

10-1-1935

Sermon Study on 1 Pet. 2, 1-10

T. Laetsch

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

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



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Laetsch, T. (1935) "Sermon Study on 1 Pet. 2, 1-10," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 6 , Article 88.
Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol6/iss1/88>

This Homiletical Help 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.

möchte! Schulden wir das nicht unserm Heilande? Glauben wir nicht, daß er uns dazu erlöst, erworben und gewonnen hat, auf daß wir in seinem Reich ihm dienen in ewiger Gerechtigkeit, Unschuld und Seligkeit? Bekennen wir nicht mit unserm Munde: 2 Kor. 5, 15? Soll unser Wandel eine andere Sprache reden? Gewiß nicht. Wollen wir Luthers Nachfolger sein, so wollen wir wie er glauben, ja und amen sagen zu allen Lehren der Heiligen Schrift; so wollen wir aber auch reden wie er, unsern Glauben durch ein fröhliches, mutiges, unerschrockenes, deutliches Bekenntnis in Wort und Tat bezeugen; so wollen wir auch wie er auf unsern Glauben fröhlich und selig sterben. Zu solchem Bekenntnis unsers Glaubens schenke uns allen Gott seines Geistes Kraft! Amen.

Th. o. B. ä t f. d.

Sermon Study on 1 Pet. 2, 1—10.

(Eisenach Epistle-lesson for Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.)

In the first chapter of his epistle Peter had reminded his readers of their regeneration unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This hope had been engendered in them by the Word of God, the Gospel, which had been preached to them. Since they were regenerated by this living Word, Peter pleads with them to remain faithful in their love and desire for this Word, to grow into, and become more like unto, the Word and its perfection, to grow into ever keener understanding and fuller appreciation of the marvelous privileges offered in this Word, into an ever deeper realization of the duties placed upon all believers by this Word, into ever greater willingness and into ever-increasing strength and efficiency in performing these obligations. The passage is one of the choicest examples of truly evangelical exhortation, the Law being applied to the Christian life without the slightest moderation or modification of its demands, while intertwined with these demands are the precious Gospel truths, supplying life, giving strength to ever renewed efforts to live up to these demands. Peter as little as Paul means to make void the Law through faith and hope; on the contrary, both in reality and truth establish the Law, Rom. 3, 31.

"Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil-speakings, as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby, if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious," vv. 1—3. "Wherefore" draws a conclusion from the preceding words. Since the Christians to whom he writes have been regenerated, chap. 1, 23, it is necessary that they lay aside all characteristics of the old man, and since they have been born again by the Word of God, it is really self-evident that they desire this life-giving and life-sustaining Word above all other things. In order to desire the Word of God and grow therein, they must lay

