

10-1-1933

Outlines for Sermons on the 450th Anniversary of Luther's Birthday

J. H. Fritz

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Theo Laetsch

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm>



Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Fritz, J. H. and Laetsch, Theo (1933) "Outlines for Sermons on the 450th Anniversary of Luther's Birthday," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 4 , Article 105.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol4/iss1/105>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Print Publications at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Concordia Theological Monthly by an authorized editor of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

768 Four-Hundred-Fiftieth Anniversary of Luther's Birthday.

wird und deren Druck ausgangs Juni zu Ende kam; *) sodann die Auslegung des 90. Psalms, die aber erst 1541 gedruckt wurde. Von ganz besonderer Wichtigkeit ist die Tatsache, daß in diesem Jahre die ganze Bibel in der Lutherischen Übersetzung im Druck zu Ende geführt wurde, ein Werk von monumentaler Bedeutung und unberechenbarer Tragweite und Wichtigkeit.

1535. „Eine einfältige Weise zu beten.“ — Diese Schrift wird allgemein in den ersten Teil des Jahres 1535 gesetzt, aber genaue Daten liegen nicht vor. Der Untertitel lautet: „Wie man beten soll. Für Meister Peter, Barbierer.“ Die Schrift ist eine Vorlage, nach der jeder einfältige Christ beim Beten des Vaterunsers, der Zehn Gebote und der drei Artikel sich richten kann. Luther gibt die Hauptgedanken an, die jeder Christ bei seiner Andacht haben sollte, wenn er diese Hauptstücke täglich für sich herbetet. Es wäre zu wünschen, daß diese oder eine ähnliche Vorlage in englischer Sprache erschiene, da viele schlichte Christen etwas Schwierigkeit haben, sich die rechten Gedanken bei ihrer Andacht zurecht-zulegen. (St. Louiser Ausgabe X, 1394—1415.)

1535. „Form der Ordination.“ — Dies Formular wird ebenfalls in das Jahr 1535 gesetzt. Es ist die erste Anweisung in der lutherischen Kirche, die für das katholische Sakrament der Priesterweihe die einfache Zeremonie der kirchlichen Ordination einsetzt. (St. Louiser Ausgabe X, 1602—1605.)

U m e r k u n g. In diesem Jahr erschien auch Luthers Umarbeitung seines Galaterkommentars nach den Vorlesungen von 1531, die schon im vorigen Jahre immer wieder genannt wurde. Auch begann Luther im Jahre 1535 seine Genesissvorlesung, die er über ein Jahrzehnt lang fortsetzte.

1536. „Bedenken, daß weltliche Obrigkeit schuldig sei, den Wiedertäufern mit leiblicher Strafe zu wehren.“ — Diese Schrift, die in unserer Ausgabe Melancthon zugeschrieben wird, wird in neuerer Zeit mehr als Arbeit Luthers angesehen. Wahrscheinlich waren beide Lehrer an der Arbeit beteiligt. Nach Buchwald war sie am 7. September zum Versand bereit. Sie sollte besonders genau studiert werden, da sie eine Vermischung von Kirche und Staat zu befürworten scheint. (St. Louiser Ausgabe XX, 1752—1757.)

1536. „Warnungsschrift, sich vor Winkelpredigern zu hüten.“ — Dies ist eigentlich nur ein Brief an Lorenz Castner und seine Gefellen zu Freiberg, datiert 11. Februar 1536. Er enthält zehn Paragraphen und eine Nachschrift. So kurz die Schrift ist, so enthält sie doch sehr wichtige Gedanken, namentlich über Familienkommunion: „Weil sie laßt euch nicht bereden, daß ein jeglicher Hauswirt möge das Sakrament in seinem Hause geben.“ (St. Louiser Ausgabe XX, 1758—1761.)

U m e r k u n g. Eine exegetische Arbeit dieses Jahres, die von ganz besonderer Wichtigkeit ist, ist „Der 23. Psalm, auf einen Abend über Tisch ausgelegt.“ (Fortsetzung folgt.) P. E. R e c h m a n n.

Outlines for Sermons on the 450th Anniversary of Luther's Birthday.

I.

JUDG. 2, 8—22.

The celebration of the Festival of the Reformation in our Lutheran churches is self-evidently linked up with the name of Martin Luther; for he was the instrument in the hand of God of restoring to His Church the Word of God in its full truth and purity. This

*) Berzendung erfolgte erst am 17. März 1535.

year we are reminded that on the 10th of November it has been 450 years since Luther, that great man of God, was born. What makes Luther an outstanding man in the history of the Church and of the world at large is *what God made of Luther and what God did through Luther*. In this respect it is that we honor Luther's name; Luther, like other great spiritual leaders in the Church, is God's gift, Heb. 13, 7.

