

"Meditate
upon these things;
give thyself
wholly to them;
that thy profiting
may appear unto all"

I Timothy 4:15

Journal of Theology

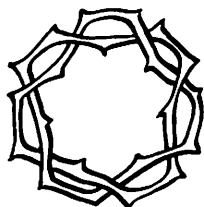
Church of the Lutheran Confession

VOLUME III

DECEMBER 1963

NUMBER 5

OLD TESTAMENT LENTEN TEXTS CORRELATED TO THE PASSION HISTORY



Homiletical Study by Egbert Schaller

Unless a pastor has already arrived at a personally satisfying conclusion in the matter, his preliminary preparations for the sermonic task of the Lenten season may confront him with the need for a decision in a question which has seemed to be of some moment to many a conscientious servant of the Word. The question, briefly stated, is this: Precisely what is the purpose to which the mid-week Lenten services should be devoted? In the selection of a series of texts appropriate to the season, the answer may be decisive.

Broadly speaking, the correct answer is not in doubt among us. The message of the Lenten season cannot properly be any other than the blessed story of the work of redemption wrought for us in Jesus Christ our Savior.

Aware of the fact that the cover lists this as the December issue of our *Journal*, the reader may be taken aback in finding that it contains Lenten materials. This apparent incongruity is, of course, a result of the tardy appearance of the issue. By the time it reaches our subscribers the Lenten season will, in fact, be imminent. Our hope persists that in the near future conditions will permit a closing of the gap presently existing between official dateline and publication date. We ask our readers' indulgence. --Ed.

Upon this premise, some pastors base their attitude that it is the Passion Story as such which ought to be read, heard and preached annually in this season. For one thing, this portion of the Gospels is normally neither read nor treated in sermons at any other period in the church year; therefore its record of the supreme Sacrifice should be given every priority during Lent. Its treasure-store of spiritual knowledge and power is inexhaustible. Its message is simple, basic, direct.

Therefore we find some pastors hesitant about turning to other portions of Holy Writ for texts less immediately associated with the actual history of the Passion. Texts from Romans or Hebrews, for example, which provide a doctrinal treatment of the Savior and His atoning work, are laid aside as somehow unsatisfactory for the occasion; similarly prophetic and illustrative portions of the Old Testament seem less suitable for sermonic work than they are, for example, during Advent.

On the other hand, it may be that in some instances Lenten preaching has tended to neglect the Passion History as being too repetitious a fare; and sometimes audiences may have been tired by dry treatment of doctrine or by allegorical fantasies to which some Old Testament texts were subjected, or by random pretexts used for moralizing in services that should have been vibrant with the living Gospel message of the deep humiliation of God's Son in our stead.

Surely there must be a happy and legitimate medium between a straight Passion history series year after year and a mere perfunctory allusion to the real story of Lent. The following series of studies does not pretend to represent a unique solution; but it illustrates one method by which the centrality of the Passion history in the service may be maintained with a broader range of textual materials. True, in this arrangement the traditional reading of the Passion story in its entirety is sacrificed. But

perhaps it is not without merit if occasionally we undertake to concentrate our attention throughout each service upon one shorter excerpt.

The Scripture lection chosen forms the secondary basis for each sermon; and it is illuminated by the Old Testament text which governs the thoughts of the sermon. This type of Lenten preaching may not appeal to all; but it is hoped that the studies will stimulate and edify by their content.

I.

THE TEXT: "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." Psalm 2:2-3

THE LECTON: John 11:47-57

INTRODUCTORY:

To take counsel is, in our modern day, an expression susceptible of more than one meaning. When a man becomes involved in difficulties which require study and knowledge of the law, he takes counsel, which means that he hires a lawyer. But when men take counsel together, they hire each other's wits. This method of dealing with problems is universal and age-old. Families gather their members for counsel when questions arise affecting the entire family. Even kings and rulers, otherwise so proud of their independence, can put their heads together for planning when confronted by a mutual enemy.

Next to Satan himself, the oldest, most consistent enemy of God and His Gospel is man. This enmity does not come from God and is not shared by God. It arises from man's natural hatred of God's love and of His free and full salvation. Whenever and wherever God has in-

jected Himself with His love and power into the problem of salvation for sinful men, the majority of them have always conspired to oppose Him. They stoned His prophets and killed those whom He sent unto them. And finally, when His beloved Son came to earth to carry out the eternal plan of redemption, men set a fashion in taking counsel against Him which is being repeated constantly ever since.

THE THEME:

TAKING COUNSEL FOR LENT

1.

The verses under consideration, taken from the second Psalm, describe conditions that have existed in a general way since Adam was driven out of paradise. But at the same time they are words of prophecy that foretold the day when men did literally take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed. The lection from the Passion History which accompanies this text reports a consultation among the chief priests, Pharisees and rulers of the people resulting in an agreement. The question was asked: "What do we?" (Note the indicative mode, rather than the deliberative subjunctive; the question is not up for discussion, but carries a reproach: Here this man is doing miracles, and what do we do about it? Nothing!) The outcome of this conference was that "from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death."

What peculiar blindness was this that these men, so well versed in the Scriptures, were unable to recognize themselves as the rulers that were spoken of by David? Here they sat, plotting to take the life of Him who had told them, many times over, that He was the Anointed of God, that He and the Father were one. Should not this group of conspirators have called to mind the words written against them so many years before? David had carefully stated that the plotters not merely take counsel together against the Lord. These men would have bitterly denied that they were counselling against their Creator, the

God of Abraham. But they could not deny that they were planning in hatred against God's Christ. For they were attacking His Gospel; and with that they were saying, as men have said for ages: Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us. It is God who in the blessed Gospel holds up Christ to the souls and eyes of all and commands all to behold Him alone, to depend on Him alone, to trust and believe only in Him. It proclaims that only He is wise because He alone knows and does the will of the Father. Him alone it calls righteous because He alone is without sin, and is able to confer His righteousness upon all. The Gospel liberates consciences from the fear of death, teaching us to believe in the forgiveness of sins and to hold fast the hope of eternal life through the Son of God delivered up for us all. It sets men free to serve God; and no higher ideal or aspiration is possible than this. Why then should there be a counsel among men against its bands and cords?

We must understand the heart of the human race. Luther says it plainly: "Just as a monkey loves its own offspring, so the world loves only those things which belong to it. It does not wish to give up its own righteousness. It does not wish its own wisdom to be erased. It values its own righteousness so highly that it absolutely does not care about the righteousness of God. Therefore our Lord Jesus is like a tyrant to them Who would bind them in His chains. He will not let them save themselves, but ties them to God's salvation. He will not let them speak with authority of their own thoughts and wisdom, but asks them to listen to Him. 'One is your Master,' He says, even Christ.' To Satan and to those whose hearts are blinded by his sin, this is an unbearable yoke."

There is nothing that so clearly describes the attitude of these people toward Christ as the words of the text: The Kings of the earth SET THEMSELVES. How true to life this is. The priests, the scribes, Herod and Pilate

face Christ and His Gospel by setting themselves, not as waiting to receive Him, but as expecting a blow! We have seen boys do this on a ball diamond when the ball was thrown high and became lost in the glare of the sun. Not knowing where it would drop, the fielders set themselves in preparation for a possible bump. In the text we find a similar "setting themselves," a hardening of the mind and heart so as not to yield when the blow strikes. For the Gospel is a blow to the pride and the greatness of man. It accuses him as one utterly lost and condemned without Jesus, as helpless in his sin.

