is also a great multitude in our communion, who can say the words, and can greatly praise the Gospel and God’s grace, and confess they are poor sinners; but when it comes to the test and they are attacked and rebuked, they will neither hear nor suffer it, but begin to be angry and say: their honor is offended and their conscience is troubled, or if they can do no more they will practice all kinds of bad tricks against the Gospel.

34. In words and show these may pretend to be like the publican, but in reality they are like the wicked rogue and hypocrite. For they speak and present themselves thus for the reason alone, that men may be obliged to regard them as pious, and that no one dare call them anything else, until

God lays hold of them only a little either by the devil, the world, or by his Word; then they are so tender that they cannot stand anything at all, and cry out against violence and injustice. And in brief, as they were previously poor sinners, they are now perfect saints, and so proud, that no one can get along with their sanctity.

35. Of such the world everywhere is to-day full, especially of the great and powerful noblemen, and the learned sophists. Even the common citizen and the farmer who learned this from our Gospel, that they wish to accept and comfort themselves with the thought that God is merciful to sinners, and yet they refuse to be rebuked and censured as sinners; while they still insist that God's Word cannot remain silent about sin; they apply the Word of God which rebukes sin to others, and say just like this Pharisee: I am not like the rest, and whoever says so is unkind to me. And when one begins to remind them of the wrong they do, they pretend that he speaks against the government, and gives occasion to great dissension. And in brief, one must preach only what they like to hear; if not, it shall no longer be called preaching the Gospel. And such people are like all the false, hypocritical saints, who can indeed say they are poor sinners, but do not want anyone to regard it as true; for when others say it, they are offended.

36. Only these two factions can, and that very easily, harmonize these two utterances; I am a sinner, and, God be merciful unto me. But there is still a third class, who should and gladly would say it in truth, for whom it is the most difficult of all to say these two sentences at the same time from the heart and unite together such a confession and such an absolution. For, they find in themselves two great hindrances. On the one hand there is still too much in us, as I have said, of the old rogue, the Pharisee, that before God we are anxious to be good and righteous, and better than others; this would sooth the heart and be the sweetest joy for him who can bring it to pass. We all would like to have God approve what we have done and be pleased with it; and in words also thank him and confess that this is his divine gift. But there is a hindrance introduced that blocks the way, like the angel with the fiery sword at the entrance of paradise, that no one may come near and boast before God.

37. On the other hand, where the publican must come before God with only sin and shame, stripped of all his praise and full of nothing but corruption, here is anxiety and worry, so that he grasps hold and appropriates the words to himself: "Be thou merciful to me!" But here

again both his own modesty and all human wisdom prevents and hinders him still more; yea, the devil himself by the law of God on which he here insists and enforces, as he ought not, to bring mankind into distress and despair.

38. Hence it is indeed an art above all human art, yea, the most wonderful thing on earth, that a man may have the grace truly to know himself as a sinner, and yet again turn round and cast away all thoughts of God's wrath and hold to mere grace. For the heart that truly feels sin, cannot otherwise think or conclude, that God is unmerciful and angry at him. As Judas when he saw that he had betrayed Jesus unto death, immediately began to censure himself, and with heart and reason convicted himself worthy of God's eternal wrath and condemnation. No human heart is able to escape this, for God's command and law stand in the way, which condemn to death, while the devil drives and chases you to perdition. How is it possible to unite such words of the publican in the face of the law, of your own reason and feelings, which represent nothing else to your heart but wrath and shame. Nor can it enter any heart to confess sin, unless the ten commandments show it what sin is and why it is sin. Hence there are these two parts and they are at the same time opposed to each other; namely, to hear the ten commandments which condemn to death and to hell, and then again to lose them and struggle free from their grasp, and thus ascend from hell to heaven.

39. Therefore let him who can, learn by this high wisdom, and become a scholar of this publican, in order that he too may be able to distinguish these two parts from each other, so that wrath may not abide and cleave to sin, but lay hold of reconciliation and forgiveness; that is, that he judge not of this according to human reason or the law, but grasp by faith the comfort and doctrine of the Gospel of Christ, who alone teaches this wonderful unity, so that man can unite the two opposing words, that are farther apart than heaven and hell. For what else do the words, I am a sinner, mean than that God is my enemy and condemns me, and I have merited nothing but eternal wrath, the curse and condemnation.

40. When therefore you feel that, which you cannot force out of you by smiting on the breast and with your own good works, for it will come of itself if the law really does its work in you, this will indeed teach you how to smite the breast and to humiliate yourself. When you can do nothing else but say: O, I am a sinner! then you are lost, for the ten commandments

force and plunge you straight into perdition, that your heart must say: you belong to the devil and God does not want you, and you begin to flee from him, and if you could you would run through a hundred worlds, only to escape.

Then it is time in such a flight and terror to stop in your career, turn and say: My precious Gospel teaches me and the good publican, that before God the highest wisdom is to know and believe that God is so minded, and has founded such a kingdom through Christ, that be will be gracious to help poor, condemned sinners. And thus you can unite the two in one word and confession: I am indeed a sinner, but still God is gracious to me; I am God's enemy, but he is now my friend; I should justly be condemned, yet I know that he does not desire to condemn me, but to save me as an heir of heaven. This is his will, which he has had preached to me, and commanded me to believe for the sake of his dear Son, whom he has given for me.

