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## Address at the Funeml of Rev. G. A. Gullixson

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**Address at the Funeral of Rev. G. A. Gullixson,**

May 25, 1933.

On this Ascension Day we have come to lay aside the remains of a dear husband and father, a pastor and friend, a brother in Christ, a pillar in the Church of God. I dare say, we are all of one accord in the statement that our lives have been richer and happier because Father Gullixson entered into them, that this congregation has experienced many a blessing because of his leadership, and that our synod by his influence, counsel, and testimony was greatly strengthened in the performance of its mission. To-day one may bless his memory because of his fatherly love and care in the home, or a kind and encouraging word, or that winsome and sympathetic smile of his, or his sober counseling and admonition and reproof; for he had a way of dealing with individuals as with personal friends. Another may cherish his staunch confessionism, his earnest pleading for the cause of the Gospel in his public ministry, his self-sacrificing and untiring labors for his local congregation, for his synod, for our institution at Mankato, and for the Synodical Conference and its various activities. And they will all bless and cherish his memory with good reason.

It may not be granted so readily that in him with whom we were privileged to associate on such intimate terms we were associating with one truly great, a hero of faith, a tried pillar in the Church of God. Such heroes are born out of the travail of the Church in distress, and they stand in the gap when many fail. It is true, they wield a double-edged sword, the one bringing healing by the Gospel and the other dealing fatal wounds to error, pretense, and sham and to those who openly or secretly are striking at the vitals of the Church; and so they are not always loved. They stand as pillars to support and bear great burdens in the Church; but they stand unmoved, too, and therefore cause hurt to those who in mistaken zeal would rush headlong and tear down here and destroy there, little knowing possibly that they are causing the downfall of the whole structure of faith. These are as steel that has been tested in a crucible; they are as trees that have been tossed by the storm of life and of the Church and thus have set deep roots and cannot be overturned.

The Church has seen men come and go who by great organizing ability have apparently succeeded in doing a great work. The Church has seen men come and go who by their eloquence have swayed many. But when they were gone, it is not always true that the work they did had been fitted into the building as a beam which binds the whole more firmly together. There are those who are for a time looked upon as heroes of faith because they dare to greet wolves and

invite them into the sheepfold; who dare to throw themselves into a raging stream, expecting to stem its deadly tide; who dare to call peace when God calls to war. It is after all a comparatively simple task to convert the Church into a huge business institution, a social center, a great charity organization, a political playground. All that is needed is to sell a little of the Gospel and let Satan take the rest. It is a comparatively easy thing to become a hero of faith by making the Church a happy hunting-ground for the lodge, for this vagary of human opinion and that, a sort of platform where you may greet as a brother any one who appears to be sincere, whether it be sincerity in the Gospel of Christ or sincerity in propagating what in the end inevitably destroys that Gospel. But these are not those whom God calls heroes of faith. A hero in God's sight is one who dares to call war when God calls war, though all men else may cry peace. He is one who will, if necessary, by name point out and attack the wolf in order that as a faithful shepherd he may protect the flock entrusted to him. He is one who does not wait for the raging torrent and then, when it is too late, by a heroic gesture pretend to save, but who in time, though men may call him a fool, puts himself and his all into the breach that the dike may hold. He is one who with Christ leaves the ninety and nine to save the one, forgetting the crowd where ease and favor are to be found. The hero in God's sight is he who goes with faithful Abraham upon the mere promise of God; who dares to battle with Joshua against mighty odds because the Lord is on his side; who dares to build though he owns nothing but faith to build with; for whom one word of Scripture is enough to direct his whole course; who does not consider his own honor or renown, but esteems only that honor as supreme, that reward as eternally sufficient, that his Savior write as his memorial what He had His apostle write for John the Baptist: "He confessed and denied not."