In applying the Word of God to our needs as God would have us do, we find that God has a special message for us at this time of distress in which we are living, even as He did in the days of Israel, after the spiritual leaders, Moses and Joshua, had gone to their eternal reward.

Two Things which the Lord Says to Us on the Occasion of the 450th Anniversary of Luther's Birth.

1. *The Lord says to us: Remember the blessings I have given you.*

a) *Material blessings*, v. 12 ("brought them out of the land of Egypt"). God had rescued His people from Egyptian bondage. While this was primarily of a spiritual nature, the people of Israel had also been suffering from physical oppression, poverty, etc. The Lord delivered His people and brought them to "a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey," Ex. 3, 7, 8; Deut. 6, 10, 11; 8, 6—9. The Lord warned His people not to forget to praise Him for His blessings, Deut. 6, 12—15; 8, 10—20. — Similarly did the Lord bless us in this country. This country has never been poverty-stricken; moreover, it has enjoyed years of unprecedented prosperity. For such material blessings man gives credit to himself. Not so the Christian; he acknowledges them as a gift of God.

b) Greater than the material blessings are God's *spiritual blessings*. God had showered these down upon Israel in great abundance. He had brought Israel to a knowledge of the true God, Jehovah, and had done many wonderful works among His people, v. 10. God had also given to His people great spiritual leaders: Moses, Joshua, servants of the Lord, v. 8. Through these the Lord made known His covenant of grace, Gen. 12, 1—3; 17, 7; Gal. 3, 16. — Even so has the Lord blessed us with spiritual blessings. God prepared Luther for the work of the Reformation and through him put the Word of God again into the hands of the people. After Luther's death God gave other great leaders to His Church, such as Martin Chemnitz, born 1522, and Johann Gerhard, born 1582. In the history of our own Church in this country the Lord gave us such men as C. F. W. Walther, F. Pieper, and others. For almost a century God has in *His grace* preserved unto our Synod *doctrinal purity; especially did the fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion, justification by faith, receive due emphasis*.

770 Four-Hundred-Fiftieth Anniversary of Luther's Birthday.

But "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," 1 Cor. 10, 12. Are we perhaps in danger of losing what we have? Some indications point that way. Therefore the Lord warns us.

2. *The Lord says to us: Beware lest you despise My blessings and compel Me to take them from you!*

a) *The Lord's blessings are taken from those who despise them.* Of Israel the Lord said: "Thou art an holy people unto the Lord, thy God. The Lord, thy God, hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth," Deut. 7, 6 ff. But in our text we read that after Moses and Joshua and their generation had been gathered unto their fathers, "there arose another generation after them which knew not the Lord nor yet the works which He had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served Baalim; and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers . . . and provoked the Lord to anger," vv. 10—15. Yet the Lord would save His people, and therefore He raised up unto them judges to deliver them. In spite of that the people were unthankful and disobedient, vv. 16—19, and so "the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel," v. 20. In the course of centuries the Jews lost all the blessings they once had; *because they despised them, they compelled the Lord to take these blessings from them.*—And where are the Christian congregations that at one time were at Rome, Ephesus, Corinth, to whom Paul had addressed his epistles? Where are the seven churches of Asia Minor? What has become of the Church of the Reformation in Germany? How sadly is the Protestant Church throughout the world, and especially also in our country, disrupted! Because of indifferentism on the part of many Protestants Modernism has made its inroads into their ranks, so that many to-day deny the great fundamental truths of the Christian religion. And what about the great indifferentism towards the truth that is also found in the Lutheran Church of our country?

Are we any better than others? Have we any reason to believe that, if we of the Missouri Synod despise the Lord's blessings, we shall fare better than others? Surely not. Are we perhaps even now in danger of dead orthodoxy and formalism? Has not the spirit of indifferentism already taken hold of us? (Lack of thorough indoctrination by means of the pulpit and catechetical instruction. Doctrinal discussions at synods and conferences are crowded out by business matters. Danger of unionistic tendencies. Poor church attendance. Little interest on the part of many in reference to matters concerning the kingdom of God, Synod, missions, etc. In the years of greatest prosperity we had deficits in our treasuries. Millions of people in this world are without Christ and His Gospel, and yet many of our workers are idle because we lack the spirit of self-sacrifice and consecration and instead use the present economic condition as an

excuse.) During the past year the Lord has deprived many of us of material blessings. Are we perhaps compelling the Lord to take from us also our spiritual blessings? Or are we ready to learn the lessons which the Lord is teaching us? Are we ready to repent and return to the Lord and implore Him anew for His grace?

b) The Lord is gracious and long-suffering and has no delight in the death of the sinner, and therefore *He warns us*. Let us heed His warning before it is too late.

