

Concordia Theological Monthly

Continuing

LEHRE UND WEHRE

MAGAZIN FUER EV.-LUTH. HOMILETIK

THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY-THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY

Vol. XIV

April, 1943

No. 4

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

Luther

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

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

Published for the

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

CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE, St. Louis, Mo.



ARCHIVES

gremage to our blessyd Lady of Walsinghame as sone as my strengthe will serve me, where I shalnott fayle butt say Masse for the Kyng and you.

“I have twoo Lutheranes in my house. . . . The preste is a very heretyke as appearith by his confessions, and hath as he durste doon hurte in my dioces: the other is yll butt nott soo yll. . . . Remembre the infecte persones in Oxenforde, some ordre and punysshement to be taken with them: for if sherpenes be nott now in this land many soon shalbe right bold to doo yll. And noo doubtte ther arre moo in Oxenford as apperith by such famous lybells and bills as be sett uppe in night tymes upon Chirche doores.” He intends to ride to Oxford “for the ordering thereof.”

Dr. London was a violator of nuns and wives; convicted of perjury, he died in prison. Yet even this man made another moan to Archbishop Warham, which we regard as the epitaph for the scholars and martyrs of what we like to call The Second English Lutheran Theological Seminary: “I am marvellous sorry for these youths, for surely they be of the most towardly young men in Oxford . . . much to blame for reading any part of these works” — New Testament and Luther’s works.

Oak Park, Ill.

WM. DALLMANN

Outlines on Old Testament Texts (Synodical Conference)

Judica

Genesis 14:8-20

Here we have the first war in Biblical history. Key to proper interpretation is verse 20, “Blessed be the most high God.” “Most high” means higher than strongest enemies, sovereign Lord, possessing and ruling everything — *even amid earth’s cruel, bloody wars.*

This fact is challenged today. War, some say, proves there is no God who cares and rules. Also Christians are afflicted with such thoughts. Therefore the subject:

The Rule of God Amid the Fortunes of War

That rule is just.

1

Text: When the federation of Chedorlaomer invaded Sodom, the people could not say that the chastisement was undeserved. They had been “wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly” (Gen. 13:13), licentious, ungrateful, etc. Even Lot not blameless. Was he not smarting for his foolish, selfish choice in leaving Abram? Yea, who could honestly say that, in allowing this ancient war, God’s rule was not just?

Applications: a. Christians dare never entertain thoughts that derogate from the honor of God's justice. Rom. 3:5, 6.

b. People ask why God allows war tragedies to come upon our beloved, tolerant, progressive America? Answer: She has not been without sin; guilty of many flagrant transgressions, unbelief, materialism, etc. In view of these, who can say that God's present dealing is undeserved, unjust?

c. Some ask why believers like Lot must share in national calamities? Is it just that they must suffer as much as the impenitent? Answer: Also Christians have not been faultless. 1 Pet. 4:17. Besides, while Christians suffer *with* others, they do not suffer *like* others. They have the promise: Rom. 8:28. And, on the Last Day, a distinction will be made between them and others.

That rule is supreme. 2

Text. No doubt Chedorlaomer thought himself supreme. Had not his armies subjugated most of Asia, Canaan, now even rich Sodom? Who could stop him? God could, even through inferior agents, through one escaped captive, one unwarlike tribesman, Abram, one small band of 318 servants. Vv. 13, 14. Through these God humbled Chedorlaomer and his forces, proving Dan. 4:25.

Applications: a. Be not deceived; behind the world's struggling powers is still the supreme ruling power of God. "There is no power but of God," Rom. 13:1.

b. It is said God helps those who help themselves; man is master of own destiny; 'tis a world of survival of the fittest, where the weak must go to the wall; largest, best-equipped army always wins. That is the naturalistic way of looking at things, but not the testimony of Bible and history. Solomon: Eccl. 9:11, 12. David and Goliath. Shamgar and ox goad. As above the chaos of the unformed world moved God's Spirit, so above the chaos of human struggles moves the Most High. Hymn 520.

c. Hearts are sobbing: Will this world-conflict never end, the troublemakers never be removed, our dear ones never return, peace never be restored? It seems that way. But Gen. 18:14. If that serves His honor and kingdom, He will do it and *can* do it through the simplest means. For He is supreme.