The leaders and rulers made their minds and hearts like steel. Neither God nor this Jesus shall overwhelm them. And thus they provided their own downfall. For the "blow" which they expected never came. There was no struggle, no battle, no collision with the majesty of God. Jesus went like a lamb to the slaughter which they prepared for Him. And as so easily happens when one leans to receive a blow that never arrives, these men fell of their own scheming. Their very efforts carried them headlong to destruction. They hanged the Christ upon the Cross and were free from His bands and cords; but the effort plunged them into hell. This is the end of all those who resist the message of the Gospel.

2.

This is an opportune time for doing what we cannot avoid doing in any case: To take counsel in our hearts and with one another. The observance of Lent is a human institution, not required as such by God. But it has come to be so generally recognized that it is, today, the most significant opportunity for bringing the message of the Cross to the attention of everyone. Herein God asks us to embrace the truth that there is no salvation except through the Lamb of God who took our sins upon Himself, who would clothe us in His righteousness so that we may be

acceptable unto God His Father. During Lent we are revealed to ourselves most conspicuously as wretched children of Adam; we are invited to bow humbly, to kill our pride and open our eyes to see Jesus as our Ransom and Redeemer. The question before us is exactly the same that confronted the scribes, the Pharisees, Pilate and the rest: "What do we?" It may be regarded both as a question which calls for the establishment of a policy and as a reproach which challenges our casual indifference and our inadequate response to the great Sacrifice.

If we were to choose to ignore it, we would thereby already have reached a decision, namely, to set ourselves against Lent and all that it stands for. And if we were to think it unnecessary for us to reflect anew upon the matter, we are to be reminded most earnestly of the fact that Christ and His Gospel are of a nature that the whole world resists, and that our hearts, born in sin, are no exception. Our flesh also and the wisdom of the flesh hear the invitation of Satan that we might consider tearing the chain that binds us and casting off the cords of Christ's love. It is necessary to take counsel together in order to examine ourselves and see what we may have been doing. There are those who have sweet, polite phrases for Christ yet deny the power of His atoning sacrifice and His right to possess them and their lives, to require of them complete submission and service. They reject Christ's word spoken to them; they disobey. They withhold from Him the humble words of contrition and repentance. They neglect His Table and His House. It is for us to affirm that we are thus assembling during Lent, not as the scribes and their kind to combine forces against the Anointed of God, to see how we may with impunity escape His yoke, but to confess the awful truth that Jesus died to save us and to say that we shall again follow on the way He trod in order that our Christian life may be quickened and the knots of His love made tighter than ever about us.

(For supplementary material, see Luther's Works, Vol. 12, p. 11-12; Vol. 14, p. 313-320)

II.

THE TEXT: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day; and the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

Psalms 139:7, 11-12

THE LECTON: Matthew 27:3-10

INTRODUCTORY:

Which of the many burdens that men must carry in life is the heaviest and most grievous? The true answer to this question could not be obtained by submitting it to a popular vote; for each person tends to think of his own particular misfortune as more bitter than any other, and many people are not aware of the greatest burden of all.

The suffering invalid regards his pain as life's heaviest load. But it is not truly so. Pain is an enemy which calls forth man's power of endurance and courage and helps make him strong. The martyrs of faith who endured horrible suffering for their Lord's sake found joy in bringing even this sacrifice. We read that two of the Apostles, after having been whipped for preaching Christ, rejoiced in being found worthy to endure pain for His sake.

Bereaved of their loved ones, men may regard their sorrow as the heaviest load of life. But again it is not so. Sorrow finds the heart ready to adjust, and time proves to be a great healer. Sorrow can be relieved and overcome.

There is one thing beside which these mountains of suffering shrink to the size of ant-hills. There is one

burden before which all else must yield. That is the consciousness of guilt and sin. Nothing can compare with the pain, loss and defeat of the man who goes about helplessly mumbling to himself: I have sinned. *Mea Culpa!* No shriek from a stricken soul is so terrible as that of the sinner who cries to his God: "Whither shall I flee from thy presence?" A well-known example from the Passion story makes it possible to set forth:

THEME:

WHY THE MEMORY OF SIN IS LIFE'S HEAVIEST BURDEN

1.

We have read with sadness of the suicide of many unfortunate people for whom, according to their own statements, pain or failure or responsibilities made life unbearable. But none has ever seen or heard of a man more unspeakably tormented than was Judas when he fled out of the palace of the High Priest into the night. Beside him even Job, the great sufferer who lost his home, his twelve children and his property in one day and sat in the ashes to relieve the pain of his boils, was a humorist and a happy man.

Judas had no reason for dying. He had everything to live for. He was not old and he was not sick. There were thirty pieces of silver, a tidy fortune, in his pocket and nobody was trying to take them away from him. Moreover he was in line for honors within the Jewish church. While a disciple of Jesus, he had been an outcast; but now he could ask for respect and recognition for the service he had rendered. If, as Caiaphas had said, it was good that one man should die for the people, Judas had made a valuable contribution and should be acclaimed a hero.

Yet in this pleasant situation something went wrong. We cannot determine with certainty just when it happened; but very likely it came after Judas had watched the condemnation of Jesus before the Council. Like a man beset by de-

mons the traitor left the palace, knifed his way through the crowd of soldiers in the courtyard and sought the silent shadows of the deserted streets.

Some men like to think of all suicides as of people temporarily insane. That is a cheap explanation of a difficult matter. Certainly it is true that many are not responsible for their actions, being unaware that they are committing this terrible crime. But no such plea can relieve Judas of responsibility. He did do senseless things, such as going to the Temple and offering to return the money. But that was desperation, the clutching of a drowning man at a straw. Not only was Judas fully responsible; it was in fact his sense of responsibility that was driving him. At some horrible moment in that gruesome night there had flashed into Judas' soul an understanding of his sin. He had shed innocent blood, for this was clearly the Holy One of God to whom he had given the kiss of death. The whole undertaking now turned into a howling ghost that sat straddle upon his neck. Thirty silver-pieces were in his pocket. Ah, no, not in his pocket. They were, it seemed, all over him, swarming him under as vultures cover a carcass. One lay against his breast and burned like molten metal. One had somehow crept into his skull and set his brain on fire. Two lay beneath his arms and strangled his breathing.

So he struggled to get free. Like poisonous toads he flung the coins from him upon the marble floor of the house of God and left. But the cool night embraced him without giving relief. It was not the money, after all. The silver pieces had changed into the gleaming eyes of an all-seeing God. They followed him onto the wooded slopes of the Mount of Olives. They made his crime unbearable. God saw. God knew. Whither shall I flee from that presence? Had He not said through His prophet: "Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down"? (Amos 9:2). Ah, the darkness hideth not from Thee!

Oblivious to the great comfort that lies in those very words, Judas went and hanged himself, thus either forgetting or not able to let himself think of that other truth so unbearable to sinners: "If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there!"

This true and tragic story proves beyond doubt that there is no burden in life so heavy to bear as the guilty knowledge of sin which a heart cannot forget when it knows that it cannot escape from the wrath of an angry God. What the story does not explain is why there seem to be so few people who know the weight of this burden. Or was the sin of Judas such a rare one? What must a pastor frankly tell his hearers when this question is asked?

Surely every sinner has reason for being terrified! His sin and his guilt are not concealed. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do!" (Hebrews 4:13). And if there are many sinners who have never shuddered with despair and lived in horror of their misdeeds, it is because they have been dosing themselves with the drugs of a worldly life, taking the tranquillizers of pleasure and running away from their own consciences. Such behavior, persisted in, can only lead to a terrible reckoning.