41. See, thus you have in this publican a beautiful example of true Christian repentance and faith, and an excellent masterpiece of high spiritual wisdom or theology, of which the Pharisee and those like him have never received a taste or smell. Besides you see here the proper fruits that follow faith, that he is now a different man, with a different mind, thoughts, words and works than formerly; he gives honor and praise to God alone for his divine grace; he calls and prays to him from the heart and in true confidence in his Word and promise; otherwise he could not have either thought or prayed these words; and thus he performs unto God the true and acceptable

worship, and observes the true Sabbath. And now he also has a heart which is an enemy to sin and disobedience. He does not rejoice but is sorry that he has lived in violation of God's commandments, and now he earnestly and from his whole heart seeks to forsake his evil ways, not to offend, deceive, belie, nor treat anyone unjustly or with violence, and anxiously desires that even thus everyone should live in the same way.

42. This is the picture of to-day's Gospel, of the two kinds of persons among those called God's people. One kind is the great faction of the false church, who nevertheless bear the appearance and the name as though they alone were the most pious and sanctified servants of God; the other, the little flock of those who are true members of the church and true children of God, although they have not praise and great reputation before the world. The difference between them is, that each party is known by its

characteristics and fruits, by which the appearance and name should be distinguished from their true nature, of which you have sufficiently heard.

43. Therefore see to it, that you properly follow this publican, and become like him. Namely, in the first place, that you be not a false but a real sinner; not only in words but in reality and from the heart acknowledge yourself worthy before God of his wrath and eternal punishment, and bring before him in truth these words, “me a poor sinner;” but in the same flight lay hold of the other words: “Be thou merciful to me,” by which words you take away the point and edge of the law and thus cast and turn from you the judgment and condemnation the law seeks to force upon you.

44. From this distinction in the two kinds of sinners you are able to form a correct estimate of both sides. God is indeed unmerciful and an enemy to sinners, to those who do not want to be sinners, that is, those who do not fear the wrath of God, but who yet continue in their security and do not wish to be punished. Again, God will be merciful to poor sinners, who feel their sins, and confess that they are condemned before the judgment of God. Thus here all is turned about according to the word and judgment of God, just as the persons are; so that the ten commandments gain this interpretation, and they pass sentence upon those who wish to be holy, or do not want to be accused as sinners, and never think that such judgment strikes them. But the Gospel and sentence of grace and comfort pass upon those lying in the terror and fear of death.

45. Again, you must be like the publican in this, that you henceforth forsake sin, for it is not said of him that he continued as he was before, but went forth and applied grace to his own heart, so that God declared him righteous, as the text says: “This man went down to his house justified.” These words do not conclude that he remained in his sin, as he did not go into the temple and pray for that; for whoever desires to continue in sin cannot pray for grace and forgiveness, but he who prays thus thinks, wishes and desires to be just and entirely free from sin. This you must know so that you do not deceive yourself. For there are many who only consider that the publican as a sinner receives grace and forgiveness, and do not think that God requires that they should forsake sin, and let the grace received be henceforth powerful in their lives. But some want to understand it as though God saves sinners in a way that they may still remain in sin and unrighteousness.

46. Hence it is necessary that Christians contend on both sides against the devil and their own flesh. For when they begin to repent and would gladly become different people, then they first feel the devil's influence, how he excites, hinders and controls them, so that they make no progress, but remain in their old state, etc. Again, if they cannot prevent this, and in spite of the devil turn to God and call upon him, he will attack them with weak courage and cowardice. First, he makes sin so very small, and puts them so far beyond the reach of the eyes and hearts of men, that men may despise them and not desire grace, or they put off repentance. Then on the contrary, he makes sin really too great, as he can blow a fire from a spark greater than heaven and earth, so that it will again be difficult to lay hold of forgiveness, or to bring into his heart the words: "God be thou merciful to me"' Thus indeed it is and will continue to be a great art, and we may well take this publican as our example, our teacher and doctor, and learn of him, and call upon God that we may also obtain the end of our faith.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

This sermon appeared in pamphlet form under the title: “Of the deaf and mute man, Mark 7, preached by Dr. Martin Luther at Wittenberg, 1522.” It is also one of the collection of 14 sermons

Luther published.

Text. <4107>Mark 7:31-37. And again he went out from the borders of Tyre, and came through Sidon unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders of Decapolis. And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to lay his hand upon him. And he took him aside from the multitude privately, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat, and touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphata, that is, Be opened. And his ears were opened, and the bond or. his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain. And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it. And they were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well; he maketh even the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

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IV. THE SPIRITUAL MEANING.

1. Of those who brought the deaf mute to Christ. 20-21.

2. Of Christ placing his fingers in the ears of the deaf mute. 22.

3. Of the spittle Christ laid upon the tongue of the deaf mute. 23.

4. Of the people praising God for the help. 24.

5. Of Christ bringing the deaf mute to a certain place and looking up to heaven. 25.

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SUMMARY OF THIS GOSPEL:

1. The faith of neighbors brings the deaf mute in order that he might believe when the devil is driven out of him.

2. The faith of others is helpful to one in so far as Christ gives him a personal faith. In this sense we pray for the Turks.