aside all *malice*, that ill will which seeks to harm and injure the neighbor and which is the fruitful source of guile, hypocrisy, envy, evil-speaking. *Guile*: craftiness, deceitfulness, giving vent to one's ill will not in open, outspoken enmity and hatred, but craftily seeking to hide one's evil intent, making use of every means, whether fair or foul, so long as one gains his end, stooping even to *hypocrisy*. The word *ὑποκριτής*, originally means one who answers, an interpreter, a stage-player, actor, a dissimulator, one who hides his true character and feeling behind the mask of friendliness or even friendship, who pats one on the back in order to have all the better opportunity to stab him in the back. Some manuscripts have the singular, while most of them have the plural (hypocrisies) and continue with the plural to the end of this verse, the plural indicating the various and varying manifestations of hypocrisy, envy, etc. "*Envy*" is "selfish ill will toward another because of his superior success, endowments, possessions" (Fernald, *Synonyms and Antonyms*, p. 221). Rooted in selfishness, lack of love, malice, envy will grow, unless eradicated, like a noxious, deadly weed, choking, stifling, killing every kind deed and word and thought, warping every judgment, tainting every opinion concerning one's fellow-men. "All *evil-speakings*," literally, speakings against one; and since these counter-speakings issue from a heart filled with malice, and guile, and hypocrisy, and envy, they are spoken not from love of truth, but with evil, malicious intent, with the purpose of harming one's neighbor, often in utter disregard of truth; consequently deliberate lies, malicious slander. Such faults and vices characterize the old man, whose greatest desire is the satisfaction of his passions, who longs for, and takes advantage of, every opportunity to give vent to his malicious and envious desires and thoughts. Such traits of the Old Adam are altogether unbecoming the Christian. He is born again, chap. 1, 23, or, as the apostle puts it verse 2, he is a *new-born babe*. His very nature is changed; his desires and longings are altogether different from those which he formerly cherished. Says the apostle: "As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby," v. 2. The apostle calls his readers new-born babes. *Ἀργυέννητα* means recently born. *Βρέφος* is the embryo, the unborn child, but is used also of suckling infants. The apostle does not mean to say that they were recently, newly, converted. Paul had founded the congregations of Asia Minor ten to fifteen years before this letter was written; the readers had gone through prolonged and fierce trials. The point of comparison is not the recency of their conversion, but the character and traits of a newly born babe. A new-born babe is guileless, without malice and envy. These last-named traits develop only in later years, as the child grows and his innate depravity, Gen. 9, 21, to a great extent dormant in infancy, is roused

into activity and manifests itself in evil words and deeds, only too often growing into habits uncontrollable. Christians are new-born children; they have the characters of little babes, generated in them by the living Word of God. This character is essential to salvation, Luke 18, 17; the more a Christian succeeds in becoming like a little child, the greater will he be in the Kingdom, Matt. 18, 4. Hence the goal of every believer should be to be and remain a new-born babe, without malice and guile; cp. John 1, 47. — In another respect are Christians to be like little children, namely, in their desire for the milk of the Word. Place before a new-born babe the choicest foods the world can offer; it cares not for them, it desires them not, it knows them not. It knows and desires, and longs for, but one food, mother's milk. Likewise, says the apostle, as though they had known no other food, as though it did not exist for them, as though there were for them but one food, they should desire, long for, crave, the milk of the Word. Whether λογικός is derived from λόγος in the sense of reason, hence reasonable, pertaining not to externals, but to the inner life, spiritual (cf. Rom. 12, 1), or from λόγος in the sense of word, pertaining, belonging to the Word of God, the meaning is correctly expressed in our English Bible — the milk of the Word. This milk is sincere, guileless, pure. While natural man is filled with guile (cp. v. 1), seeking to harm and slander, here is something without guile, pure, sincere, seeking only the salvation of man. Ought man not to desire this pure, guileless milk, which will never deceive him, no matter how much it promises? "That ye may grow thereby" or therein, "in the Word, as the element wherein the Christian life is developed" (Cook, in *Bible Commentary*). The same Word of God which has placed our feet on the path of life is also our constant companion on this way, the food we eat, the air we breathe, daily manifesting its life-changing, life-preserving power. As we read and study it, we grow daily in the Word, become more and more assimilated to it, more like it, pure and guileless and without malice, like new-born babes. So we grow "unto salvation," as most manuscripts add, until we have reached the final goal of our journey. Beginning, continuation, and the blessed end of our salvation we owe to the Word, the guileless milk. Ought we not to desire it above everything else? "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." The apostle quotes from Ps. 34, 8. The psalmist there speaks of Jehovah, and Peter, in accordance with Matt. 16, 16, does not hesitate to apply this to Christ, the Lord our Righteousness. A Christian has not only tasted in his conversion, but every day of his life he is tasting that his Jesus is good, χρηστός, usable, kind, gentle, Ps. 23. Since this goodness is revealed to him in the milk of the Word, ought he not to desire this milk?