2.

But would it not be an act of lunacy were we in meditation and prayer to seek for ourselves the taste of the fear of Judas? It would indeed, if it meant that we must follow Judas into destruction. But it does not mean that. The memory of sin is life's heaviest burden also because it is such an unnecessary burden. If we feel it pressing, we can learn how to free ourselves from it.

Judas needed not have died. His sin, though very great, was in fact no greater than ours and need not have burned

its memory so fatally into his heart. True, what he did could not be undone. Judas had betrayed his Lord; and He went the entire way to the Cross. Nothing that Judas could do would stop the process. But Judas needed not die; for the Lord went to the Cross for him. The hour had come when mankind was to be delivered from the fearful curse of the Law and saved from the wrath of an holy God. Judas was not left out of this great redemption, this blessed sacrifice which was being offered that very day for the sins of the whole world.

The knowledge of his sin could have been a blessing to him, and the agony of his sorrow could have led him to a greater peace than he had ever before felt in his life. He might have tarried a few hours in this world to see a thief on a cross find relief from a guilt-stained life in those holy wounds that bled for him there on Golgatha. Judas, too, might have said: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." The eyes of Jesus which looked upon Peter that self-same night would also have held a message for Judas which said: My son, thy sin is forgiven thee.

To all who are knowingly or unconsciously suffering under sin and dread the God Who is everywhere, the sermon must say: You carry a burden so vast and so needless that it is a pity to look upon you. That still, small voice within you which mutters: Whither shall I flee from His Spirit or go from His presence? may turn into a shout of joy. For do not think that David, the great sinner, wrote the words of our text in a fit of despair. It was a great source of comfort to David that his God was everywhere. That very fact is the reason for our freedom from sin. Nothing could hide from the God of love the misery of His creatures. Even the darkness of the world could not conceal us. Our God saw men in their night of sin; He followed them, no matter where they went, to bring them back, to redeem them, to reclaim them. Adam and Eve were the first to try hiding from Him. It was not only useless, but,

thank God, it was not necessary. Our God always finds us; not to condemn us, but rather to offer us pardon and a place in His forgiving arms. Our soul cannot escape Him in the darkness of earth; if it could, we would be lost forever, for to heaven we cannot soar at will and in hell it will be too late. Here, in this life, our God is always at hand, that we might give over the burden of our sins into His hands.

Once we are relieved of it, we can see how blessed a truth it is that we cannot hide from God. For His continual presence is to the forgiven sinner the assurance of safety, of the tenderest care, and of an inexhaustible supply of all that he needs. Therefore the Redeemed pray: Abide with us, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from us.

The real weight of any burden lies in the knowledge that it would not have to be borne at all. The man in pain suffers the more when he knows that there is a cure yet does not have it. The sorrow of loss is the greater for knowing that it might have been avoided. May we persuade men in this season not to make the guilt of their sin the heaviest load on earth for them.

III.

THE TEXT: "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.

Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." Proverbs 1:28-31

THE LECTURE: Luke 23:1-12

INTRODUCTORY:

In the first chapter of the Book of Proverbs Wisdom is represented as a person who stands along the road of life offering to make wise all who will listen and believe. Wisdom pleads with those who pass by to learn from her to know the Truth. Listen to me, she says, and your future is assured.

But too often Wisdom stands alone on the street corners and weeps; for men have poured wax into their ears and move by her in a steady stream. To them she says: In the end you shall call, and I will not answer; you will look for me, and shall not find me.

Wisdom, the supreme teacher in all things, is God; and God once truly walked this earth, standing on the corners and in the market places, bidding men learn of Him the Truth that makes them free. This heavenly Guest among men was Christ Jesus who in Scripture is called the power and wisdom of God. It was His express purpose to turn no one away, to be found of all. "Him that cometh unto me," He said, "I will in no wise cast out." On the other hand He stated just as clearly that certain people shall call and not be answered. Of this we see a demonstration in the Passion lecture which told of the trial of Jesus before Herod. This Prince of Galilee was eager to see Jesus and ask Him many questions concerning His doctrine. It was an appeal to Wisdom; yet Wisdom stood before him as silent as the grave. Had Wisdom grown tired? Why could it find an answer for the Thief on the cross but not for Herod? Was not his soul precious also? Are there perhaps those today whose ears hear no sound of truth from the Savior's lips? We should welcome a close examination of this story of

THE THEME:

THE CALL THAT WENT UNANSWERED

1.

Herod the Great who ruled over all Palestine at the time of Jesus' birth was the father of three sons. (The sermon should present a brief history leading to the identification of the present Herod, who received Galilee as his share of the regency.)

In the beginning he had shown some ability as a ruler and became noted for his building of the city of Tiberias. But his true character soon became evident. His shallow mind spent its time being amused by singers, dancers and jugglers. Having stolen the affections of his brother's wife, he took her for his own and sent his true wife back to her father. (The sermon should make brief mention of the involvement of John the Baptist.)

For this evil life Herod was despised even by the people. But surely Wisdom does not despise and reject men because they are evil. Otherwise none of us would hear her voice. He who spoke to Judas and to the malefactor in words of love is not willing to leave Herod in his sins. Yet at the only meeting Jesus ever had with this man He is silent. Why?

It was not because Herod did not ask Him. In his way, Herod was very religious. That is, he was interested in every fortune-teller or necromancer that appeared at his court to entertain him. John the Baptist, we are told, preached often to him, and Herod heard him gladly. Through John and in other ways this man received news of Jesus and was eager to see and hear Him. He seemed to appreciate the Gospel that John proclaimed, yet only as a novelty.

This man had heard the voice of Wisdom and had gone his way heedless of her counsel. The Gospel had been near him and had pleaded with him. It lay in his prison for many weary weeks; for out of the dungeon beneath his fortress, from the lips of John, had come many a sermon both of Law and of Grace. Such is the man before whom our Lord Jesus stood at last a prisoner; and like him are countless thousands who regard themselves as religious, yet have never accepted Wisdom. They are fully described in the text. Wisdom denounces them; not because they are always wild and coarse sinners, but because they have hated knowledge as a threat to their real ambitions and objectives. The Apostle Paul once spoke of such as "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." Is this perhaps some strange malady that afflicts certain people through no fault of their own? By no means; on the contrary, they choose it so. For Wisdom declares that people like Herod did not "choose the fear of the Lord," which is the way of godliness, and for this reason "they would have none" of Her counsel. Wisdom did not have for Herod a divine blessing upon his sins, but a merciful way of escape from them into a newness of life. But that was knowledge which Herod hated because it would rob him of his pleasures. How could he give up his brother's wife? How could he sacrifice the respect of his evil companions? How could he join the ragged company of the Apostles and leave his carousings?

"What is the pulse of this so busy world?" asks Edward Young; and he answers: "The love of pleasure." This is also the hatred of knowledge. When men have made this choice for themselves, they come at last to the day when Wisdom no longer speaks to them.

2.

It should not require many words to explain and justify God's silence before Herod and all who are of his breed.

The first and last meeting between Christ and Herod was, as far as Herod was concerned, purely accidental. We are told that he was glad to see Him, but doubtless also surprised at the opportunity. Herod, who was of Jewish descent, had come to Jerusalem for the Passover. He attended the festival for the same reason that a good many people will go to a big church with a large organ, a vested choir, much ceremony and little if any preaching, but will avoid a little church with much preaching. They want to feel good without giving up anything bad.