3. He, who is justified by faith hears the Word, and confesses Christ with the mouth, as these do here. This is new fruit of the new man.

4. That the Lord forbade them to tell any one, indicates Christ does not seek his own honor and glory.

1. Dearly Beloved: I hope you thoroughly understand this Gospel, for it is plain. However, as we have but one old story to preach, and since it is so precious and cannot be sufficiently considered, we will apply our text also to this old story, and briefly speak of faith and love. In the first place, we will look at the simple story of the text itself; then, if time permit, we will also speak a little of its spiritual meaning.

PART 1. THE STORY OR EXAMPLE ITSELF.

2. First, the story or example before us is good in itself, for here we see that many persons received the poor man, as though his distress were their own, bringing him to Jesus to be helped. By this, both faith and love are shown to us. Faith, in that they had heard of the Lord before, that he was kind and compassionate, and helped all those who came to him. For the Word must first have been heard, and must first have entered the human heart, showing us the mercy of God in such a way that we depend upon it. Therefore the Word of Christ must here also have taught these people this; otherwise, where it does not come, there faith and works are all in vain.

3. And though this gospel lesson, like the preceding one, does not state that they had previously heard the tidings of the Gospel, yet we must nevertheless conclude, and the fact proves it, that they must have previously heard the good tidings and Gospel of Christ the Lord, through which they believed. For that is properly the Gospel which is called good tidings, a good report, not that which is written on paper, but that which is proclaimed in the world and becomes known by the living voice. Thus doubtless they had heard that Christ was kind, friendly, and helpful, willing to aid everybody; this was the beginning of their faith. Thus you must earnestly search the Gospel, and you will always find, that the tidings must first go forth and lead us to God, in order that he may' lay the first stone; otherwise, all is lost. In the next place, you will learn that because they have clung to the tidings and trusted them for their comfort, they went thither, and hoped to receive of him what they had heard.

4. Now you here observe the nature of faith which grows out of the Word. For the Word first sets forth to us the mercy and goodness of God; then faith causes us to cleave unto it with a firm confidence, and to obey the Word. For we are now conscious of this in our hearts, and are satisfied; for as soon as we believe, we are already with Christ in this inheritance, and are justified.

5. In the third place, this Gospel lesson describes the works of love in this, that these people go and care for the poor man, just as Christ, without their merit, and without their doing, sends forth his Word, and spreads abroad his goodness and mercy. Thus as they have :laid hold and drank from the fountain, they again flow forth freely, and also impart themselves to their neighbor freely and without any merit. Thus love should do its work, not as though it needs it, but devotes itself solely to the benefit of its neighbor, as Paul, among other things, speaks to the Corinthians about love, <4606>1 Corinthians 13:5: “Love seeketh not its own”; and to the Philippians he says, <5104>Philippians 2:4: “Not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.”

6. This we may also learn here in these good people. They do not need this work themselves, nor do they look to themselves, but to the poor man, and think how they may help him; they seek no reward, but act independently and freely. Thus you should by right do likewise; if not, you are no Christians. Therefore consider carefully how love is here described, that it takes upon itself the care of others. If we accept this lesson, it will be well for us; but if not, then God will punish us with blindness, as he has been doing, to our grief, for nearly four hundred years. This much we say briefly concerning faith and love. Furthermore, we must now, in the fourth place, treat of the faith of other persons.

7. You know the fundamental truth is, that man cannot be just and acceptable before God, save alone by faith. So that they have lied and spoken falsely who have taught heretofore that we may deal with God through our works. Moreover it was much more foolish that they taught us to rely upon the works and faith of other persons, pretending that nuns, monks and priests can help other persons by their wailing which they perform in their cloisters at night, and that in this manner they can help other people and distribute their treasures. Therefore, let everyone here remember, that no one dare undertake to be saved by the faith, or by the work of another person; in truth, it cannot be done by the faith or work of

Mary, or of any saint, yea, not even by Christ's work and faith, but through your own personal faith. For God will not permit Mary, or any other saint, not even Christ himself, to take your place, in order that you might be godly and righteous, unless you believe for your own self. If Christ's faith and work will not do it, you will much less accomplish it by the work or faith of all the monks and priests. Hence our Gospel lesson gives us an occasion to speak of the faith of others.

For here we read that they led this person to Christ in their own faith and work; the man did nothing toward it, but merely suffered it to be done.

8. Therefore let everybody mark well, that he can never be saved through another person's faith. But it of course may happen, that by the faith of other persons you may be brought to a faith of your own. Likewise the good works of other persons may be of service to me to obtain works of my own. Therefore those lie, who declare that we may be saved through the works or faith of other persons, whether we ourselves believe or not. No, this is not so! Unless you yourself draw out from God's kindness and mercy a faith of your own, you will not be saved. Thus it must be; otherwise no other person's faith or works avail, not even Christ, though he is the Savior of all the world; his kindness, his help will do you no good whatever, unless you believe in it, and are enlightened by it.

9. Therefore, by all means beware of the preachers whom you have often heard among the monks, who approach a dying person and say: "Behold, my brave fellow, do not despair; if you have committed sins, be sorry for them; but in order that you may fare so much the better, I will make you a present of my righteous life and my good works." If now, the dying person accept such a gift, he is as much a fool as the other, and with all these works, he 'will go to the devil. Therefore, beware of such consolation, and say: If you are willing to serve me with your good works, approach God and speak thus: O heavenly Father, by thy grace I am now believing; therefore, I pray thee, my God, give also unto this poor man a faith of his own. This might help me; but that you would give me your own faith, this you cannot do, neither would it help me. You will have enough to do to be saved by your own faith.