That rule is personal. 3

Text. Directed toward Abram and Lot. But for these men this war would never have been mentioned in the Bible. Still, they were not prominent men, whose names figured in the news of the day. Chedorlaomer, Amraphel, etc., were the renowned. What did the world care for Lot and Abram, the bearer of the Messianic promise? But, God cared. Yea, among the many mighty they were His chief concern, guiding all things in their favor.

Applications: a. Forget not that every single believer is an object of God's personal care. Luke 12:6, 7.

b. Some claim that the infinite God is too occupied with the immense universe to notice us, who are but "specks of dust in the limitless expanse"; that would be beneath His dignity. But if a king amid high affairs of state hears the cry of a fallen child and rushes to its aid, is that unkingly? And, just because God is infinitely great, is He not capable of caring for *each* of His children?

c. A soldier in a vast regiment may feel, Who am I among so many? How can the Lord be mindful of poor me? Answer: Was He not mindful of Abram and Lot? Has He not promised: Luke 12:7.

d. Christians may think, Unbelievers are so many and mighty, we believers so few and feeble; how can the Lord have special interest in us? Answer: Does not the promise read: Luke 12:32.

That rule is merciful.

4

Text. Sodomites were given respite; they had deserved immediate annihilation. But before His final judgment God issues repeated calls to repentance: a. prosperity, Gen. 13:10; b. disastrous war; c. marvelous rescue; d. Abram's example, e. testimony of Melchizedek, who celebrated his victory not by a general carouse but in a praise service. Before the assembled Sodomites he blessed the God of Abram. Why? So all might turn to Him for salvation. Oh, the mercy of God!

Applications: a. Remember that with the same merciful purpose God rules today. Rev. 3:19.

b. Final Judgment is inevitable. The earth will melt, like Sodom, in fire. But before this, God issues to our world repeated calls to repentance — through prosperity, adversity, depression, war, victory, perhaps another period of peace, universal proclamation of the Gospel through the Abrams and Melchizedeks of His Church. Rom. 2:4.

c. Much talk about postwar period, when victory comes. More important than all social and political questions is, how will that victory be received? With carousal like after the First World War? Without sincere repentance?

Conclusion: Melchizedek is but a type of Christ, who is the real King of Salem (Peace), the High Priest of God. He comes to refresh us with bread and wine of the Gospel and to bless us with His grace and mercy. Oh, let us accept His blessings with penitent, believing, thankful hearts. Then shall we be not only under the rule of His power but also under the rule of His grace, and finally enter His Kingdom of Glory. A. E. WAGNER

Palm Sunday

Psalm 8

A remarkable psalm indeed. Well might one ask: Acts 8:34. The answer is given by Christ, who applies this psalm to Himself, Matt. 21:16; by the Holy Spirit, speaking 1 Cor. 15:27, 28; Eph. 1:22; Heb. 2:6-10. Palm Sunday inaugurates Holy Week and is in many congregations the Sunday in which the children pledge renewed allegiance to Jesus.

The Excellency of Jesus' Name

1. *He is the Lord of nature*
2. *He is the Lord of our salvation*
3. *He is the Lord of our lives*

1

V. 6. "All things," nothing excepted, Heb. 2:8. They are placed under the feet of Jesus of Nazareth because He is their Creator, Preserver, Ruler, John 1:3; Heb. 1:2, 3. The vast ocean with all the forms of life it holds, Ps. 104:25, 26, our Jesus created it and established its boundaries; Job 38:8-11; Jer. 5:22; He rules it, Ps. 93:3, 4; Matt. 8:26; 14:24-32; Luke 5:4-6; John 21:6. The earth and its plant and animal life are the product of His power and obey His will; John 2:6-10; Matt. 14:19-21; 16:33-38. Sun, moon, and stars, our Jesus has ordained them, made them, fixed their courses, that not one goes astray, Is. 40:26. The blue canopy of heaven, vaulted high above the earth, is the work of our Jesus' fingers. It is this Jesus, the almighty Creator and Author of life, whose suffering and death we commemorate this week. The Son of God goes forth to die! Acts 3:15; 1 Cor. 2:8. To this Jesus, the Maker and Preserver of all things, we have promised allegiance in Baptism. Oh, worship Him and remain loyal to Him!