Rev. Gullixson's life and work were intimately interwoven with the life and work of our dear synod and now recently of our college at Mankato. We cannot, as it would seem, think of the one without the other. As one has said, our synod seems so small now that Brother Gullixson is gone. Our synod has always seemed too small for some and its opportunities too insignificant for the display of real strength, real worth, and real greatness. And thus many to whom God gave the opportunity of becoming heroes of faith chose a fairer field than the one where God had stationed them for battle. Our synod is only a part of the line of battle; but it is, after all, a part of that line. Who knows but the General Himself where the important line is which is to be held? Thank God that Rev. Gullixson remained where God placed him. And let God reveal in His own blessed season which was the greater task and whose the greater glory. For if we judge by the standards of men, then the temptation and victory of Christ

in the wilderness were a battle of small consequence; likewise the experience of Abraham when he was called upon to sacrifice his own son; then were the calling and sending forth of twelve men, called apostles, and so many of the most momentous events in the history of the Church too trivial to be recorded and weighed. A task is not small because one or ten have been called to do it, nor is a dollar any bigger because one hundred give it. But let us learn by the example of him who has been taken from us that by that one word faithfulness shall our lives, our deeds, our accomplishments, be measured, and to-day it is our highest tribute we have come to pay when we express the confident hope that the Lord has numbered Brother Gullixson among that apparently so small and insignificant band whom He called blessed; for his life and work are a continual testimony of faithfulness to Him who has said: "If ye know these thing, happy are ye if ye do them."

And the secret well-spring of it all? Was it not to be found at the one and only source of Christian faithfulness and Christian greatness, the Gospel itself? You, his members here, and we, brethren of his in the ministry, knew his love of the Gospel. It was not only on his death-bed that he sought that consolation. Nor was he one of those who preached the Gospel, but did not need it for himself. His sweetest moments came when he could busy himself with the beauty of such passages as this: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." His theology, his preaching, his teaching, the joy of living, all had this central theme, the justification of a sinner before God by the free mercy which is in Christ. In this central truth of all true Christianity you will find the key to his spirit of true humility, his zeal for the Gospel, his love of the truth, his unwavering confession, his heroism in battle, and his victorious end.

Rev. Gullixson would have liked to see further progress before he died, in his congregation and in the synod. He expressed the wish that he could have seen Bethany more firmly established and secure. Was he less of a hero of faith because of this? David did not become a hero of faith only after he had slain Goliath; he was a hero of faith already in the hour when he said to Goliath: "This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand . . . that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands." A man is a hero of faith when he has undertaken a God-given task on the mere word and promise of God, when he has entered the lists against sin and error in the strength of Him who called him to battle. And thus, too,

the accomplishment, the victory. The work of our synod and the establishment of our school was, in the sight of God, completed the day it was undertaken and begun; for the end as well as the beginning is assured by the promise of Him who has said: "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

And now the vision of Ascension Day descends upon us all. A number of disciples were there, a band found faithful. While Jesus blessed them, He was parted from them. And it is this vision He has left for us to contemplate; it is thus we look up to Him now, the blessing Savior. He brought a blessing, the blessing of sonship, into the life of our beloved brother here and sent him forth with great joy into a life of service here and a life of bliss in heaven. The same Lord lives to bless us who remain here. He will continue to bless, to fill our lives with His love, His guidance, His protection, and the happiness which comes from a glorious hope. He lives to perform that which He has begun in us. He lives to intercede for us in all our temptations and afflictions and labors. He lives to receive us unto Himself with the elect that have gone before. Do not wonder too much at the happiness and the heroism of Brother Gulixson, who had enjoyed this blessing through a long life nor at his victorious death, but let us wonder more at the fact that we who enjoy the same blessing and own the same promises show so little of joy or of a heroic faith.

Chicago (Mankato, Minn.).

S. C. YLVIKAKER.

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## Dispositionen über die altkirchliche Epistelreihe.

### Achter Sonntag nach Trinitatis.

Röm. 8, 12—17.

1 Joh. 3, 1. — Zwar trösteten sich auch manche Weltkinder damit, daß Gott ihr Vater sei, weil er sie erschaffen hat. Aber es gibt auch verlorne und enterbte Kinder; darin liegt kein Trost. — Gal. 4, 4. 5; 3, 26. 27 — so sind wir wieder Kinder Gottes geworden. Unter all den Namen, die die Schrift den Christen gibt, ist gewiß keiner herrlicher und tröstlicher als dieser. Zugleich aber erinnert uns dieser Name an gewisse Pflichten. Beides stellt der Apostel in dieser Epistel uns vor. Er sagt:

Wir sind Gottes Kinder

und zeigt dann,

1. wozu uns das mahnt;
2. worauf uns das vertröstet.

#### 1.

B. 14. Sind wir Gottes Kinder, so haben wir den Geist Gottes im Herzen, Gal. 4, 6; Röm. 8, 9. Ja, das ist das Siegel unserer Gotteskindschaft, daß wir den kindlichen Geist empfangen haben, B. 15