10. This you may see in the case of the foolish virgins, who, when their lamps went out, said unto the wise virgins: "Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out." Then did the wise ones answer and say: "Peradventure there will not be enough for us and you." [42] Matthew 25:8-

9. In that case I am in need even of more faith for myself; how then could I share it with another? For my own faith must stand before God's judgment, and must fight so hard and cleave so firmly to God's mercy, that the sweat will run down its face, if it is to prevail. That is the true meaning of St. Peter's words, 1 Peter 4-18: "The righteous is scarcely saved, where then shall the ungodly appear?" For when death makes its onslaught, then such fear and agony will seize him, that he can scarcely with all his strength, stand for himself and be kept in faith. Hence it is greatly to be deplored that they have established so much deception, putting monks' cowls upon the dead, and inventing other foolish things, by which they led poor souls straightway to perdition. Beware of them.

11. Now this I say, that you may know how far the faith of others may be of use to us, and how your own faith can help you. Other people's merits will help you to attain a merit of your own, and nothing more. And though all the angels, yea, the mercy of God itself, were ready to stand for you, it would avail you nothing, unless you cleave unto it with a faith of your own. But it may effect this, that it will assist you to obtain a faith of your own, which will help you. Furthermore, even if Christ did die for us, and pledged and gave his body and life, blood and flesh for us, and became our advocate; yet it would avail nothing, unless we believe in him. But he can assist us in this way, that he appears before the Father and says: "O Father, this have I done for mankind; do thou give them faith, in order that they may enjoy it." This then, will help us, if we feel assured that his works and merit are our own. In the same manner one should also speak of the other saints, that no saint's intercession and merit avail unless we ourselves believe. You observe this also in our lesson. There lies the poor man, unable either to speak or to hear. They who bring him to the Lord can speak and hear. But they cannot make him speak by their hearing and speaking, and even though they all had come near him and said: "We will speak and hear for you"; yet he would, in spite of this, have remained speechless and deaf continually, and would never have been able to speak.

12. Likewise, if I were to give you a written declaration saying: "Go forth, this is my work; this shall be yours"; yet it will not help you a whit, but it will carry you into hell. In what way, then, will it help you? If I do, as these men do, who come to Christ and say: "O Lord, help this poor man, that he may receive his speech?' They do not say: "We will hear and speak in your stead," but they pray that Christ himself would give him speech. Likewise, if you take my part, and use your faith in such a way that it may help me to

a faith of my own, this might help me; thus! thus it must be! God be thanked! Otherwise, no work nor any brotherhood, will avail.

13. Therefore say: I must neither rely upon your works nor you upon mine; but I will, by my own faith, pray God to give you a faith of your own. This is what is said, that we all are priests and kings, that we, like Christ himself, may intercede for one another before God, praying for personal faith. Thus, if I happen to notice that you have no faith of your own, or a weak faith, I go and ask God to help, you to obtain faith, not by giving you my faith and my works, but your own faith and your own works; so that Christ may give him all his works and salvation through faith, as he hath given them to us by faith.

14. That is the meaning of the saying of Christ, <43 16:26>John 16:26-27: "I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father." This is a beautiful addition, as though he would say: I have prayed for you, and have entreated God that he would give you what is mine. Therefore know my name. For through my prayer he has accepted you and has given you faith, so that henceforth you may pray for yourselves, and I need not do it; provided that you do it in my name. Here he has crowned us, dedicated and anointed us with the Holy Spirit, so that we all are priests in Christ, and may exercise the priest's office, go before God and pray for one another. This is what St. Peter means in writing thus in his First Epistle, <60 02:09>1 Peter 2:9-10: "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may shew forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light, which in time past were no people, but now are the people of God; which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."

15. Hence we may all say: Christ was my priest, who prayed for me and purchased faith and the Spirit for me; therefore I am also a priest, and must go on praying in the world, that God may give faith also to this and that person. So we conclude, that we shall obtain whatever we earnestly pray for in the true faith, as the Lord says, <43 16:24>John 16:24: "Ask, and ye shall receive."

16. But to pray powerfully is not within our strength; for the Spirit does not always vouchsafe to us to pray with power. Paul prayed that all Israel might be saved, <45 09:01>Romans 9:1f; why did it not come to pass? The difference lies in the faith, for the Spirit did not give it to him; had he been

able to add this faith, it would surely have come to pass. For if Paul had said, “I pray for all Israel,” and had believed and said: “Lord, I am certain that thou wilt do it,” then it would certainly have come to pass. But though he often prayed for them from his heart, the Spirit did not vouchsafe, to him that he should confidently believe it. Therefore it is not within our power to pray in strong confidence; the Holy Spirit does it. Whenever we pray for anyone and are able to add, “It will be done,” then it will certainly be done; but whenever we pray, we must add, “Thy will be done.” If, then, I must let it go according to his will, I cannot suggest to him either the person, or the time, or the manner, but must freely leave it all to him; then, indeed, I am sure of it. In this manner Christ acted also, who himself prayed thus: “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me,” but at once added: “Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” [1059]Matthew 26:39.