Herod felt more than repaid for this trip to Jerusalem when Pilate sent the prisoner to be examined by him. He was glad, we hear. But what a gladness! The gladness of a blind man who no longer can see what is before his eyes. He does not even try to find spiritual significance in the occasion. Even a child among us can easily assess the value of Herod's questions. He cares not a fig for Jesus' teachings. He is not a miserable sinner looking for a way out of the swamp of his corrupt life to an eternal peace. He does not want the Truth, only amusement.

Jesus answered him nothing. Must we explain why? We might say that in the first place God owes no answer, owes nothing at all, to sinners who ask Him. If He chooses to enlighten them by His Gospel and make them wise unto salvation, it is an act of pure grace and compassion. Wisdom stands in the streets and calls to men because she loves them. But who shall say that God owes an answer to those who, against the needs of their own consciences, deliberately cast the Truth aside because it interferes with their sins? They finally make themselves incapable of doing anything but to play with religion as though it were just another toy for their entertainment. Shall God still answer them and give them His pearls to trample?

Herod received no answer because no answer was possible. The people who have never heeded the voice of wisdom are often the most talkative and sentimental about religion. Nobody can have so much to say about religion as the man who has little of his own. He displays his ignorance on every hand; but Christ cannot speak to him, nor can the Bible answer him, because he has never honestly sought Wisdom or listened for her voice.

And finally Jesus did not answer Herod because it was not necessary. Silence was the best possible answer. It said: You are beyond teaching because you are beyond learning. You shall eat of the fruit of your own way, and be filled with your own devices.

Each of us stands in need of the constant prayer that God preserve us ever from the terrible silence of Wisdom. And it is our bounden duty to preach fervently to all, saying: Let us not prostitute our souls to the futile religious nonsense of the flesh which seeks a compromise between God and sin, between earthly pleasure and eternal salvation. It is far better to die on a cross as a thief who is welcomed into paradise than to sit on the throne of Herod and be damned in our own deceit. Let us listen to Jesus while He bids us welcome, while He offers to take our sins and make us clean. It must not matter whether we hear Wisdom's voice in a chapel or in a cathedral. But when we do hear, let us not harden our hearts. When the message of eternal life by the Cross and through crosses has become foolishness to us, it is because we have become fools. Let us listen while it seems sweet and necessary, bringing peace to a troubled heart and directing us on the narrow way. Let us seek the Lord while He may be found and call upon Him while He is near. Then to the humble spirit Christ will speak, bidding us come to Him and find rest for our souls.

IV.

THE TEXT: "Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against
an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the de-
ceitful and unjust man.

For thou art the God of my strength."

Psalm 43:1-2a

THE LECTION: Luke 23:26-32

INTRODUCTORY:

As we are taking our first steps with our Lord along the road to Calvary, our minds are to think back in review of the hours of His trial which ended in His condemnation, and recall that during the court procedures we never once heard Him declare His innocence. It is surely one of the most significant features of his hours before human judgment seats that He, the divine and innocent defendant, faced His enemies and accusers without a word of self-defense. The women along the *via dolorosa* may weep and lament the tragedy of a guiltless One going to his death; but during the hearings He, like a lamb led to the slaughter, opened not His mouth.

In Gethsemane Jesus surrendered to His captors saying: "I am He." Before the High Priest the false witnesses by their very perjury proclaimed Him innocent; but Christ pleaded guilty only to the charge that He was the Son of God. Later Pilate ranted at Him, saying: "Sayest thou nothing?" But He answered Him not a word.

Shall we see nothing in this? The greatest of all Advocates, who now represents us before the supreme court of heaven, stood defenseless at His trial. Yet He was not without His attorney. He had committed His case and His defense to His Father in heaven; and God did plead Christ's

cause at the trial, in answer to the prayer of His Son which is recorded in the prophetic record of the text. If we discern how wonderfully God answered this prayer, we shall be able to demonstrate to our hearers

THE THEME:

CHRIST'S TRUE DEFENSE BEFORE ALL NATIONS

1.

"Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation." This is the silent prayer which we may read on the lips of our Savior as in His weakness and humility He stands before His earthly judges. But from the heavenly Father there was neither sound nor sign. How are we to explain this? We can only suppose that God did not wish to declare His Son innocent, but wanted to admit Him a criminal and worthy of death, and that Jesus agreed with this decision, His true defense was a plea of guilty. Let us consider why this must be our conclusion.

First of all, we know that the Father in heaven is and always has been a mighty defender of those who are unjustly accused and threatened with punishment for crimes which they did not commit. When He sets out to plead their cause, the world has to listen and hear.

Daniel was sentenced to be eaten by lions because he prayed to his God against the king's orders; but God declared that Daniel was innocent of wrong-doing and not worthy of death. He said so by a miracle against which the king of Babylon was powerless. Three men were unjustly thrown into a blazing furnace; but God knew their innocence, and He established it. Peter was thrown into prison for preaching Christ; but God disagreed with the verdict and an angel opened the doors.

It is always a spectacle when the Father steps in to plead the cause of one of His beloved. And we shudder to think what forces He might have called into use to proclaim this dearest Jesus, His eternal Son, innocent. The twelve legions of angels which Christ said His Father could give Him were as nothing compared with the power that lay in the Father's hands.

In the second place: the Father had never before avoided publicity when an opportunity offered to confess Himself to His Son. Did not His angels gloriously proclaim the news when He was born? At His baptism, did not the multitudes about the Jordan see the heavens opened and the Spirit of God descending as a dove while the voice of the Father testified? Thus on another occasion He spoke in a voice that the unbelieving Jews heard as thunder over the city of Jerusalem. Surely, then, God would not have failed His Son in that supreme hour when He stood before Pilate and heard the death sentence pronounced. God was willing at all times to glorify His Son, to plead His cause before an ungodly nation. And when Jesus died, the sun was darkened and the earth quaked and the Temple shook. Thus the Father forced His creation to speak, confessing the One who bowed His head in death.

Yet throughout the bitter and terrible hours between midnight and Good Friday afternoon, while the Christ was being tormented and unjustly accused, His great Advocate in heaven withdrew into His awful majesty and made no effort to declare what was so fully evident, namely the innocence of His Son. Herod declared it; Pilate declared it; but heaven was silent.

What must we understand from this? That Almighty God, in turning His face away, DID plead the cause of His Son against an ungodly nation, yea, against the whole world of ungodly nations; and God's plea entered in behalf of His Son was: Guilty as charged! This is a conclusion justified by

all the facts even as it is supported by the words of the Gospel. God found Christ guilty and desired that He should thus be condemned; and Jesus who uttered no word in His behalf accepted that plea.

For the Christian this is not a mystery, as it must be to the unbeliever. The latter would undoubtedly declare that God was unjust. But we know that the plea of guilty for the innocent Christ was correct and fair in the Will of God, as evil and wrong as it was on the part of His human judges. For Jesus was made guilty by His Father. He was made to be sin for us; as it is written: "The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

There are those who deny this.. They deny all passages of Scripture which state that He became the chief of sinners. To them the trial of Jesus must remain an incredible mystery beyond all reason. There is no sensible explanation except the one which is received by faith and which upholds our faith, confirming the teaching of all the Scripture: He died as guilty, that we might be declared innocent and free.

With this message God pleads the cause of His Son before all nations to this very day. He says: My Son was guilty. I have no defense for Him. I did surrender Him to be crucified. This I did that you might have Him as your surrogate, as having died in your stead. In Him you have an unfailing Advocate before my Throne who will say to me of you: They are innocent, Father, for I have suffered for them. Their eternal happiness is my Cause, my one and only cause.

