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Sermon Study on 1 John 2:12-17

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them all." To the reprobate God "does not wish this particular good, namely, eternal life."⁶⁸⁾

Now, it may be true that Luther never made a thorough study of Thomas Aquinas, but these two thoughts, that man must do what is in him in order that he may be a worthy recipient of grace and that God has predestinated some and reprobated others, these two thoughts which were developed further by the later theologians, especially by the so-called "moderns," caused Luther to be tormented in body and soul. Of this, God willing, we shall treat in a subsequent paper.

Morrison, Ill.

THEO. DIERKS

Sermon Study on 1 John 2:12-17

Eisenach Epistle for the Second Sunday in Lent

In the opening verses of his letter, John had laid the foundation for all his subsequent teachings by recalling for his own and his readers' adoring contemplation the manifestation of the eternal Son of God in the flesh, 1:1-3. His purpose in so doing was to bring his readers — and that includes us — to fellowship with himself and thereby with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, and thus to fulfil their joy, 1:3, 4. This joyous message of fellowship with God and His Son is the strongest and most effective antidote against Sadducean sin service, which militates against this fellowship with Light and has no part in the blood of Jesus, 1:5-7, and against pharisaic self-satisfaction, running counter to the work and veracity of Christ, vv. 8-10. In his sincere endeavor to guard his readers against sin and its baneful effects, he once more reminds them of their Advocate and His universal propitiation, but immediately adds that only then do they truly know this Advocate if they keep His commandments and walk as He walked, 2:1-6. And this is not a new commandment but an old and well-known one, v. 7, and yet a new commandment, coming with new strength and with fresh obligation, since darkness is passing away and light is already shining, the light which came in Christ Jesus, v. 8. What an incentive to walk in that light by walking in that love and fellowship with the brethren, vv. 9-11, to which he had already referred, 1:5-7, and in that love and fellowship with Him who is Light, 1:5, 6, which keeps itself unspotted from the world and its lusts, 2:12-17.

"I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young

68) *Summa*, I, q. 23, a. 3.

men, because ye have overcome the Wicked One. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong and the Word of God abideth in you and ye have overcome the Wicked One," vv.12-14. As we read these words in the original, three questions arise. How are the three terms, children, fathers, young men, to be interpreted? Why does the apostle change from "I write" to "I have written"? What is the meaning of $\delta\alpha$? As to the first question, space forbids our entering into a detailed presentation and refutation of all the various interpretations offered. The classification most generally adopted in our day, and withal the most satisfactory, regards both $\tau\epsilon\kappa\nu\acute{\iota}\alpha$ and $\pi\alpha\iota\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha$ as general terms, including all readers, and then distinguishing two classes of "children," viz., fathers and young men. To assume three different classes of either physical or spiritual age and maturity involves difficulties almost insurmountable. The order in which they are placed, seems strange, if not unnatural. One would rather expect children, young men, fathers, or the reversed order. Commentators adopting this classification find great difficulty in distinguishing just three classes of spiritual maturity and in assigning a valid reason why each one of the $\delta\alpha$ clauses applies especially to that one class. In fact, the apostle makes no distinction in the knowledge ascribed to the children and to the fathers, using for both the same term $\epsilon\gamma\nu\acute{\omega}\kappa\alpha\tau\epsilon$. On the other hand, $\tau\epsilon\kappa\nu\acute{\iota}\alpha$ is the common term used throughout the epistle for all readers, irrespective of physical and spiritual age or maturity, and $\pi\alpha\iota\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha$ is the term Christ used in calling to His disciples from the shore of Lake Tiberias, John 21:5, a scene and a term indelibly inscribed on the memory of the beloved apostle, a term which John himself uses in addressing all his hearers; cp. 1 John 2:18; 3:7 (in the latter passage the oldest manuscripts are equally divided between the two readings). Moreover, the $\delta\alpha$ clauses can readily be shown to be peculiarly adapted to the classes to which they are added if we distinguish only between young men and fathers. As to the change from "I write" to "I have written," the simplest explanation seems to be to assume that John changes the tense from the present to the "epistolary aorist" (whereby "the writer looks at his letter as the recipient will" [Robertson] and which is used 2:21, 26; 5:13) in order to avoid the sixfold repetition of the present tense. Incidentally, John uses the present tense, $\gamma\omicron\gamma\acute{\alpha}\phi\omega$, up to this change, 1:4; 2:1, 7, 8, 12, 13 a. b. Beginning with 13 c, — where the overwhelming evidence is in favor of the aorist, only a few later manuscripts offering the present, — the apostle uses the aorist, 2:14, 21, 26; 5:13. There is no indication whatsoever in the text that the present refers

to the epistle, the aorist to John's gospel. That suggestion seems too far-fetched to deserve serious consideration. As to the $\delta\upsilon$ clauses, translated "because" in the Authorized Version, commentators are practically agreed that the six $\delta\upsilon$ always have the same meaning, "because, for," stating not the contents of John's writing, but the reason why he writes what he is now writing. He would not dare to write as he is doing and as from the viewpoint of the readers he has done were it not for certain facts of which he is assured and which alone give him confidence and courage to admonish them as he does. The only other instance that $\delta\upsilon$ is used with "write" occurs 5:13, and there manifestly it means "for, because."