17. Therefore, when I am to pray for an entire city or community, I ought to say: “O Father, I pray for all of them.” Nevertheless, however, I must give honor to his name or will, and say: “Dear Father, I pray for these; I know it is thy will, that I should pray, that I should not despise prayer; but thy will shall be done always; for I might ask something for some one who is not worthy of it before thee; or again, I might possibly east aside some one who is worthy; therefore do thou act according to thy divine will, for thou wilt certainly do better than I could ever conceive.” Thus you see that we cannot always add these words: It will be so. But if we are certain in our hearts that we may add: “It will be certainly so,” then it will come to pass.

18. This we see in our text. These people approach the Lord in strong confidence, praying for the poor man, and their prayer is also heard. In the same manner, when baptism is performed we see this take place in the children’s faith. There are the infants, bare and naked in body and soul, having neither faith nor works. Then the Christian Church comes forward and prays, that God would pour faith into the child; not that our faith should help the child, but that it may obtain a faith of its own. If it has faith, then after that whatever it does is well done, whether it suckle its mother’s breast, or whether it soil itself, or whatever it may please to do. But if it does not obtain faith, our faith is of no value to the child.

19. Therefore my faith can help you in no way except that it may assist you to obtain a faith of your own. Hence, to sum up all, everything depends

upon personal faith, as strong as it is, so much does it need the faith and prayer of other people in order to increase in strength. Now you can easily judge, that those people were the greatest fools, who held masses and vigils with the brotherhoods; for the wise virgins have sufficient oil only for themselves, and scarcely have enough. This is a simple explanation of the story of the Gospel lesson. Now let us briefly consider the meaning which our Lord puts into it.

PART 2. THE SPIRITUAL MEANING.

20. The people bring the poor man to the Lord, the Lord takes him to a special place, lays his fingers into the man's ears, spits, and touches his tongue with the spittle, looks up toward heaven, and sighing, says, Ephphata, that is, Be opened! This is a lovely picture, and its meaning is good. For by those who here bring the deafmute to the Lord, the office of the ministry is meant. Ministers and the Apostles lead the poor consciences of men to God. This is done in three ways, by preaching, by a godly life, and by intercession. With the Word and preaching, they are brought to God; a godly life serves to show the Word so much the mightier in its power. But the Word itself leads to Christ, though it be preached by a sinner. Yet, a good life serves as an emphasis and a furtherance of the Gospel; while a wicked life dulls its edge. Their third duty, to pray for the people, likewise leads them on the road both to faith and to works.

21. Now if the Word go on its way in this threefold manner, it cannot fail to bring forth fruit, as God says, Isa 55:11Isaiah 55:11: "My Word, that goeth forth out of my mouth, shall not return to me void." This is indicated by the action of the pious persons who carry the mute into Christ's presence; this signifies the ministers, who bring forward the sinner; then God appears, giving growth and increase, as Paul says, 1 Cor 3:71 Corinthians 3:7, He opens the sinner's eyes, ears, and mouth. This happens in a wink of the eye, for God's Word is like lightning, which in a moment passes from sunrise to the ends of the earth. Thus when such persons are brought to God, he gives them grace to believe.

22. This is signified by the act of laying his fingers into the man's ears; through the Word he breathes the Holy Spirit into him, making the heart believing, decent, chaste, and holy; for the finger signifies the Holy Spirit.

23. Again, the spittle that is laid on the man's tongue, typifies the Word of God; this is put into his mouth in order that he may be able to speak it. And this spittle, the Word of God, is a noble thing, but very bitter to the Old Adam.

24. Then they praise God, saying: "He hath done all things well, he has made the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak." For wherever there is true faith, there the Spirit will not allow you any rest; you will break forth, become a priest, teach other people also, as we read <19B610>Psalm 116:10: "I believe, for I will speak." There the heart is full, and the mouth must run over. Then when they are persecuted, they will not care.

25. But the part of the story, that Christ took the man apart from the others, looks up to heaven, has this meaning: If God do not take me alone to a separate place, and give me the Holy Spirit, so that I cling to the Word which I have heard, then all preaching is in vain. But why does this require so much that he looks up to heaven and makes use of divine power, calling upon God's grace to come and to act? By this he teaches us that such power must come from heaven, working in the heart of man by divine strength; then help comes to him. Again the spittle which is the Word of God is a noble thing for the Old Adam. Then they go forth to praise and glorify God.

26. Thus have you learned, from the story and from its spiritual or secret meaning, that we must first hear the Word of God and thus, through the intercession of Christ, obtain a faith of our own, and then we come out, confessing this and praising God forever. May this be sufficient on this Gospel lesson. Let us pray to God for grace.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

SECOND SERMON — <4107>MARK 7:31-37.

This sermon is given in place of the preceding sermon in edition c and appeared in pamphlet form under the title: “A sermon on the Gospel of Mark, 7th chapter, preached in the Castle Church at Wittenberg before the Elector and Duke Henry of Saxony by Dr. ,Martin Luther. Wittenberg, 1534.” At the close stands: Printed at Wittenberg by Nicholas Schirlenz, 1534. It appeared also in the edition of the Postil of 1543.