2.

But if God's defense of His Son before the Nations was to declare Him guilty, how then could He answer the other appeal that the prayer in our text contains? The words which we must also consider are these: "O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man!" Did the Father provide

such deliverance? And who was the unjust and deceitful man?

Our Lord could not have feared or hated any one single person of all those that drove Him to His death. For there was no difference between them. Deceitful and unjust—that applied to every one of them, including His own disciples who forsook Him. Caiaphas, the Council, Pilate and Herod—was any one of them truthful or honest or pure in dealing with the Savior? In the company of the human race Jesus was like the clean amid the unclean. How the stench of the corruption of men must have sickened His soul. When all this evil closed in on Him, when He was handled by men on whose hands clung blood and lies, when He was crucified between two of them, can we wonder that He breathed the prayer: Make me free from this entire evil mass of humanity?

His heavenly Father heard that prayer, and answered it. But not in the way we might have expected. To see a cordon of angels suddenly grouped about Jesus, bearing Him away from the evil company of men to His heavenly home, needed not have surprised us.

But God thought of a better way. Jesus desired a better way. Jesus was to be delivered from corruption by making these and all men free from their deceit and injustice. The Lord did not take Jesus from the world but made men free from their sins. He redeemed them from the guilt and curse of sin through the sacrifice of His Son. By the Holy Spirit He comes to them, converting them through His message of love, cleansing them with the blood of Christ. He washed away their stains, the putrid mass of their sinfulness, and clothes them with the beauty of holiness.

Thus is Christ delivered. Henceforth He need associate only with redeemed men. For by His merits God justifieth the ungodly. The unbelieving are now truly lost

sheep who need but to be sought and found, while in the midst of His believers our Savior lives with His brethren, the Church which is His body, the fulness of Him who filleth all in all.

When men came to build the Panama Canal they found the region infested with malaria. Men died like flies from the pestilence. It was almost impossible to live there. What did men do? Did they leave? No; by draining the swamps and destroying the insects they made that region fit for human life. Similarly God delivered Christ from the deceitful and unjust man by changing the condition of man. We marvel at that love which found such a solution to the problem of sin.

Based upon this truth, how warmly must not the sermon exhort men to pledge themselves to value this cleansing through the power of the Cross and strive to walk in purity for the Savior's sake. Should we in wilfulness or ignorance continue to weep for ourselves and our children, as did the women along the Way of the Cross?

V.

THE TEXT: "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength
out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine
enemies."

Psalm 110:2

THE LECTURE: John 19:17-30

INTRODUCTORY:

"Behold your king!" These mocking words of Pilate come back to us as a challenge and a command, now that we stand at last before the Cross of Christ. For of Him was the prophecy written which confronts the preacher in this text. It was foretold that the Lord God would send the rod of the Messiah's strength out of Zion and that He would rule in the

midst of His enemies. Standing beneath the Cross itself, we recognize in it the rod that came, indeed, out of Zion; and we see the King ruling in the midst of his enemies; and we understand. Our task is to communicate this understanding.

Pilate had prepared a bill of accusation for this Cross. On it he wrote: Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. We can imagine the smile on Pilate's lips as he ordered this judgment written out. And how well he spoke the truth without being aware of it. For so he pointed back to that ancient prophecy and explained what men should see and think as they look upon Jesus Christ crucified. We may invite our hearers to examine the writing on the Cross, the I.N.R.I. which tells us of

THE THEME:

THE CRIME OF THE GREAT KING

1.

If he were not a criminal, said the Jews to Pilate, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. They had found it a bit difficult to establish their case, but finally got it narrowed down to a point. He says he is Christ, a king! When Pilate asked Jesus whether that be true, He confirmed it. And so we have no doubt, as we stand beneath the Cross and see that title of His crime, in confessing its truth. Those who passed by and those who pass that Cross today are not misinformed.

Furthermore, to those who mock Him and ridicule His majesty we say that they had better have a care for themselves. For He is not only A king. The charge is: *THE* king of the Jews. And He was charged with being king in three languages, thus testifying that His crime embraced all nations. Christ of the Cross claims the homage of all the earth: that is His crime.

Pilate met objections with the famous reply: *Ha gegrapha, gegrapha!* But the complaints continue to this day. Jesus of Nazareth, King in every language! Shall that dignity be held by one who died shamefully upon the accursed tree? Shall every knee bow before Him and every tongue confess that He is the Lord? Men have publicized their refusal to pay tribute in countless ways. But what Pilate wrote is indelible. While some titles are acquired cheaply, and others are not honestly held, the title on the Cross is the title of the Crime of Jesus and was well earned. He is guilty of being your King and mine. Let us be about our business of saluting His Majesty upon the Cross, and see to it that others do likewise.

2.

But if inquiry is made concerning the source of His power and His right to it, that is a fair question and deserves an answer. After all, no one becomes a king by being titled by Pilate; there must be a higher grant of power than that. And there is.

The source of His power is revealed in the prophecy. The rod of a king's strength is his scepter which represents his authority. Being in possession of the royal scepter is the legal requirement for the right to rule. God gave to Jesus such a rod of strength. It came out of Zion; and Jesus had come to Zion to receive it, to take it with outstretched hands. We have seen Him do so. For Zion is Jerusalem, and the rod of strength is the Cross, fashioned by the hands of His people. And did He not claim it? Why, He hung upon it. With hands and feet He possessed it, with great pain and sorrow. But hanging upon it, it was His. No one else in heaven or earth could have managed to hold that scepter. By His pain and sacrifice Christ earned the right to rule over all the people of earth.

It may seem an odd sight to see a king hanging on his own scepter. But there was never another king like unto

Him. He rules in the midst of His enemies with that scepter. See, they surround Him: the guards and the people and the priests mock and torture Him. His power to rule over them all, these sinners, is in the Cross by which He robbed Satan of men's souls and despoiled death of its power. He purchased His human enemies by the ransom of Himself. They are His slaves, whether they know it or not. There is no source of power anywhere greater than that of the Cross. With it He touches the hearts and they become white. He touches with it the souls of men and gives them deliverance from fear, confers the power to love God and the right to be called God's children.

3.

Though men called it a crime, it is the Heavenly Father's Will: "Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." It is important that we help our hearers observe Him as He carries out this which was entitled His crime.

See, He prepares His throne while there on the Cross. He is laying the foundation of His rule—by the suffering of His great heart. He plainly intends to be a humble King, for He bows His head in grief and shame. His is to be a Throne of Grace, that is, a rule where anger and wrath and sentence of damnation should not be heard; for He pays for the wrongs of men. All the wrath of the Father is pouring in upon His trembling soul, so that the fury of the Law may be spent when men come to Him to plead their wretched, lost condition. He wants to be able to tell them, then, that there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. For His rule He prepares Himself by being touched with our infirmities, that He might understand from experience the pain of our sin and the fear of hell.

If such a kingship is a crime, it is one we should happily share with Him by submitting to His hand. He was

not ashamed of His position on Calvary or of the title that was hung over His head. Indeed, He had said that the Son of Man should be lifted up so that all men might see Him and be drawn to Him. He claims our worship. Could anything be plainer than that He expects us to love Him because He so loved us? He considers that in laying down His life for us, He has earned our devotion.

If this is so, why do we not love Him? Why do we insist upon dividing our loyalty and affection between Him and the world? Why do we so often look upon His Church as an object of our charity rather than as a responsibility of citizenship laid on us by our King, one which we gladly recognize and discharge?