"To whom coming as unto a living Stone, disallowed indeed of

men, but chosen of God and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," vv. 4. 5. Προσιζομαι with the dative = come to one, with προς = attach oneself to another. Faith is a daily, continuous approach to Jesus as He sits on His throne of grace and extends His gracious invitation, Matt. 11, 28; Is. 55, 1 ff. In faith the believer attaches himself ever closer to his Savior, knowing that indeed He is a living Stone, a Stone, strong, firm, immovable in all the changes and vicissitudes of life, the Rock of Ages (Is. 28, 4, marginal reading). A Stone indeed, yet not a stone dead, cold, repellent, but a living Stone, having life within Himself, John 5, 26, that life which is the light of men. This Stone indeed is disallowed of men. The apostle quotes from Ps. 118, 22, according to the Septuagint, ἀποδοκιμάζω, meaning to separate, repudiate after examination, testing. Men, the leaders especially of Israel, and hundreds and thousands following their example, tested Him and found that He does not measure up to their standard; cp. Is. 53, 1—3. They throw Him aside, on the rubbish-pile, as altogether unfit for the building which they are contemplating as a temple of reform for mankind, as the kingdom of God on earth. Nor does He fit into the schemes of men, into the buildings devised by them, not because He is altogether unfit for a corner-stone, but because their building is unfit for this unique Corner-stone. The fault lies not with the stone, but with their standards. For what man disallows, behold, that has been chosen of God as something exceedingly precious, Is. 28, 16. The Supreme Master Builder, contemplating to build a temple worthy to be His own habitation, Eph. 2, 22, looked about for a corner-stone and after due deliberation chose One, whom He held in highest esteem, Matt. 3, 17; John 3, 35; 5, 20; Eph. 1, 6, whom He regarded as worthy of the exalted honor of becoming the chief Corner-stone of that marvelous building not built with hands, not by human might or wisdom, but by God's own Spirit, His holy Christian Church. Shall we follow the judgment of man and remain aloof from Christ, reject Him? Or shall we not rather follow the judgment of Him who cannot err? Then let us attach ourselves ever more closely to that living Stone, and let us be built up on Him as living stones unto a spiritual house. Since the imperative fits the context, exhortatory throughout, better than the indicative, which would seem rather pointless, almost flat, in this connection, we prefer the marginal reading in the A. V.: "Be ye built," built up, "a spiritual house." The apostle has in mind here not the *ecclesia visibilis*, the Church as outwardly united or organized into one body; he is speaking of a spiritual house, invisible to men, invisible even to believers, much as they would desire to see it; visible only to the all-seeing eye of the Founder of the Church, until on that Day we shall see Him as He is

and His Church as it is. This joining of all believers unto one house is not effected by outwardly uniting persons without regard to doctrinal differences; no, the apostle informs us that the house is built up by the stones' attaching themselves to the living Stone, Christ. Attachment to Christ, union with Him, faith in Him, fostered and strengthened by imbibing the sincere milk of the Word, unites the Christians unto a spiritual building. Hence Christians should guard above all against spiritual lethargy, negligence in the use of the means of grace, loathing of that plain, simple milk so offensive to human reason, disregarding the only Corner-stone; for thereby not only their attachment to Christ, but in the same measure the building up of the spiritual house would be hampered. In the same measure as believers make it their paramount business, their chief object in life, to become attached to Christ through faithful use of the appointed means of grace, the holy Christian Church is being built up, and they are being built up as integral parts of this spiritual house. Such attachment to Christ is not impossible for believers. They are no longer dead stones, Eph. 2, 1; 1 Cor. 2, 14; they are *living stones*, says the apostle. Through union with the living Stone they have been made partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. 1, 4, have been endowed with a new life, that spiritual, divine life which human reason, be it ever so keen, cannot understand; which human strength and skill, be it ever so powerful, cannot engender; which finds its source, its fulness, its nourishment, its substance, in Christ, the living Rock, and in His strength unites itself ever more closely, attaches itself ever more intimately, to Christ, Gal. 2, 20. As lively stones, filled with the life of Christ, the believers are to be built up *an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices*. As living stones they are not only building themselves up into a holy temple, they are also to perform, and actually are performing, the duties for which this temple is being built, that of bringing offerings pleasing to God. As the living Stone has made them living stones, so He, their great High Priest, makes them partakers of His priestly office. They are a holy priesthood, a body, an assembly, of priests, of which body every believer without exception, be he ever so humble and unknown, is a member; all of them of equal rank, acknowledging but one High Priest, Christ Jesus, who has made them His assistants and grants to all equal rights. They are priests, not merely Levites, to whom the lesser duties connected with the sanctuary were assigned, who were forbidden upon penalty of death to usurp the duties and rights of the priests, Num. 18, 3. There is no sacrifice which believers may not offer, no veil behind which they may not enter, Heb. 4, 16; 10, 19; Rom. 5, 2. They are a *holy* priesthood, sanctified, set aside, by God's appointment, Ex. 28, 1; cp. *chosen* generation, v. 9. Their holy garments for glory and beauty, Ex. 28, 2, are not merely man-made robes