1. As the Gospel everywhere shows Christ our Lord to be a merciful and gracious man, ready to help every one by word and deed, in body and soul, so does this Gospel lesson picture to us how willingly he helped this poor man, who was deaf and dumb, in order that we might be invited to believe, trusting to obtain from him all that is good, and also thereby to show unto us an example and a pattern, which every Christian ought to follow, helping his neighbor in the same manner.

2. For a Christian life consists entirely in the following: First, that we believe and trust in Christ our Savior, being fully assured that we are not deserted by him, whatever need or danger may betide us. Secondly, that every Christian person also conducts himself toward friend or foe in the same way, as he sees Christ does, who is so willing to help everyone. Whoever does this, is a Christian; but he who does it not, is no Christian, though he calls himself one. For these two cannot be separated; faith must be followed by its fruits, or it is not true faith. That is the sum of this Gospel lesson.

3. Now some have been agitated over the fact that in this miracle Christ first takes the poor man and leads him apart from the people, performs particular ceremonies, places his fingers in the man’s ears, and spits, and touches his tongue, looks up to heaven, sighs and uses peculiar language; whereas he had before helped other mutes and many not mutes without any such ceremonies, merely by a word. All this, I say, has set some to thinking, and they have explained it ‘that Christ in this case called to mind

how this same man, whom he was now helping would afterward sin with his tongue and ears; therefore he had pity on him who would commit such sins after this great work was done, and that this deed of mercy would be so ‘little appreciated, in that a speechless tongue should become a blaspheming tongue, which would not only defame his neighbors, but even dishonor God in heaven; and the ears, which were opened in order to hear God’s Word, would rather hear all manner of erroneous and false doctrine, than the Word of God. This, they say. was the reason Christ sighed and looked up to heaven.

4. I will not reject this opinion; [so that it may not be said, that we are never pleased with anything, but want to have everything new and changed.] But, we must not, as it were, confine Christ too narrowly as though he had regard to one person only; we must regard him more highly than that he would help only this man. For all the Holy Scriptures, and particularly the prophets and psalms, declare, that he was sent to have deep compassion on all the misery and need of the whole human race, and that Christ was the person, chosen particularly above all saints, to be so minded toward us as surely to take upon himself all our need and sorrow as though they were his own, as in <19012>Psalm 40:12 he says of our sins, “Mine iniquities have over-taken me, so that I am not able to look up,” and in <19104>Psalm 41:4, “O Lord, have mercy upon me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.” Here our merciful Lord speaks in our person, bearing our sins as though they were his own, and as though he had committed them himself. And again, <19905>Psalm 69:5: “O God, thou knowest my foolishness, and my sins are not hid from thee”; again, <23506>Isaiah 53:6’ “The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all”; and vs. 4-5: “He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; the chastisement of our peace was upon him,” etc. And other passages of Scripture bear witness to this.

5. For the Lord Christ must be painted in such a manner that he is the only person who takes upon himself the misfortune, not of one country, or of one city, but of the whole world; even as St. John names him, <43029>John 1:29: “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world.” But if he bears the sins, it follows that he must also have borne whatever belongs to sin, and what follows sin, as the devil, death and hell.

6. That is the reason he sighs so here, as the person who was to do it, of whom the prophets had long before announced that he would have deep compassion upon all the evils of the whole human race. He was not alone

concerned about the tongue and the ears of only this poor man; but it was a common sigh over all tongues and ears in general, yea, over all hearts, bodies, and souls, and all men, from Adam to the last human being, who is yet to be born. Hence he does not chiefly sigh because this man would in the future commit many sins; but the chief reason is that he, Christ the Lord, viewed the entire mass of flesh and blood which the devil afflicted with a fatal hurt in Paradise, making mankind deaf and dumb, and thus thrust them into death and hell fire. This view being before the eyes of Christ, he looked far about him, seeing how great the damage was, inflicted in Paradise by the devil through the fall of one man. He looks not upon those two ears, but upon the whole number of men who had come from Adam, and were yet to come. Therefore this Gospel lesson sets forth Christ as being the man who is concerned about you and me, and about us all in a way that we ought to be concerned about ourselves, as though he were sunk in those sins and afflictions ‘in which we are sunk, and that he sighs over the fact, that the very devil has brought about this ruin.

7. This surely is why he shows such great earnestness in this case, and makes use of special ways and means. As though he would say: “Your deplorable condition, your bondage in sin and death, affects me so deeply, that moved by nothing but by my own thoughts, I must act in a special manner.” For so extraordinary are his actions in this case, compared to his other works, that it is truly astonishing. He often healed others, or casted out devils, with a single word; indeed, he actually helped some whom he never visited, as for instance the centurion’s servant, <4013>Matthew 8:13; here, however, on account of two diseased organs, the tongue and the ear, his actions are very peculiar, as though he were especially concerned. By this he shows us that at this time he had a special view and special thoughts of the human race.