2

The Son of God became a man, weak, feeble, v. 4; lower than the angels, v. 5a. Picture His lowliness from the manger to the tomb: His humble birth, His flight into Egypt, the Nazarene, poor, despised, persecuted, His suffering in Gethsemane, before Caiaphas, at Gabbatha, Golgotha, His burial. Why? Is. 53; Matt. 20:28; 2 Cor. 5:19-21. He finished His work of redemption and now is crowned with glory and honor by His Father, v. 5b. Ps. 110:1-4; Eph. 1:20, 23; Phil. 2:9-11; Rev. 5:6-13. Let us join in their hymn and glorify the Lord of our salvation.

3

Jesus is the Lord of our spiritual lives. V. 2. Through Baptism He works saving faith in little children and makes the prayer of babes and sucklings an impregnable defense line for His Church

and its individual members, a defense which the forces of hell cannot breach. This Jesus preserves the faith He has created throughout the lifetime of His believing followers. It was a grown man, David, who wrote the hymn of praise in honor of the excellent name of Jesus, and we have Jesus' promise, Luke 12:32; John 10:27-30; 11:25, 26. He stills the enemy and avenger, v. 2; He quashes the charges of the accuser, who accuses His followers before God day and night, Rev. 12:10; Zech. 3:1-4. He silences the voice of our conscience, which He has cleansed by His blood, and gives us strength to serve the living God. Heb. 9:14.

Jesus is the Lord of our physical lives. Do we need food and raiment? Do we or our loved ones need protection in danger or comfort in sorrow? He who rules "all things," v. 6, whose name is excellent in all the earth, wherever we or our loved ones may be; He who has lived for us, who has died for us, who sits at the right of God for us, will not leave us nor forsake us. He has conquered even the last foe, death, for us, 1 Cor. 15:26, 27 a, 51-57.

THEO. LAETSCH

Maundy Thursday

Exodus 12:1-14

Today the Christian Church commemorates the institution of the Sacrament of the Altar by our Savior. By Baptism we are washed clean of our sins and are received into the communion of saints; in Holy Communion, where we eat the body and drink the blood of Christ, our faith in the Savior is strengthened and the comforts derived from His atonement on the cross are brought us. — As the New Testament Church has two Sacraments, so also God in His mercy had given His believers under the Old Testament covenant two Sacraments: Circumcision, by which the Israelite was received into Jehovah's covenant, and the Passover, which has much in common with the Sacrament of the Altar. This second Sacrament will engage our attention.

The Sacrament of the Passover

1. *Its visible element*
2. *The benefit which it confers*
3. *What it demands from those who partake of it*

1

The word "sacrament" is not a Biblical term, but it is used by the Christian Church to convey a definite idea. We Lutherans define a Sacrament as a sacred act, in which God, by certain external means connected with His Word, conveys heavenly, spiritual blessings to man. Accordingly we find that the Passover was instituted by God Himself, v. 1. The visible element which God specified was

a lamb that had to meet certain requirements, v. 5. This lamb was selected on the tenth day of the month Nisan, the first of the year, and kept until the fourteenth, when it was killed in the evening. Its blood was caught and with hyssop, v. 22, was sprinkled on the doorposts of the house in which the passover was eaten, v. 7. Its flesh was roasted, but care had to be taken to preserve the entire animal whole, v. 9. It was then eaten by the individual household or, if one family was too small to consume a lamb alone, two or more could share it, vv. 3, 4. Care had to be exercised so no bone of the animal was broken at the meal, v. 46.

This lamb was a figure of the Savior, Jesus Christ. Centuries later Isaiah spoke more clearly of this lamb, Is. 53. John the Baptist pointed to it at the Jordan, John 1:29. St. Paul refers to it 1 Cor. 5:7. Rev. 13:8 designates it as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Though He died on the cross, not a bone was broken, John 19:36. What the Old Testament Church saw only dimly as a shadow, Col. 2:17; Heb. 10:1a, we are privileged to see clearly in its fulfillment.

2

As a true Sacrament the Passover confers spiritual benefits. It was instituted at the time when the tenth and final plague was about to be visited upon the Egyptians for their sinful refusal to heed God's demand that Pharaoh allowed Israel to depart from the house of bondage, v. 12. The Lord was coming with judgment. Israel, too, was not free from sin, but the eating of the paschal lamb and its blood on the doorposts gave them the assurance of God's grace that their transgressions would not be held against them, but were fully forgiven, v. 13. The destroyer, v. 23, would pass their houses by. Hence the name "Passover."