of gold and precious materials, but the garments of salvation and the robes of the righteousness and the perfection of their Savior, Is. 61, 10; 1 Cor. 6, 11; cp. Heb. 10, 22; and they sanctify themselves by, serve God with, holy works, *offering up*, as the apostle says, *spiritual sacrifices*, not, as in the Old Testament Temple, the blood of animals. No, the glory of the second Temple shall be greater than that of the first, Hag. 2, 9, in so far also as here only spiritual offerings shall be brought to God, God is worshiped in spirit and in truth, John 4, 24. Cp. Ps. 10, 13—15; 51, 17; Luke 1, 74 f.; Rom. 12, 1; Heb. 13, 1—21. Such sacrifices are pleasing to God, acceptable to Him, Ps. 51, 17; 69, 30. 31; but *pleasing to Him only by Jesus Christ*, by Him who redeemed us and washed us in His blood and made us priests, Rev. 1, 5. 6; who daily covers up our failings with His perfection; who is and remains the Alpha and Omega of our Christian life. Attaching themselves to this living Stone, the believers should constantly build themselves up unto a spiritual house, in which community of saints they are to exercise the exalted privilege granted to them as a holy priesthood by offering up daily spiritual sacrifices to their God.

Vv. 6—10 the apostle proves that both his statements concerning Christ and the Christians and his exhortation were in full keeping with Scripture. His statement concerning Christ, v. 4, is proved and applied vv. 6—8; his statement concerning the Christians, v. 5, is established by applying to the Christians such titles as in the Old Testament were applied to the believers.

“Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief Corner-stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded,” v. 6. The apostle’s manner of introducing his proof shows that he does not intend to quote any one passage, but that he simply states what is contained in Scripture, skilfully interweaving various passages speaking of Christ, His adherents, and His opponents. God Himself states that He would lay a corner-stone, and He calls this stone elect and precious; hence the apostle had the right to speak of this stone as chosen of God and precious, v. 4. This stone was to be laid in Sion, the Church of the New Testament; hence the apostle could tell his readers that they had come to this Stone. God Himself says of this Stone: “He that believeth on Him,” etc.; hence Peter was fully justified in calling Him a living Stone; for no one can be saved by believing in a material, a dead stone. Since no one believing in Him shall be confounded, this Stone can be no one else than He of whom all the prophets say that in His name there is life eternal. This stone is none other than Christ. Just as truthfully he could speak of the Christians as of living stones, since life begets life, and of the Church as a spiritual house, since the Corner-stone is not a material, but a spiritual, living Stone.