8. For as we admit that Christ, our Lord and God, had all other human traits, sin excepted, we must also concede, that he did not always have the same thoughts, was not always equally disposed, nor always equally fervent; but was variously actuated, just as other saints. Therefore, as his emotions and thoughts were peculiar in this case, his actions were also peculiar, so that we must see how truly human he was in body and soul, whose mind was not at all times alike disposed, just as little as he was always hungry and sleepy at the same time. As these conditions are variable in men, so they were variable in him, as St. Paul says, <5007>Philippians 2:7: “He took upon himself the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of

men, and being found in fashion as a man," etc. This must not be understood merely of external appearances, but of his soul and the thoughts of his heart, that, being ardent at one time, he was more ardent at another time, etc. This, then, is one reason why Christ here acted thus, namely, because he is a real man; but at the same time a person who stood in the place of all men and took upon himself at the same time the diseases of this man, and of all men.

9. The other thought is also true, that he was deeply grieved by the knowledge that this man, if he would heal him, might sin greatly after he was healed. But it is too narrow to explain it as referring only to the future sins of this man. For it was the task of Christ, our Lord God, to concern himself, and to suffer, not only for one man's sin but, as we read in Revelation 13:8, for all sins that would be committed from the beginning of the world, from Adam to our time, even unto the last man to be born before the day of judgment. Therefore their view is too narrow who explain it only of those sins which this man would yet do in the future. Although he showed in other instances that he took account of the future life of certain persons, as he said to the paralytic, John :14: "Thou art made whole, sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee."

10. For Christ, our dear Lord, has so kind a heart that he grieves to think of a person sinning. For he is well aware that sins cannot remain unpunished; therefore he even wept over the city of Jerusalem, because he saw that her sins had to be punished. So kind and loving' is his heart that he has by no means pleasure where sin is committed.

11. He addresses here particularly two organs of the body, the ear and the tongue; for you know the Kingdom of Christ is founded upon the Word, which cannot be apprehended or understood except by these two organs, the ear and the tongue, and he rules in the hearts of men alone by the Word and by faith. The ears apprehend the Word, the heart believes it; the tongue, however, speaks or confesses that which the heart believes. Hence, barring the tongue and ears, there is no perceptible difference between the Kingdom of Christ and that of the world.

12. For in regard to the outward life a Christian has duties like an unbeliever; he tills the ground, works his fields, and plows just like others, and he undertakes no peculiar work or deed, either in eating, drinking, working, sleeping, or anything else. But these two organs of the body make a difference between a Christian and an unbeliever; a Christian

speaks and hears differently; he has a tongue which praises the grace of God and preaches Christ the Lord as being the only Savior, etc. This the world does not do; it speaks of avarice and other vices, preaches and praises its own glory.

13. In like manner the ears of both differ. A Christian's ears have the same Word which the tongue preaches, and the heart believes; but the world prefers to hear one speak of her wisdom, understanding, honor and glory. The ears and tongues of Christians are thus different from the ears and tongues of the world, or of unbelievers, caring nought for silver or gold, but only for that which is said of Christ, and how to speak and preach Christ.

14. Surely our dear Lord foresaw how much harm and misery would yet be caused by tongues and ears. It does great harm that Christians are persecuted, drowned, burned, and hanged, and that the world sets itself forcibly against the Word; but this harm does not penetrate all, nor will it win. For when it becomes known that persons are dealt with so very unjustly, they only grow bold and fearless thereby and despise such torture and suffering. Hence that is not the greatest injury with which tyrants afflict Christendom; but that piece of flesh which lurks behind the teeth, offers the greatest harm to the Kingdom of Christ. I am not now referring to people lying about and defaming one another; I am speaking of the higher things, that the tongue after Christ has loosed it and has given it the Gospel, should thenceforth inflict such notorious injury. It is true, the injury is not so glaring, and it appears to be much worse if a person's head is struck off, than if a false prophet or writer comes forward; but a false sermon, yea even a false word, which comes whirling along in God's name, will cut off a great number of souls, so that an entire city or country may fall under it.

15. This now is one of the afflictions which caused Christ to sigh; as though he would say: Be watchful! Beware of deceitful tongues which meddle with the Scriptures, more than of those which hold forth in the winehouse or in the grocery-store; though the latter are not harmless, yet when those tongues begin to speak which I have made loose so that they can boast of Christ, beware of them, etc. And in very deed, it is worth while to deplore the fact that those who have the Word and can talk much about it, should nevertheless persecute the Word with tongue and fist. The Turk also is a menace to Christendom, but his harm is inflicted only by the sword, and is in no way equal to the harm done by sectarians. There is

need even now that one should sigh because such tongues which mislead so many people and still claim to be Christians, and to have improved the Christian Church. This is the first point, namely, that the devil, after the tongue is loosed and people know what Christ is, still inflicts injury by subverting the doctrine.

16. Hence Christ says, one will find corrupt ears which, though I have opened them, wish to hear nothing else but what such false, evil tongues say. As Paul says, <5040>2 Timothy 4:3' "The lime will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine, but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts, and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside unto fables," etc. Preachers who teach thus, are rogues and apostles of the devil. Now the others ought to be so godly as to say, I will not listen to their tongues. Aye, says St. Paul, they do not wish to hear the blessed tongue, but seek another; and in truth they find it, as it now happens among the sectarians of our day. Therefore, says St. Paul, as their ears itch, so will he send them preachers who will forcibly lead them into error. Just as we saw, while under the Pope, that no one was able to withstand the slightest error, but their fictitious purgatory, indulgences, haunting spirits, and whatever was only new, was immediately held to be an article of faith. Thus did the devil rub their ears, so that they were much more willing to listen to such deceit than to the Word of God.