It was not some magic power of the blood of the slaughtered lamb that had this marvelous effect, but it was the shed blood of Him whom the paschal lamb typified that had the power to atone for sins, 1 Pet. 1:2; Heb. 9:13, 14. Faith in this coming Jesus put also the believing Jew of the pre-Christian era under the shelter of His blood. For him as well as for us held 1 John 1:7.

3

But not every one without exception was permitted by God to eat the passover. God gave this Sacrament only to Israel, v. 3, not to others, vv. 43, 44, 45. Such as wished to partake, first had to become one of God's people through the rite of circumcision, by which they came under the Old Testament covenant and held membership in God's Church, v. 48. It was faith in God and His Messiah that made one worthy to eat of the paschal lamb, Heb. 11:28.

At the first Passover the children of Israel were given the directions found in v. 11. They were about to leave Egypt and to

become a nation. Egypt represents the world, Israel the Church of God. He who ate of the paschal lamb obligated himself to turn from the ways of the world and dedicate himself to the service of Jehovah. Cp. 1 Cor. 10:17-21.

The Passover was further to be observed as a memorial, v. 14. Throughout coming generations its celebration was to be a recurrent reminder of God's deliverance of His people from the oppression of Egypt and of His forgiving grace which was ever new and never ceased. Cp. 1 Cor. 11:24-26.

In the course of time the Passover became the most prominent feast of the Jews. At the time of Christ thousands upon thousands of them from all parts of the world gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate it. How these people shame many of us Christians. They had to submit to the irksome ritual of the Law to eat the passover, but their zeal was not dampened. We Christians live under liberty; the Sacrament of the Altar is readily available to us; but many are indifferent to it.

May God grant us grace that we may ever appreciate more fully the meaning of the Lord's Supper for our souls.

G. V. SCHICK

Good Friday

Isaiah 53

Our text is God's own commentary on the cross of His Son. Isaiah introduces it with an outcry against unbelief. Let those who follow their reason and notions beware lest they convert the tree of life into a stumbling block to their own undoing. We have no fuller nor clearer interpretation of our Redeemer's Passion anywhere in Scripture.

The Cross of Christ in the Light of Isaiah 53

1. *The cross itself*
2. *Its sacrificial character*
3. *Its regenerative power*

1

The Redeemer came into the world as a son of David, but the royal majesty and splendor of the house of David was a thing of the past. He was a shoot of an almost lifeless trunk, a scion of a stump in dry ground. Apparently nothing could be expected of Him. He had no form, no beauty, no imposing appearance, nothing that could make Him seem desirable or admirable in the eyes of the world.

He was utterly despised, and finally forsaken by everybody but a handful of feeble followers. The common people, too, turned against Him.

He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, a favorite of grief. People turned away from Him with a shudder, not only because of His afflictions, but also because of the contempt in which they held Him. He was considered a wicked man, an abject failure, a man stricken of God, smitten, and afflicted.

He was pierced through, mortally wounded, crushed, led to the slaughter like a lamb. Unjustly, but with a show of legality, he was horribly outraged, violently put to death, cut off from the land of the living. But who cared, who deplored it, though it was for no fault of His? He was made a trespass offering. His life was poured out unto death. Crucified in the midst of two malefactors, He was taken with them from the cross, and like a felon interred on the scene of execution.

His soul travailed. The Lord Himself smote Him, bruised Him, put Him to grief.

2

How account for this? The answer is given in almost every verse of this chapter. Our sins were imputed to Him and punished in Him. This is the ever-recurring refrain and the point which is driven home by constant repetition. We went astray, were self-willed, disobedient, rebellious, but—on Him the Lord caused the blow to fall. In Christ Crucified we see the retributive justice of God in such full display that even the dullest and the most callous can realize the true nature of sin. Hymn 171:3—5. It cuts through the heart, Acts 2:37. Again, the cross of Christ is the most marvelous revelation of God's infinite love and mercy. With our salvation in mind, God spared not His own Son, and the Son assumed our griefs and gave His life as a trespass offering. This is the very acme of unselfish love and mercy and transforms even the most repulsive features of His suffering into sheerest loveliness.

And in such love amid His passive obedience shines forth His active compliance with the will of God—for us. No deceit was found in His mouth, v. 9, the mark of a perfect man, Jas. 3:2. He opened not His mouth. In patient submission to, and harmony with, His Father's will, He bore the outrages perpetrated on Him without complaint. He went to the most ignominious and painful death for people who were hostile to Him. He resolutely carried out the foreordained counsel and will of God, Acts 2:23. It is a most perfect righteousness He obtained for us by such flawless obedience rendered unto God for us.