“Unto you therefore which believe He is precious; but unto them

which be disobedient the Stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the Head of the corner and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed," vv. 7. 8. The apostle at once applies what has been said. Since he that *believes* shall not be put to shame, the honor, the glory, just mentioned is for you, unto you, the believing ones, *ὑμῖν οὖν ἡ τιμὴ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν*. The honorable things said of Christ in v. 4 are shared by the believer, who through faith is attached to Christ, made one with Him, who looks for the realization of Christ's promise in John 17, 20-24, and who—so Scripture, which cannot be broken, asserts—shall not be disappointed in his faith in Him. Luther and the Authorized Version translate as if Peter had written *ἐντιμον*. The words *ἡ τιμὴ* will not permit such a translation. In the sermon one may adopt the translation of the Authorized Version and point out that Christ is indeed precious to all believers because He makes us participants of His glory. Before unfolding this truth, Peter proves that he was justified in stating that men disallowed Christ and points out the dread consequences of such rejection as a warning to all believers. Again he points to Scripture, emphasizing by his own example the need for that close adherence to Scripture for which he had pleaded with his readers v. 2. He combines two passages, Ps. 118, 22 and Is. 8, 14. The first passage foretold the disallowing of the Stone on the part of the builders and the laying of this very Stone as the Head of the corner. Though men rejected this Stone, God will abide by His choice; and since the builders will continue in their stubborn rejection it will be for them no longer a Stone of life unto life, but, though still a living Stone, will be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, as Isaiah had foretold, Is. 8, 14. In quoting Isaiah, Peter does not follow the Septuagint, but like Paul, perhaps adopting his translation, renders the words in closer accord with the original. *נֶגֶפְהָ* occurs only once. *Negeph*, derived from *nagaph*, to stumble, Ps. 91, 12, means stumbling; hence *eben negeph*, the stone of stumbling, is very properly translated *λίθος προσκόμματος*. The other term is *צוּר מִקְשָׁל*. *Mikshol*, derived from *kashal*, to stumble, is a synonym of *negeph*, stumbling; with *zur* = rock of stumbling, offense. The Septuagint translates it *πέτρα πτώματι*, Paul and Peter by inspiration *πέτρα σκανδάλου*. Evidently they are treating *προσκόμμα* and *σκανδάλου* as synonymous terms, both signifying anything that would cause one to stumble and fall, any occasion or cause for transgression and consequent perdition. Christ is made a stone of stumbling and offense, of transgression and perdition, to all who reject Him, who are disobedient, *ἀπειθοῦσιν*, as some manuscripts read, or are unbelieving, *ἀπιστοῦσιν*, which others offer. The present participle denotes persistent, continuous unbelief. Since God will not change His plan of salvation merely because it

does not suit some men; since He has once for all appointed Christ as the Head of the corner; since man cannot get around this Christ; since they will not accept Him, but persist in their disobedience and unbelief, there can be but one result: they will continue to take offense, they will harden their hearts; and since there is salvation in none other, they will, they must, inevitably rush headlong into perdition. In elucidation of vv. 7b and 8a the apostle continues: "even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient; whereunto also they were appointed." Peter identifies Christ and His Word. In v. 8a Christ is the stone of stumbling, in v. 8b the "disobedient" stumble at His Word. Christ and His Word, a savor of life to them that are saved, becomes, and is appointed to be, a savor of death unto death to them that perish. Why? They are not obedient. There is no neutrality possible here, Matt. 12, 30a. "*Whereunto also they were appointed,*" of course not unto their unbelief; that would contradict the clear passages teaching the universal grace of God, Ezek. 33, 11; 1 Tim. 2, 4; 2 Pet. 3, 9. Because of, and in punishment of, their unbelief they are appointed to stumble and perish according to God's unalterable decree, Mark 16, 16. A powerful warning indeed, the strongest possible warning against rejection, neglect of the means of grace, satiety, and carelessness in their use, and an urgent admonition to desire the sincere milk of the Word. Having preached the Law in all its truly awful majesty, the apostle, knowing that the letter (the Law) killeth and only the spirit (the Gospel) giveth life, 2 Cor. 3, 6, turns again to the Gospel in order to create and strengthen in his readers the willingness and ability to remain faithful to Christ and His Word.