aa) By the heathen nations and the conditions of that time the Lord proved Israel whether it would be faithful to Him, vv. 21—23. Even so now by the ungodly world and the modernistic churches surrounding us, by the wide-spread apostasy and the evil conditions in the world, the Lord is proving us whether we will keep His way to walk therein or not, v. 22. Will we stand the test?

bb) Let us repent and anew learn to appreciate our spiritual inheritance (work of the Reformation by Luther, work of the fathers in our Missouri Synod) by a careful restudy of the Word of God (indoc-trination), and let us also show our appreciation of the Lord's blessings by a greater consecration (by applying the Word of God to our daily life) and by preaching it to a sinful world (missions). Thus we shall truly honor the memory of Luther and honor our God, who gave us that great servant of the Church.

Since, however, we ourselves are insufficient for these things, let us ask God through Christ to preserve us in His grace, keep His truth unto us, increase our faith, deepen our love to Him and to our fellow-men, and let us in every way become much more consecrated unto Him who died for us and rose again, so that we may not perish, but live eternally and in the mean time bring the blessings of salvation to many others also. To God alone be all glory!

J. H. C. FRITZ.

II.

MAL. 2, 5—9.

That babe born 450 years ago at Eisleben was destined in God's counsel to become the Reformer of Christ's Church. His Reformation consisted in restoring Scripture to its place of honor and authority and maintaining it there against all efforts to disenthroned it. Scripture, and Scripture alone, was to him the infallible guide and norm of doctrine and life. No compromising therefore, no unionism, no fraternizing with error and errorists. That was his attitude not only against the Church of Rome, but against all false doctrines arising also within the so-called Protestant Church. For this position Luther has been maligned and slandered at all times. Yet it is just in this position, unpopular as it is especially in our day of unionism and syncretism, that we must follow the example of Luther. Then alone

772 Four-Hundred-Fiftieth Anniversary of Luther's Birthday.

we are in keeping with God's will, then alone we shall truly build the Church. If our celebration is not to be displeasing to God (cp. Matt. 23, 29 ff.), then let us honor Luther by following his faith and practise, Heb. 13, 7.

As True Followers of Luther Let Us Strenuously Guard against Every Kind of Unionism.

- 1. Then alone shall we do what God expects us to do.*
- 2. Then alone shall we truly build His kingdom.*

1.

Malachi charges the priests, the God-appointed teachers of Israel, with unfaithfulness to their duty of retaining and preaching the Word of God in its truth and purity, v. 7. They had compromised with error, vv. 2, 8, and thereby corrupted the covenant, v. 8. No longer were they true sons of Levi, whose faithfulness is praised v. 6; rather, the curse of God rested upon them, v. 2.

All Christians are priests, 1 Pet. 2, 9. To us are committed the oracles of God, and the priest's lips, v. 7, should keep knowledge. Not merely the ordained pastor, whose special duty it is, but all Christians have the duty to keep, preserve in its purity, that knowledge which according to v. 5 and John 17, 3 gives life and peace. God's purpose in making His covenant, in granting His revelation, was that we should fear Him and be "afraid before His name," v. 5, to regard it as blasphemy to change one jot or tittle of His Word, Ps. 119, 120, and avoid all false doctrine and teachers, Rom. 16, 17; 2 John 10, 11, etc. In our mouth is to be the Law of Truth, v. 6a; and this Law dare not be changed, Deut. 4, 2.

That was Luther's position. Over against Rome's insistence on the authority of the Church Fathers he insisted: "It is written." When Zwingli refused to accept the Scriptural doctrine of the Lord's Supper and maintained the principle that God would not propose to our faith such impossible things, then Luther again showed from Scripture the error of Zwingli's doctrine and the fallacy and danger of his principle. When influential friends, who disliked to see Protestantism disrupted by a question of doctrine, sought to establish a union, Luther was willing to discuss the doctrinal differences and seek an agreement on the basis of the Word of God. When, however, Zwingli made the proposition to confess their union in all things in which they agreed and, as for the rest, to remember that they were brethren; when he held that there would never be peace in the churches if one could not bear differences on secondary points of doctrine, then Luther stood as firm as adamant. Pointing to Scripture, he exclaimed: "It is written." He refused the hand of fellowship, saying: "Yours is a different spirit from ours," and in holy indig-

Four-Hundred-Fiftieth Anniversary of Luther's Birthday. 773

nation he wrote: "Cursed be such charity and unity to the very bottom of hell, since such unity not only miserably disrupts Christianity, but makes sport and foolishness of it in a devilish manner." (St. L., XX, 773.) Though much maligned (cp. *CONC. THEOL. MONTHLY*, Vol. I, p. 321 ff.), yet Luther's position was in exact keeping with the Word of Scripture, the will of God as revealed in the Bible.