And since He was made a curse for us, we are delivered from the curse of the Law. "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes are we healed." We had no peace and were fatally ill, subject to wrath and judgment, death and hell; but when Christ died for us, our sin was expiated, our punishment

canceled, our righteousness established. No sacrifice on our part, no pain, no work, no merit of whatever kind or degree, is necessary, nor tolerable, for our justification. Complete and full justification is ours through Him, and Him alone.

3

There is power in the cross of Christ to convert sinners, vv. 10-12. All the "seed" of Christ can testify to this. His vicarious satisfaction has conquered their heart for Him. It makes the strong His spoil; cp. Saul of Tarsus and Luther. It has tamed the very murderers of Christ, Acts 2:23, 37. Paul's speech and preaching was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. What did he preach? 1 Cor. 2:2. By this Gospel Luther reformed the Church. Oh, the folly of those who substitute another gospel for the Word of the Cross, or champion the religion of works, and thus rob the Redeemer of the reward to which He is entitled and which alone can satisfy Him — immortal souls whom He purchased with His own blood. Impenitent sinners, however, neither perceive nor feel the power of the cross until they break down and ask, What shall we do? And then the answer "Nothing; behold, by the satisfaction Jesus Christ rendered in your stead you *are* justified" will bring the response, "Nothing in my hand I bring," etc. Gal. 6:14. Hymn 157, 3 ff. This faith makes them willing, zealous servants of their glorious Savior.

PAUL G. BIRKMANN

Easter Sunday

Job 19:23-27

Vv. 23 and 24. The man who spoke these words was conscious of the fact that he was about to utter words of utmost importance, words of infallible truth, words so precious as to defy all attempts at estimating their value. Moreover, he had a perfect right to speak in such high terms of these words, for they were not his own words — they were the words of God. The mottoes in our homes and the hymns in our churches still bear witness to the priceless value of these words:

"I Know That My Redeemer Liveth"

1

These words proclaim *an undeniable fact*.

a. Job is not uttering wishful thinking; he is expressing a fact. Job's faith was not based upon a myth or a legend, but upon an occurrence which is established beyond the shadow of a doubt. Job declares that his Redeemer, his Avenger, his Helper, lives.

Who is this Redeemer? Whom do *you* mean when you say: "I know that my Redeemer lives"? That is the one whom Job meant. Job refers to that wonderful Helper whom God promised to Adam and Eve, Gen. 3:15. Job refers to the Lion of Judah of whom Jacob spoke before he died. True, Job did not see the fulfillment of these prophecies as we see them in Jesus, but Job had God's Word, and that was enough. God's Word declared that this Redeemer lives, and Job repeated the fact of which God's Word assured him.

b. We are today celebrating the very event of which Job speaks in this place. We are today celebrating the resurrection of Job's Redeemer, the resurrection of Jesus. 2 Tim. 1:10. Today we even have, if anything, more reason than Job to confess this truth. For today we know that there is no fact in history better attested than the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This Jesus, whose resurrection we are celebrating today, is the very Redeemer of whom Job spoke. Remember, Jesus did not die in secret; He died openly, and His death was attested officially. After His resurrection He was seen not by one or two persons who thought they saw His shadow, but by many people repeatedly, at one time by as many as five hundred. Many saw the nail prints in His hands and in His feet; many ate, walked, and spoke with Him. That Jesus lives is a positive fact attested by many irreproachable witnesses. All Christendom is celebrating this day by saying and singing: "I know," etc.

2

But this sentence of Job, "I know," etc., contains also *the expression of a personal, joyful conviction*. Job had passed through fearful misfortunes: loss of children, loss of health, loss of friends, loss of wife — loss of everything except his faith. God gave him by inspiration this wondrous expression for his joyful conviction: "I know," etc. Job knew and believed that his present sorrows were not to continue. True, Job felt his sin and guilt, but he also believed in the Savior from sin. Job had this joyful conviction: Though death itself and the grave face me, my Redeemer will avenge me, He will save me, He will help me. That gave Job strength to utter these words of triumph in the midst of deepest degradation and distress.