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God; which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." The apostle now develops the thought expressed v. 7a and proves at the same time that his statements concerning the exalted privileges of the Christians, v. 5, rest on solid Scriptural ground. Because of their faith in Christ all the honors promised to believing Israel in the Old Testament are now theirs to have and enjoy. Once more Peter combines a number of Scripture-passages. The first title is found in this form in the Septuagint translation of Is. 43, 20 and is implied in Ex. 19, 5; Deut. 7, 6 and 14, 2 may also be compared. The second title is found in Ex. 19, 6, the third in Ex. 19, 6, Deut. 7, 6, and 14, 2, and indicated in Is. 43, 20, whence also the last clause of 1 Pet. 2, 9 is taken. The fourth title is found in Deut. 7, 6, 14, 2, and in other passages. In the Old Testament God had of all the nations chosen one people to be His own, the seed of Abraham, the children of Israel.

This people was to be the covenant nation, in which each member was to enjoy all the privileges enumerated in the passages quoted. Yet there were two restrictions to the universal and perfect enjoyment of these privileges. The first was that only such would be actually accepted as His people as kept His covenant, Ex. 19, 5; the second, that the Old Testament believers were to be a royal priesthood, etc., largely by representation, by outward types and symbols. Their priesthood and royalty were manifest only in a special, representative priestly and royal family; the sacrifices to be offered were material offerings; their holiness, to a great extent, consisted in the observance of outward rituals. All this was to be the shadow of things to come, a prefiguration of the glory to be given by Christ to His believing followers, Col. 2, 17; Heb. 8, 5. In Christ the body has come; in Him all these types are fulfilled; through Him the believers of the New Testament, a generation no longer confined to any one nation, composed of Jews and Gentiles, are in spirit and in truth, in fact and in deed, all that these titles imply and involve. As Christ Himself is chosen of God, so in Christ all believers are chosen, elect in Him, Eph. 1, 4. Since the Church consists of elect, chosen individuals, it is indeed a generation of elect, a chosen generation or people, chosen unto faith, 1 Pet. 1, 2, chosen unto life, Acts 13, 48. "*A royal priesthood.*" Christ, the Corner-stone, is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, the priestly king. Attached to Christ, as all believers are, they are through Him royal priests. About their priesthood see v. 5. At the same time they are kings, rulers. All things are theirs, 1 Cor. 3, 21—23; they are rulers over Satan, bruising like their Savior Satan's head, Gen. 3, 15; Rom. 16, 20; Eph. 6, 11—16; ruling over sin, Rom. 6, 1—23; their flesh, Rom. 13, 14; Gal. 5, 24, the world, 1 John 5, 45; Rom. 8, 37. In spiritual matters they need acknowledge the authority of no man, 1 Cor. 7, 23; Col. 2, 16.

"*An holy nation.*" What Israel was supposed to be, but never became, is realized in the Christian Church. That is indeed a congregation of saints. Theirs is a holiness recognized not only by the world, 1 Pet. 4, 4; but acknowledged by God Himself, who calls them saints, 1 Cor. 1, 2; Rom. 1, 7; etc., who quashes every indictment preferred against them by any enemy of their salvation, Rom. 8, 33, 34; who Himself has clothed them in fine linen, clean and white, the righteousness of their Savior. He Himself gives them strength to lead a holy life, so that they reflect in their lives the unsurpassable glory of their High Priest's glory as the moon reflects the glory of the sun, adding to their faith virtue, etc., 2 Pet. 1, 5—8; thinking and doing whatsoever things are true, etc., Phil. 4, 8; ever striving after greater perfection, Phil. 3, 13—20; 2, 15. Truly a holy nation.