If we would be true members of the Lutheran Church, we must follow in the footsteps of the Reformer. We grant it would be far better if all who call themselves Christians were united in one camp and would march, a mighty army, against the common foe. Yet our General's orders forbid that very union; union must be based on unity of faith. We are the Lord's priests, v. 7; our duty is to preserve knowledge. We should be unfaithful to our trust were we to preach or tolerate falsehood and error. We are the Lord's messengers, v. 7, ambassadors for Christ, 2 Cor. 5, 20. What a crime for a messenger to change the message which was entrusted to him! We are to follow Levi, v. 6a. It would be dishonesty, hypocrisy, to pretend a union which is such in appearance only, while in reality no union exists; for what is the chaff to the wheat? Jer. 23, 28. Hence bear in mind 1 Pet. 4, 11. Preach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth and maintain union only on the basis of this truth. Then may the world misunderstand, misinterpret, charge you with malice, narrow-mindedness, bigotry. Rather be ridiculed by the world than fall under the curse of God Almighty, v. 2. Cp. Jer. 23, 30—32.

2.

But is not our uncompromising attitude detrimental to the welfare of the Church? Is it not due to this very position that the Church of the Reformation was hopelessly split? Does not this stand to this day constitute one of the chief obstacles to the inner and outer growth of the Church? That objection is also refuted in our text. Only by true doctrine is the Church built, while error is ever detrimental to its growth.

True, unionism may increase the membership of certain denominations. Some may join a unionistic church who would not join a church that clings to all points of the Word of God. Yet the Church of Christ is built only by the preaching of truth, v. 6b; many are turned away from iniquity by the purity of doctrine. It cannot be otherwise. The covenant of God, v. 5, is for life, spiritual life, eternal life, and peace, the peace with God through Christ Jesus, the only Mediator. Yet such life and such peace can be granted only by the Law of Truth, v. 6, by the preaching of true knowledge. Cp. John 6, 63b. Malachi also says that by this covenant the fear of God was engendered in the hearts of believers. Only true doctrine can work

sanctification. By teaching all things, we disciple the nations, John 8, 31. 32. Only by adhering to Christ's doctrine, we learn the truth and are made free. By taking heed and continuing in doctrine, a pastor will save himself and others, 1 Tim. 4, 16.

On the other hand, false doctrine corrupts, causes many to stumble, v. 8. If we deviate from God's Word, He will curse our blessings, v. 2. They will become ineffective in the same measure as they agree not with the Word of God, Jer. 8, 11; Ezek. 13, 10—16. False doctrine, far from building up the Church, spreads like a cancer, undermines the Church, saps its very life, causes divisions and offenses, ruin and desolation. In the end, unionism digs its own grave, v. 9. Indifferentism breeds contempt and rejection not only of God's Word, but finally of all religion and its prophets.

As we love our Church and its splendid inheritance, as we love the assurance of being in possession of the truth that makes us free, children of God, heirs of salvation, so let us follow in the footsteps of Luther in his uncompromising rejection of all unionism and his unflinching loyalty to the Word of Scripture. T. LAETSCH.

Dispositionen über die altkirchliche Epistelreihe.

Sechzehnter Sonntag nach Trinitatis.

Ep h. 3, 13—21.

Das Sonntagsevangelium von der Auferweckung des Jünglings zu Nain führt uns ein Bild des menschlichen Lebens vor. Kaum sind wir geboren, so geht das Sterben schon los; Sorge und Gram, Trübsal und Not, Krankheit zehren am Leben, bis der Tod ihm ein Ende macht, Hiob 5, 7; Ps. 90, 10; 103, 15. 16. — Der Christ hat noch ein anderes, ein inneres, geistliches Leben, in welches er durch die Wiebergeburt hinein- geboren ist, Joh. 3, 3. 5; 1 Joh. 5, 1; 2 Kor. 5, 17; Ep h. 4, 24. Soll es nun in diesem Leben gerade so gehen wie im leiblichen Leben? Ach, bei vielen ist das der Fall, Luk. 8, 13. Die Gefahr droht uns allen, Matth. 25, 5. Darum diese Bitte des Apostels an seine Christen:

Denn

Werdet nicht müde!

1. Gott liebt euch; 2. Gott stärkt euch;
3. Gott führt euch zum Siege.

1.

Der Apostel redet zuerst von der Ursache, warum Christen in Gefahr stehen, müde zu werden, V. 13. Die Trübsal, die über Paulus gekommen war, konnte gewiß die Christen entmutigen; wenn es dem großen Apostel so übel ging, was konnten sie dann erwarten? — Trübsal aller Art, die keinem Christen erspart bleibt, bildet eine große Anfechtung