Our text confirms that Jesus must rule by His Cross; and this signifies that He owns us by right of purchase. Only the wicked call this a crime. And only our wickedness of heart could cause us to deny ourselves to Him. Our faith says:

Fulfilled is all that David told
In true prophetic song of old;
Amid the nations God, saith he,
Hath reigned and triumphed from the Tree.
Hail, Hosanna, David's Son!
Help, Lord, hear our supplication!
Let Thy kingdom, scepter, crown
Bring us blessing and salvation!

VI.

THE TEXT: "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.

And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover."

Exodus 12:5-6, 8, 10-12

THE LECTURE: John 19:31-42

INTRODUCTORY:

Christ Jesus was crucified at the time of the Jewish feast of the Passover. We remind our hearers that in that night the children of Israel were directed to choose a lamb from their flocks, kill and eat it in a certain prescribed way. By this ceremony God prefigured the sacrifice of His Son who is called by the Baptist "the Lamb of God." And the Apostle Paul declares to us "Christ our Passover, sacrificed for us."

We see that God thus revealed His intentions and His way of salvation to men hundreds of years before He brought His Son into the world. Nothing more mightily convinces any questioning heart and feeble faith than seeing the Savior as the One foretold since the beginning of time. Nothing more surely demonstrates that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.

Thus to refresh the faith of our hearers, we undertake to show them how the details of Christ's death correspond to the details of the ancient passover observance, so that they may recognize Him without fail as

THE THEME:***THE PASSOVER LAMB—SACRIFICED FOR US*****1.**

The manner in which Jesus our Savior was sacrificed for our salvation was so like the sacrifice of the paschal lambs of the passover that the similarity can no more be coincidental than were the words of Isaiah: "He was wounded for our transgressions: He was bruised for our iniquities." Isaiah in spirit foresaw the Lamb of God; and Isaiah saw Him in his day each time men made ready the passover.

The preacher will at this point very briefly review the detail of the instructions for choosing a lamb for the passover, as found in the text. . . . We may suppose that it was not always easy to find such an animal; and we naturally ask why God so rigidly controlled the matter. Why should not any lamb have been good enough for the purpose that seemed intended? The answer lies in the higher purpose of this lamb. It was the shadow of our Lord Jesus Christ. This may be carried out by listing the parallels.

But herewith we have only begun. Let us follow the lamb to the time of sacrifice. Each family in Israel was directed to slaughter its lamb at a certain hour; in this way the entire people, the whole congregation, as it was called, would perform this act in unison.

Is there not something strangely familiar about that? After expertly killing their passover lambs together for twenty centuries, the Jewish congregation blindly killed the Lamb of God for which they had been waiting. They took Him at night. Here we may rehearse the course of the Passion briefly, until we see how, late in the afternoon, as the shadows are falling, Christ the Lamb breathes His last and the sacrifice is complete, in the evening.

We note further: The Jews were directed to take their passover lamb and prepare it in a certain manner. There was to be no dismemberment, no breaking of bones. The head of the house took the body from which the wool and skin had been removed and impaled it upon two sticks of hard wood, one running lengthwise, the other cross-wise through the flesh. Upon this wooden cross it was suspended over an open fire until fully ready. Even a child could tell us the story of what happened to the Lamb for sinners slain; but the preacher had best rehearse it: The impaling, the heat of God's anger, the joints melting as wax, etc..

What a great tragedy it was that those people who for centuries had before them year after year the death of their Savior in the symbol of the passover lambs did not read the record rightly. How great their blindness, how terrible their unbelief. How plainly we can see it! Yet what good would that be to us if we failed now to use and enjoy the Truth. Of what benefit the Paschal Lamb of God to us unless we make It our own? The Lamb must be taken, received, laid hold on, possessed. How this is to be done we learn also from the example in the Old Testament. Not only the sacrifice of Christ, but the manner of His proper use is foreshadowed in the ritual of the Jewish passover.

2.

Here we refer to verses 8 and 10-12. God's order to the people was: "And they shall eat it." While the angel of the Lord passed through the land of Egypt dealing out death and destruction in the houses of the Egyptians, the people of Israel were safe and snug in their homes. These might be poor shanties, but they were death-proof. For outside the doors the blood of the lamb had been painted on the posts and lintels, and within the families were eating of its flesh. These homes and these families were in that hour not only saved from death, but were freed from slavery.

Again we are reminded of the wonderful fulfillment of this forecast of the miracle of Grace that awaits us in our Passover Lamb who died for us. While the Angel of the darkness of death takes his terrible harvest in the world, there are those who are at home with the crucified Lamb of God. His precious blood marks their hearts as clean and secures them against the Avenger the while they partake of Him.

But the Lamb cannot be received or eaten in part. "Ye shall let none of it remain." This again is a direct invitation. There is Jesus, giving Himself for you. Do not pick at Him and choose what suits you. He must be ingested in all that He did for us. He must be our Prophet, Priest and King, else He is not our ground and hope of life at all, and we may be sure that any portion of Him which we disdain now will be beyond our reach when on the morning of Judgment Day the fires make an end of the earthly passover feast of faith.

The passover lamb was to be eaten in groups, by families. The Savior wishes to be the food of the entire household. Nor let us overlook for our hearers that the passover lamb was eaten together with a dish of bitter herbs. Our Savior is utterly satisfying and sweet to the hungry soul; but those who receive Him must be prepared to eat also of the bitter herbs of the Christian life which sometimes abounds in sorrow and tribulation for His Name's sake. The Lamb drank a cup of vinegar in His thirst; and we will taste that. It is a part of our share in Him that, if we live with Him, we suffer with Him.

But though our Passover tastes of bitterness mixed with sweetness, let us eat it as did the Jews of old with their lamb, standing on our feet, our loins girded for travel. They were about to depart for the promised land; we are on the road to the heavenly Canaan. We cannot enjoy Christ if we are sitting as though anchored and grown fast,

rooted deep in the soil of earth. The sacrifice of Christ is profitable only to wandering men and women, to pilgrims in a strange land.

"And ye shall eat it in haste: for it is the Lord's pass-over." Truly in this sense also it is well-named; for the day is coming when no one shall eat of Christ on earth, when the Lamb has become the Bridegroom celebrating His wedding in heaven. Keep the Passover of your redemption while you may. Paint the blood upon the doorposts of your heart, gird your loins, and join the assembly of those who are enjoying their Savior NOW.



PAIDEIA

LEFT TO THE LIVING

The theology of our education is fixed: man is sinful, and left to himself he will perish eternally; but the Lord said, "When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live. I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field I entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God." Ezekiel 16. That, as one of the prophets put it, is the theology of our salvation.

The listening and the learning, the telling and the teaching, the Lord has left to living believers: "Go ye into all the world" . . . "What ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops" . . . "When thy son asketh thee in time to come . . . then shalt thou say unto thy son" . . . in sum, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

And the doing has been done by the living. God gave the *WHAT* to His people, but the *HOW* He left to their decision. In the days of the believers' minority, God told them more

about the *HOW*: it was to be done in the home, and by the parents; there were no schools till after the Captivity. God instituted symbols and signs that the faithful were to use, the passover, the sacrifices, the rainbow, and the unleavened bread, and the like too numerous to mention. In their majority the people of God were told clearly the *WHAT* and the *WHERE*, but the *HOW* was again left to them, the living children of God.