"*A peculiar people.*" Λαός εις περιποίησιν is the translation of the Hebrew term אֱלֹהִים-עַם. The Hebrew term means that which one has

gotten, acquired, and now holds as his own peculiar treasure; hence translated *own proper good*, 1 Chron. 29, 3; *peculiar*, Deut. 7, 6; 14, 2; 26, 18; *peculiar treasure*, Ex. 19, 5; Ps. 135, 4; Eccl. 2, 8. The Greek word means something that is made to remain over; a *preserving*, Heb. 10, 39; possession, own property, Eph. 1, 14; an obtaining, 1 Thess. 5, 9; 2 Thess. 2, 14. Both terms indicate that the Church has been obtained by the Lord and will be and forever remain His own, peculiar, and cherished treasure. The term reminds us of such passages as Deut. 32, 10; Zech. 2, 8; Is. 49, 15, 16; 43, 1—4; 41, 10 ff.; John 10, 28, 29; Rom. 8, 28—39.

"That ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." That is the purpose for which God has honored the believers in Christ so highly. They are to show forth, tell out, publish abroad, make known everywhere, the *virtues*, the praises, the excellences, the many instances of goodness, of Him who has called them by a holy calling, 2 Tim. 1, 9. His own Gospel, 1 Pet. 1, 23; Eph. 1, 19, 20; 2 Cor. 3, 6. Peter uses the word *call* in the same sense in which Paul continually uses it, of the effective call that has accomplished its purpose, as a synonym of convert, regenerate, 1 Pet. 1, 23. While *convert*, *regenerate*, stresses the change in man effected by the call, *call* stresses the means whereby this change has been effected. Since the Word of God, the call of God, as extended to them by their fellow-men, has made them newborn babes, they should shout out this call to all the world in order that others like them may be called *from the darkness to His marvelous light*, out of that darkness in which natural man is held captive, Is. 8, 20—9, 1; Eph. 4, 18; 2 Cor. 4, 4, into that marvelous light proceeding from the Throne of Light, shining in the Gospel, the Word of Light, giving light to our hearts, 2 Cor. 4, 6; Eph. 1, 18; Is. 9, 2; 60, 1 ff.; that light in which we see light, Ps. 36, 9; 2 Pet. 1, 19; Prov. 4, 18. In his admonition to show forth the praises of God the apostle therefore has in mind not so much the virtues of the Creator and Redeemer God, although in these days of evolutionistic denial of divine creation, of pantheistic, self-aggrandizing rejection of the doctrine of the need of redemption and vicarious atonement these wonderful works of God should and must also be published to all the world. The apostle is thinking here especially of the virtues of God as detailed in the Third Article, of the work of sanctification, a work showing forth the power and wisdom and grace of God in no less a degree than the work of creation, cf. 2 Cor. 4, 6, or the work of redemption, Eph. 1, 19 ff.; 2, 4 ff. We need but recall to our memory these virtues of God and spontaneously the desire will fill our hearts to tell others of those excellences of our God which we have experienced in order that they likewise may be brought out of darkness to light. Since the apostle knew that Satan is ever trying to make

the Christians sluggish in the performance of this duty and in making use of this privilege, he adds a few more words, describing in the language of the Old Testament the marvelous change which divine grace has wrought in them. Quoting almost literally Hos. 2, 23, he writes: "which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God, which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy," v. 10. Politically, ethnographically, they had been a people, yet the highest honor that can possibly be bestowed on a nation had not been theirs—they had not been God's people, Eph. 2, 12; Col. 1, 21. Having come to Christ, however, they had become fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God, God's own precious people indeed. Formerly they had not experienced mercy. That everlasting love of God, John 3, 16, was unknown to them. Hence their efforts to conciliate God by their own efforts. Held in wretched slavery, they were hopelessly doomed, though in their ignorance they realized neither their slavery nor what their future fate would be if they remained in their sad state. Now, however, they have obtained, experienced, mercy. Having come to the knowledge of the tender mercy of God, Luke 1, 78. 79; Eph. 2, 4, they are privileged to approach the throne of their compassionate Brother, Heb. 4, 13—5, 2, and, accompanied by this mercy, enter the gates of life eternal, 1 Tim. 1, 16; 2 Tim. 1, 18. What a contrast: darkness and light; not a people and God's people; not having obtained mercy and having obtained mercy! Such is the marvelous change wrought in them by the Gospel, that sincere milk of the Word. Ought they not to cherish this Word? Ought they not to shout it out to all the world?