This same joyful conviction lived also in the hearts of all believers of the Old Testament. It comforted Adam and Eve after they had been driven out of Paradise. They were told of their Redeemer who would restore a more glorious Paradise to them. Abraham by faith saw the day of the Redeemer and rejoiced, John 8:56. Moses spoke of this Redeemer, Deut. 18:15. David rejoiced in his great Descendant, the King of kings and the Lord of

lords. Isaiah in prophetic vision sang of the Champion of Bethlehem, The Mighty God, The Prince of Peace. The Apostles and disciples recognized in this Jesus their Redeemer from sin and death. That made them willing to endure everything for His sake. That is the joyous conviction which lives in the hearts of all Christians today, inspires our Easter sermons, and moves our lips and tongues to sing our Easter hymns. "I know that," etc. — that is the victorious refrain of every Christian.

3

But this same sentence *points also to the future, to the eternal glory of the believer.*

Vv. 26 and 27. Job's faith in his own resurrection. True, unbelievers have tried to pervert these words and distort their meaning, but all faithful Christian teachers and believers have always confessed the same truth which Job confesses. Hymn 200:7; 1 Thess. 4:14-17. You and I, my dear Christian, we shall live, even as our Redeemer has promised, "Because I live, ye shall live also," John 14:19, and "I am the Resurrection and the Life," etc., John 11:25.

Why have Christians suffered so much, surrendered so much, lost so much in order to retain their faith? Because they were certain of the future and eternal glory.

Was Job right when he said: vv. 23 and 24?

Lord, write these words into our hearts! Hymn 200:1 and 8.

MARTIN S. SOMMER

Easter Monday

Isaiah 52:7-10

In that unique series of prophecies Is. 40—66 Isaiah, the Evangelist of the Old Testament, beholds in a grand panorama the history of the Church of God from the Babylonian Exile to Christ's Kingdom of Glory. He sees Israel's deliverance from exile, the great deliverance wrought by Christ on Calvary, the final deliverance from all evil, in one grand picture. The deliverance by Christ, without which there would have been no deliverance from exile and no deliverance on the Last Day, is invariably the all-pervading theme of his prophecies. One of these is recorded in our text, very suitable for the Easter season.

It presents to us

The Blessed Easter Tidings

1. *Its glorious message to the Church*
2. *Its joyful reception by the Church*
3. *Its eager promulgation through the Church*

1

The text speaks of waste places, v. 9, of destruction and ruin wrought by enemies in the city of God, Jerusalem. That refers to the Zion of the Old as well as the New Testament. What havoc and desolation, spiritually, mentally, physically, have the enemies of God's kingdom wrought in the world at large, in our country, in the Church, in the family, in our body and soul. Bring details particularly of specific ravages and breakdowns in our own spiritual life. Sin rules, Satan rules, hell rules, world-wide with iron fist. Mankind is bound seemingly inescapably in fetters of steel, everlastingly doomed!

But, no! No! Listen to the Easter tidings, vv. 7, 9. Thy God reigneth, O Zion! That is none other than thy Jesus, Ps. 2:6-8. Satan and his forces had been bitterly opposed to Him, Ps. 2:1-3, had determined to keep their palace, Luke 11:21. They had succeeded in slaying Him and enclosing Him in the grave. But, lo, to Jerusalem, to the Christian Church, to the world, comes the glorious message "Thy God reigneth." That Jesus in whom you trust, on whom you base your comfort and hope in life and in death, is risen! Rom. 1:4; Acts 2:24. Jesus, your Savior God, rules! All His and your enemies are vanquished! He brings you tidings of "peace," Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:11-18; Phil. 4:7; John 14:27; of "good," offering you all the blessings He has procured for you; of "salvation," here on earth, hereafter in eternity. Thus the Lord Jesus comforts His Christians with a comfort based on His redemption, v. 9, guaranteed by His resurrection.

That is the blessed contents of the joyous Easter tidings. Rejoice!

2

Vv. 8, 9. The watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem and the Church, eagerly looking for the messenger of victory and peace, rejoice at the coming of the messengers. How beautiful they seem as they swiftly come with their tidings! How the hearts and souls of the sorrowful Christians rejoice as again they see eye to eye their risen Lord approaching His weary, weeping, anxious, anguished brethren and sisters, healing their wounds, Is. 61:1-3. Apply to spiritual and material needs. And every new experience of His grace and power, every joy of sin forgiven, every deliverance from evil, every wiping away of tears, every strengthening of faith, every victory over sin, world, flesh, every realization of His companionship increases their joy, makes them happier Easter Christians, more willing to bring the good tidings to others.