No creedal formula, no protesting confession, no doctrinal dogma, but an abundance of doctrine, a message to be proclaimed—the words so vivid that the Galatians could see Christ evidently set forth, crucified among them—the conviction so personal that an answer must be given to every man that might ask a reason of the hope that was within. Each one a light, reflecting the Light to the world.

Wherever the teaching of the Twelve made its way were the sign of the fish, the Apostolic Constitutions, the lections of the Scripture, and the Baptismal Formula; soon liturgy and hymns, conventicles and church services; and after a long, long time, the sermon as we know it today, and the parish ministry. In each age and in each place the Gospel found its own forms, but always left to the people, the believing people of God.

Later came monasteries and teaching orders, chantry and cathedral schools, universities dedicated to theology. Ceremony took on the whole task of teaching, and the catechumenate all but disappeared. The church as church all too often took the place of Spirit in the experience of the Christians. The homily became lost because there were no catechumens to instruct after baptism became the ceremony of enlistment, and seemingly little besides. The Gospel became a set of propositions to which the Christians pledged themselves on the assurance of the church that they were true. Augustine stressed the Word and Sacraments, but from his time to Luther the Word was

neglected. The Sacrament "made God" to the awesome admiration of the masses more ignorant as the centuries rolled on. People could have what they wanted.

Conflict arose between elected leaders and others who claimed to possess the special gifts of the Spirit; so authority developed, and it moved to the hands of deacons, presbyters, bishops and higher, because liberty was abused by a few. Christianity became a society, and the family no longer was so effective as earlier in Israel. Parent-and-child relationships were overshadowed, and in the end openly dishonored. Power must crush the disobedient, and the *domini canes* set out to hunt down heretics, strengthening the arm of the Inquisition. But always mankind could have it as it wanted it—shall we soon say, as he deserved it? "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?"

Ceremony elaborated itself into matins, lauds, prime, terce, sext, none, vespers and compline. The peasant knew little of the meaning of the mass, and in the liturgy he mostly got lost, just stood there for hours an inoperant spectator. Feasts multiplied, and this led rather to irreverence. Relics led to magic, and the traffic grew heavy indeed. A few tried to save something, so they turned to religious drama, miracle plays and mysteries, enacted down the street or in some convenient cove by a wall.

Men of brilliance did no better than did the masses of ignorant men. They turned to games, playing with the logic of Aristotle applied to the dogmatics of the church. With scholasticism they sought to magnify in their way the grace of God, but they minimized the importance of enlightening the minds of men. The "law" of Troeltsch had its way: every sect with success becomes a church, bound to repress and stultify those spontaneous feelings which led to its birth. The "iron law of oligarchy" was fulfilled, with vengeance in the climax of a spiritual monarchy—the Antichrist took over, and the church was "his."

Against all this stands each teacher among us, the last best hope of God for the furtherance of the faith that was once delivered to the saints. It is not for one teacher to take on the reformation of another; his work is with himself, constantly to work at his own improvement, for thereby alone can he lead another in the paths of a Christian citizen. He rouses children who may long have been neglected, because he is always stirring himself. Just as the faith is a "living, busy, active, powerful thing," so his teaching is the lighting of fires, inspiring the weak, and demonstrating in his own self what can stir in one who is awake. The clue is in the Christ, who taught not as the scribes; and the people heard Him gladly.

No man has yet appeared in the history of education who can say to you or me or him: This is the way to do it. Therein is your charter of liberty. But what responsibility! Education can as easily go wrong as right. The course is left to the living, remember! As you find it succeed in your hands, so you do it. There is no sadder sight in the classroom than one who is trying to imitate another teacher, who is thereby untrue to himself as a living personality formed by the experience that God has given him. Nor can a greater pest invade the schoolroom than the supervisor who is just another organizer. Not once has an authority appeared in the long history of education with a final solution to the problem of how it is to be done. The Jesuits had a scheme, the monitorial men in England devised a system, Herbart had his five formal steps, the Progressives had a special disorder, and there are psychologists now who offer sure-fire procedures to make over the whole of human nature—organizers all, but "any teacher worth his salt does not want to be 'organized' himself, nor to have the subjects for which he is ultimately responsible 'organized' over his head by someone who only sees the school for an hour or so a term, and who has only a fleeting glimpse

of the individual character of the school in question." Sybil Marshall, *An Experiment in Education*, p. 18 (Cambridge University Press, 32 East 57th Street, New York 22, New York)

The point is that your work has been left to you. Think carefully how high then is your position. We submit for your consideration this author's philosophy of education because it reflects the high honor bestowed on the disciples when the Lord of the church sent them out to "disciple" the world: they should rely on the Spirit. The implication then was that what the Spirit could not do, God had no other way of doing. Accordingly, that which teachers cannot do by the spirit that is in them—that has no other formula for its accomplishment. Our sole hope for good schools is good people teaching them. Able teachers, yes; but also eager students, students inspired to be eager by the example of their teachers. Not all will become such; some will, and therein lies hope. The experiment goes on; as men see it, every child, every person, is an experiment. Who knows "what manner of child shall this be"? Jesus treated even Judas in the manner as Judas would be viewed by us. Yes, how we teach is left to the living.

Not often enough dares a teacher to be himself, but in the measure that he is so able, those who are to learn from him are blessed. Such a teacher will be different in his own way, as the people saw Jesus teach differently from the profession of His time. At rare times we stumble upon such a teacher, one who has caught the vision of what it means to lead in learning. The author above quoted is worthy to be read as an example for inspiration to put forth utterly just what we are.

"The first requisite is that he should know what he is trying to teach. This is fairly easy for the specialist, but not impossible for the general class teacher. It means that to be worth one's salt in school one has always to be

engaged in the process of educating oneself until the day one is presented with a wheel-chair by the old pupils as a mark of merit for long and faithful service; it means an open mind on such subjects as space travel, and humility enough to learn from one's pupils, who know far more about it than the average teacher; it means the ability to reason and to judge which parts of one's own mass of accumulated knowledge are suitable for the children in one's present class; it does, in fact, mean that one should be a really 'educated' person in every sense of that overworked word."

"A teacher should realize that his function is still to teach. I apologise for making such an obvious statement, but it must be said. We have passed, quite rightly, from the era of being taught to the era of learning for oneself. This is perhaps the very essence of modern education Yet there are hundreds of thousands of people who cannot, and will not, admit that the treatment of ignorance has undergone a change as radical as the treatment of diphtheria, and that the practitioner in each case still has a job to do Nor is the teacher in school just to mark the register and to see that the children teach themselves. He is there to see that they *learn*, and the difference, though subtle, is enormous."

"Children are the most adaptable of creatures, and the more one asks of them, the more one gets." "If his school has any life in it, "the teacher "will not need to be told what is happening. It will shout at him from every wall, every flat surface, every desk, every blackboard, and he will be dazzled by the light from the faces of the children."

"The essential thing was to grasp every idea that would make learning more active and therefore more interesting and more easily assimilated." "Our own schooldays remain with us so vividly that years of experience and practice in other schools never succeed in wiping them out of our minds

Methods will go on changing, though the curriculum remain unchanged forever. This sobering thought should serve to remind us that neither what we teach nor any prescribed method of teaching it is of much importance in itself. The things that really matter are that because of what we teach the children become interested enough to go on wanting to know; and that because of how we teach, and the example we present to them, the children should be able to think for themselves and have confidence in their own judgement. The two aspects of education put together will enable our charges to keep abreast of current ideas to the end of their lives. "

Our author has not been surpassed in verbalizing what other writers have set as their aims in teaching English, "to make a child a minstrel of his own free spirit and a careful scribe as well"; "I could see quite plainly that one of my tasks was to 'purify the dialect of the tribe' without devitalising the common speech of the children altogether; to keep what was telling and homely and fine in their brand of English, and to strengthen it with the props of correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling, as far as it could be done without covering up the original structure altogether.