What the apostle had in mind when he penned these glowing words was to admonish and enable his readers to grow in holiness of life.—*Grow in Holiness*. 1. As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, vv. 1—3. 2. As living stones be built up a spiritual house, vv. 4. 5a. 6—8. 3. As royal priests offer up spiritual sacrifices, vv. 5b. 9a. 4. As God's own people show forth the praises of your God, vv. 9b. 10.—Since this text sets forth the spiritual priesthood of all believers in language so clear and beautiful, and since this doctrine is one of the cardinal doctrines of our Lutheran Church, Lenski aptly suggests that the subject of a sermon on this passage be made *The Christian's Priestly Calling*. "The first three verses state the general requirement for this calling; the next five, its connection with Christ and His holy temple; and the last two, its exalted character and its sacred functions."—*Lenski*. The text could well be made the basis of a series of three or four sermons, in which either the three parts suggested by Lenski or the four parts of the first outlines may be utilized, each part being of sufficient importance and

furnishing ample material for a separate sermon. — *Ye Are God's Own*. Therefore love His Word, serve Him in holiness, show forth His virtues. — *Ye Are a Royal Priesthood*. This is a privilege which you owe to your gracious Lord alone. This is an honor which puts you under great obligations. — *The Contrast between Believers and Unbelievers*: in their relation to Christ (unbelievers, vv. 4. 7. 8; believers, vv. 4. 6. 7); in their conduct (unbelievers, v. 1; believers, vv. 2. 5. 9b); regarding their destiny in time and eternity (unbelievers, darkness, not a people, no mercy, offended, lost; believers, vv. 3. 6. 7a. 9. 10). — *Christ the Rock of Salvation*. To some a rock of offense, vv. 4b. 7b. 8; to others the Wisdom and Power of God, in Him chosen, v. 9, called, regenerated, vv. 2. 9; made royal priests, etc., vv. 5. 9. 10; sanctified, vv. 1. 2. 3. 5. 9; preserved unto salvation (v. 2, "unto salvation"; v. 6, not confounded; v. 9, peculiar people).

THEO. LAETSCH.

Dispositionen über die altkirchliche Evangelienreihe.

Sechzehnter Sonntag nach Trinitatis.

Luk. 7, 11—17.

Das Laub wird gelb und fällt ab — ein Zeichen des nahenden Winters und ein Bild des menschlichen Lebens, Ps. 103, 15. 16. Verstehst du Gottes Sprache? Die ganze Natur predigt uns die Vergänglichkeit alles Irdischen. — Aber keine Auferstehung; die kennt nur der, der Gottes Offenbarung hat. Die Natur kennt eben keinen Heiland; nur Gottes Wort predigt uns den, der den Tod zunichte gemacht und Leben und ein unvergängliches Wesen ans Licht gebracht hat. Hier in Nain tritt er uns entgegen.

Jesus, der Todesüberwinder,

1. im Tode, 2. nach dem Tode.

1.

Nain = die Liebliche. Aber auch in Nain kehrt der Tod ein. Er kennt auch kein Kirchenbuch: ein Jüngling. Und keine Barmherzigkeit: der einzige Sohn einer Witwe.

Ein besonders trauriger Fall? Ja; aber der Tod ist der schwerste Schlag, der uns treffen kann, einerlei wann und wo und unter welchen Umständen er kommen mag; und für den, der ihm allein entgegenght, bringt er nur Hoffnungslosigkeit und Verzweiflung.

Aber Jesus kommt, legt seine Hand auf die Wahre und sagt: „Weine nicht!“ Du hast keine Ursache zu weinen. Warum nicht? Weil er ihn auferwecken wollte? Nicht allein deswegen. Der Jüngling ist später doch wieder gestorben, und diese kurze Verlängerung seines