3

Vv. 10. As the Lord laid bare His arm for the destruction of Israel's enemies and the deliverance of His people out of the

Babylonian Exile, so He laid bare His arm on Calvary and in Joseph's garden, where He forever vanquished sin and death and hell and delivered mankind from their spiritual slavery. Now all the ends of the earth shall see this salvation, it shall be brought to the attention of all people. Rev. 14:6. And His Church, which is in possession of these tidings and has experienced their saving and sanctifying power, will gladly lend its co-operation in prayer, in personal mission work, in sending messengers near and far, in order that this loving desire, this gracious determination, of their King may be fully and completely accomplished. Let us do our share. Let us pray that the Lord protect and bless our missions, that He open new doors, and let us get ready now to make the most of any opportunity that might come to us after the war has ceased, so that the glad Easter tidings of salvation may be preached to all the ends of the earth.

THEO. LAETSCH

First Sunday after Easter

2 Samuel 12:1-10, 13, 14

David had become guilty of two shocking sins: adultery and murder. Remember, he was one of the most sincere, upright servants of God; besides, he was one of the inspired divine penmen. Still he fell. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." In the text today we are shown how David, after a hypocritical display of love of righteousness, is convicted, repents, and is forgiven. May the lessons of the story not be neglected by us.

1

A brazen-faced hypocrite David is when Nathan tells the parable. His conscience was muzzled. The intoxication of sin was still upon him, and unblushingly he pronounces the sternest sentence on the greedy, selfish rich man. He fails to see that he himself had committed the same crime he is condemning, but in a manner a hundred times more atrocious.

How common a sin is hypocrisy! Conversations largely consist of flare-ups of apparently righteous indignation as the real or merely rumored misdeeds of neighbors and acquaintances are aired and condemned.

Sin must be disapproved and branded as what it is — a transgression of God's holy Law. But this should be done not in a self-righteous spirit, but sorrowfully, in humility, with full recognition of one's own sinfulness.

Of all forms of wickedness that of hypocrisy is among the most detestable. It includes not only the service of sin, but the attempt of the wrongdoer to pose as a saint, and often a total lack of pity toward fellow sinners, even though they have offended less heinously.

2

Nathan fearlessly, without any mincing of words, and undaunted by the high station of the offender, carries out his mission. A crushing verdict he utters: "Thou art the man!"

It was not a pleasant task, but God had ordered it, and David's welfare required it.

The Law must be preached and applied. The servant of God often has to use stern speech. Let no one think that a Christian minister is trespassing and meddling when he tells sinners of their wrongdoing. The same right and duty to rebuke belongs to every Christian, though he has not been made the specially called representative of the congregation. It is a painful process, like that of performing a difficult operation. But if neglected, the sinner will not be brought to a knowledge of his sins and to repentance.

3

Nathan's sharp word was not spoken in vain. David's eyes were opened, and he confessed his sins. Vividly he now saw the pool of evil in which he had wallowed. There is no attempt to excuse his crimes. The divine word of the Law accomplished its work. He was truly sorry. He now hated the wrongs he had done.

Let all who are guilty of unrepented wrongdoing, and especially of the sin of hypocrisy, follow the example of David. God calls. Let sin be recognized. Let there be real loathing of sin and true sorrow, the realization that God has been offended against. It is the first one of the two things that constitute repentance.

4

Upon his confession David was forgiven. Nathan preached to him the Gospel. Here is confession and absolution. God has prepared full forgiveness through Christ and in His Word offers it to the sinner. David accepted it and thus again became a member of God's family. Trouble came, his and Bathsheba's child died; but this was a fatherly chastisement.

Sinner, God is always ready to forgive. His Son atoned for your transgressions. His pardon is offered to you in His Word. In the absolution spoken in the church service God speaks to you. Receive His forgiveness with a believing heart, realizing that in it and nowhere else there is help for you.

Believing in God's forgiveness through Christ is the second of the two things constituting repentance. Whether we fell away from faith, as David did, or not, we all daily need to repent. May we often ponder this chapter in David's history.

If there is tribulation as a result of your wrongdoing, be grateful to God. He manifests a Father's love and desires to make your repentance something that will continue to the very end.