17. It is so even now. Our Lord God opens the ears so that the true Gospel is heard; yet wherever a sectarian turns up, the people immediately accept him, becoming so frenzied and so hostile to the true preachers that I am greatly perplexed how such excellent hearts to whom I would have entrusted body and soul, can grow so spitefully hostile to us, as though they were full of satan and sin much more grievously with tongues and ears than before they had the Gospel, so that it were much better that Christ had never made them whole, and that they had not heard his Word at all.

18. The meaning of Christ's sighs then is, not only that he reviewed in his mind all afflictions from the beginning of the world, but that he deplored the certainty that after the revelation of the Gospel, his Kingdom should suffer so much harm through the very persons whom he would help, and that his Kingdom should be so buffeted and rent, which would not have happened, if men had not first been rescued by him. To be sure, he must bear it, and we must also bear it; but nevertheless, he will not on that account have sighed in vain.

19. And though the nature of his sighs is not fully stated here--for it cannot be written, as St. Paul says, <4826>Romans 8:26, that such sighs ca, not be expressed in written or spoken words — yet for all that, woe betide those who do such injury and make so little of this sighing, and go forth as though they had done well. For Christ was troubled by this with many and various harrassing thoughts, such as these: Behold, so much does it cost me, so much fear and torture I must bear, until I bring it about that these people hear my Word and preach it; and yet they will so shamelessly falsify and subvert it, and will do to me and my kingdom, such great injury' This ingratitude toward the Word must hurt every Christian soul; hence it is not astonishing that it also moved Christ the lord so greatly, that he here uses special ways and ceremonies, because this thought struck him forcibly at that time.

20. We should learn now from these ceremonies and demonstrative actions, which Christ uses here, how earnestly Christ our Lord cares for us; we should diligently be on our guard to keep our ears and tongues in the condition in which he gave them to us, and fortify ourselves against the devil and against men, lest they change our ears and tongues to the contrary. Secondly, we should also, every one in his calling, show our gratitude toward his Word for this blessing in such a manner that a ruler in his country, a preacher in the pulpit, father and mother in the home, rightly fulfill the duties of their calling, while the others should hear it, keeping open their ears as Christ has opened them, and diligently see to it, as Christ acted in the case of this man, that they may also be as serious, and thank God for it.

21. Among us, God be praised, the tongue has been so developed that we speak purely, and that the ears gladly hear it; for there still are many pious people everywhere who take delight in hearing God's Word. But side by side with this there is great ingratitude also among us, and frightful contempt for the Word of God, perhaps, indeed, a secret persecution and suffering. Other princes persecute it openly; but we here sit under shelter, as in a garden of roses, and yet secretly there are so many, citizens and peasants, and the noblemen with their golden chains, who would gladly hound all pastors and preachers out of tile country, if only they could do it. This shows that they despise the Word and hate it secretly; as we see it is the case that, where the Word is persecuted openly, there only it would live, and where it is unhindered and public, there they do not want it.

22. But our Lord God will surely not have sighed in vain. Some think, indeed, that it will always remain so, because he keeps so silent about it; but it happens very quickly that a pulpit changes its character. Therefore our Lord God wants us here to take warning, as it was also predicted by St. Paul, in order that we should beware. Tongues will change their speech, and the ears of the people will itch after false preachers, even as it came to pass under the Pope's rule, where people were so willing and eager to hear and to do, whenever anyone came along who had something new to say, no matter how unreasonable and foolish it might be. At that time, if anyone had risen to preach that a church should be built in the river Elbe, they would have done it. But now that the Word is being taught and preached from the pulpit, to trust in God and to serve our neighbor, the lives of the people nowhere are conformed to it. That is the doings of the very devil, but this does not excuse us.

23. For since the doctrine has been brought into such shape and form that the articles of faith are preached in their purity, and since the tongues are now loosed and the ears are opened, we should also apply ourselves that this doctrine may show itself in our daily lives. But I fear it will not be done before lightning and thunder strike down upon us, as St. Paul says. God has already made a beginning with the Pope, striking the Antichrist with the lightning of the Gospel, which is the Spirit of his mouth, which is now opened and speaks, and is still striking among the wicked; but I fear the teaching will not be followed by right living, until he will come and strike everything to the ground completely, making an end of ungodliness by the manifestation of his glorious coming, ^{2Th 2:8}2 Thessalonians 2:8.

24. Now since righteous works and living do not seem to follow the doctrine so perfectly among us as they indeed ought, I fear that our Lord God, unless the day of judgment should break in upon us, will not let his punishment be deferred; for our lives are not at all in agreement with the doctrine, not even in the least thing, as that we should serve our neighbor, which truly is not a great requirement. For there is no need to run to Rome nor to St. James, nor to give money or anything valuable to obtain it; all you need is to give your will to do it. But since we are such desperate people who, after having done only too much under the Pope, do nothing now so either the day of judgment must strike in our midst, or our Lord God will send heresies and then we will be compelled again to do unnecessary works. It is a matter of great concern to Christ, the Lord, that his Word should thus be despised and per secured; therefore those who are

the cause of it will not go unpunished. Let this suffice concerning this text. [Let us pray to our Lord God to give us his grace, that we may so act and live as he has enabled us to speak and hear. Amen.]