"It seemed to me that the first objective was to close the gap between spoken and written English. School life had a tradition that talking was what you did out of school, and writing what you did inside. My pupils were at first as loath to talk inside as they would have been to write in the playground, and had no idea that talking and writing and reading bore any relation to each other. The freedom given to them soon loosened their tongues, and we had long since left behind the days when deathly silence reigned as soon as I appeared, either inside or out. Good conversation is an art in itself, and one that I have always thought well worth acquiring. As the children grew more and more used to me and my ways, they talked freely, not only in front of

me, but with me and to me. They began to realise that a good discussion was as exciting as any other sort of contest. They had to obey the rules of good conversation, which meant listening while others talked, keeping to the subject under discussion and saying only those things that they were prepared to back by further argument if necessary. Discussions ranged far and wide over many different subjects, but nearly always came round, in the end, to questions of religion, ethics, and morals. They soon realised that there was nothing I was not prepared to talk to them about, although I sometimes had to tell them outright that I did not know the answers, or that such subjects were better left to a private talk between me and the child concerned."

In reading "infants learn by imitation and are quick to do so. They must be fed in the earliest stages with nothing but the best, and plenty of it. Their daily meat must be folk-tales and stories, nursery rhymes and jingles, songs and endless conversation."

The basis of the whole experiment in education that is reported in this book—is art! It led, finally, to teaching a term by what the author called, in fun, "the symphonic method," actually building the work around Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony. The last section of the book reports what happened. The author summarizes: "The more I thought about it, the more I realized how apt a title I had hit upon. In this method the separate subjects are analogous to the different sections of the orchestra, playing in concert for full effect every now and then, but in between these moments, first one and then the other taking up the theme."

The teacher in this experiment had a word for every education officer, a quotation from Confucius: "If you suspect a man, do not employ him; if you employ him, do not suspect him."

The book is heady stuff. As background for the review we gave the story of deterioration in the preaching-teaching

of the Gospel. That story is matched in education by the badness of much teaching still found in schools, the verbalism, the passiveness, the wholesale-instruction, the sleep that is not to dream. Yet teachers can have their way with learning if they have the gift of life to love the activity of learning, if they have the zeal and energy to lay on for the work, to have at the task. The *HOW* is left to them, the living.

M. Galstad

== PANORAMA ==

SCIENTIST AND THEOLOGIAN DISCUSS GENESIS I

The debate between scientists and theologians on the first chapter of the Bible has gone on for quite some time. Nor has the defense of the biblical account of Creation been

as unanimous on the part of theologians as one might expect. First in the universities of Europe, then at American seats of learning, then also in church-related colleges and seminaries, the number of theologians making their concessions to the ever bolder claims of evolutionistic science has greatly increased. There have been some cases of abject surrender. But generally speaking, it was the scientist who was attacking, the theologian who would be defending (though often by damaging compromise) the inspired record. Therefore, to see representatives of these two professions reversing their respective roles, to see a scientist publicly confessing his simple and unqualified acceptance of the biblical account of Creation and defending it against the claims of science, and then to find a theologian going out of his way to discredit this same simple confession of faith in the inspired Word—all this creates a situation towards which one can hardly remain indifferent.

The October 1962 issue of our JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY carried an article by Dr. Bernhard E. Keiser entitled, "Can the Scientist of Today believe Geneses I?" At about the same time the article also appeared in THE LUTHERAN SCHOLAR, a magazine published by Lutheran scientists and scholars, where it was evidently read by Dr. Robert P. Scharlemann of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. The article is a soberly written, objective analysis of the reasoning on which science bases its conclusions concerning the tremendous age of the universe. Dr. Keiser does indeed undertake a critique, but it is a critique of the methods used by his scientific colleagues in arriving at their extreme conclusions (by "extrapolation"). The fallacies which he exposes are the fallacies of his fellow scientists. And his conclusion is that a scientist of today can believe Geneses I—as he himself does. Only in closing does he address himself to the Church, encouraging and exhorting his fellow Christians not to permit themselves to be influenced by "the oppositions of science falsely so called" (I Tim. 6:20). Only once does he become stern, quoting the warning of Rev. 22: 18-19: " . . . If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book."

It is strange, therefore, that a man of Dr. Scharlemann's position should take such violent exception to this simple confession of a layman's faith in the inerrancy of the Bible, stranger still that he should resort to ridicule (see his quotation from "The Crime of Gallileo") and to a method of argument that, to say the least, is not fair to the man whom he has made his target. Taking up Dr. Keiser's observations concerning the prevailing views of science about the age of the earth, he quotes him correctly as saying: "Christian scholars, who believe that the entire Bible is God's inspired, inerrant Word, however, believe that the earth is much younger. . . ." But then he speaks as though the reference had been simply to "Christian scholars" in general, to all who in answer to some poll or questionnaire might describe themselves as holding membership in a Christian church. That most of these would declare themselves against Dr. Keiser's position we believe. But those are not the ones of whom the article speaks at this point. We believe that the author knew exactly

what he was doing when he made his reference to "Christian scholars" specific by adding "who believe that the entire Bible is God's inspired, inerrant Word." (Our emphasis) Of such scholars, though they be few, Dr. Keiser's statement is eminently true. His critic might have noted the fact and thereby spared the Church the sorry spectacle of a theologian who chose to discredit a layman's clear affirmation of faith in the inerrancy of Scripture and particularly the accuracy of Genesis I.

E. Reim

NOTE

Dr. Keiser's paper "Can the Scientist of Today Believe Genesis 1?" has been published in a tract edition by the *LUTHERAN RE-SEARCH INSTITUTE*, 57 Hoover Street, North Arlington, New Jersey 07032. 1-10 copies, 10¢ ea. postpaid; 11-25 copies, 9¢ ea. ppd; 100 and over, 5¢ ea. ppd. Checks payable to J. F. Whitehead.

C O N T E N T S

VOLUME III

December, 1963

NUMBER 5

OLD TESTAMENT LENTEN TEXTS CORRELATED TO THE PASSION HISTORY

A Homiletical Study by Egbert Schaller

TAKING COUNSEL FOR LENT.....	4
WHY THE MEMORY OF SIN IS LIFE'S HEAVIEST BURDEN.....	9
THE CALL THAT WENT UNANSWERED.....	13
CHRIST'S TRUE DEFENSE BEFORE ALL NATIONS.....	19
THE CRIME OF THE GREAT KING.....	24
THE PASSOVER LAMB--SACRIFICED FOR US.....	28

P A I D E I A

LEFT TO THE LIVING.....	34
-------------------------	----

Martin Galstad

P A N O R A M A

SCIENTIST AND THEOLOGIAN DISCUSS GENESIS I.....	42
---	----

E. Reim

THE JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY (Church of the Lutheran Confession) is published at New Ulm, Minnesota, by authorization of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. Subscriptions are payable in advance at the CLC BOOK HOUSE, Box 145, New Ulm, Minnesota. The rate is \$3.00 per year for five issues: February, April, June, October, December. All correspondence other than subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to Prof. E. Reim, Editor, Route 22, Eau Claire, Wisconsin. The Editorial Committee: E. Reim, Chairman; C. M. Gullerud; E. Schaller; M. Galstad.