In order to avoid needless repetitions, we shall combine what John has to say to all readers and what he tells particularly to the fathers and to the young men. To all his readers he writes, *Little children*, $\tau\epsilon\kappa\upsilon\iota\alpha$, a term of endearment used once by the Savior, John 13:33, once by Paul, Gal. 4:19 (note the occasion), and then exclusively by John, 1 John 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21. $\tau\epsilon\kappa\upsilon\iota\omicron\nu$ designates the small child, infant, babe. John is the elder, the older not only in years, in experience, in maturity, he is also their divinely appointed master and teacher, not, however, a harsh taskmaster, a slave-driver, but a fatherly instructor, educator, who loves his disciples with a father's love, watches over them with a father's care, teaches them with fatherly patience, admonishes, warns, comforts, them with fatherly solicitude. Twice he uses endearing, caressing terms of tender love, assuring them of his affection, in order to win their hearts, to render them the more willing to listen to his plea. *I write to you because your sins are forgiven you.* Note the perfect; the sins have been forgiven. No need of worrying about that burden so unbearable for man, that dread load which, if not taken from him, will and must drag him down to eternal perdition. All sins are forgiven; they have been dismissed, sent away, cast into the depth of the sea. That forgiveness is an act of God in the past, the blessed fruits of which still continue in the life of all Christians. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," 2 Cor. 5:19; and when the Christian is first brought to faith, then this precious gift, this choicest of all treasures, is made his own, Acts 10:43; 13:38, 39. His sins are forgiven *for His name's sake.* No need of mentioning the name of Him whose name is above all other names. "When all around is darkling, His name and cross, still bright, Deep in my heart is sparkling Like stars in blackest night." Cp. Acts 4:12. The name of Jesus is Jesus Himself, as He reveals Himself to us in His Word and the Sacraments, the means whereby He gives to us those precious gifts purchased with His own

blood. Little children, you have forgiveness through the name of Jesus, and because you have this forgiveness, I am confident that the words which I am writing to you will not fall on deaf ears.

I have written unto you, little children, because you have known the Father. Again the apostle uses the perfect tense. His readers have come to the knowledge, and are now in blessed possession of that knowledge, which also in this case is a knowledge *cum affectu et effectu*. From the word of the Gospel preached to them they first learned about their true Father. In their baptism they experienced their regeneration, their new birth, as children of this heavenly Father. Throughout their lifetime they learned to know ever better, love more fervently, serve more faithfully, Him who is so much closer to them than their human parents, to whom they owe, not only their natural life, their body and soul, who, because He is the Father of their Lord Jesus Christ, has through Christ become their spiritual Father, Eph. 3:14, 15; Rom. 8:15; John 1:12, 13; and whose knowledge is life eternal, John 17:3. Him they have learned to know, and the longer they have been Christians, the better they have become acquainted with Him as their own dear Father.

Incidentally we note that both forgiveness and knowledge of God are not characteristics of a special class, least of all special privileges of "children," babes, physically or spiritually, but are the very essence, the heart and soul, the life, of every Christian, young or old. The apostle would have chosen different characteristics if he had intended to describe immature or very young Christians.

The apostle had in the first sentence of both series addressed all his readers by the term children. Now he distinguishes in both series between old and young Christians. While the younger Christians are conceived as being still in the midst of the battle, many years of warfare still lying before them, the older Christians, the fathers, can look back upon years of struggles ended, battles fought, warfare accomplished. Though the warfare of a Christian is a lifelong struggle, though even the old Christian dare never give up the fight, yet as he advances in years and the end of his life draws nearer, the surer he may be that his fight has been fought, his course has been finished, his faith has been kept, and that henceforth there is laid up for him the crown of righteousness, 2 Tim. 4:6-8. To these fathers the apostle writes, and he urges them to continue walking in light, because they have known Him that is from the beginning. No need of asking who that is. John himself had in the opening words of his epistle pointed out Him who was from the beginning and whom it had been his and his fellow-apostles' privilege to hear and see and touch, the Word of Life made flesh, their own Jesus, 1 John 1:1-3; cp. John 1:1-3.

Jesus is from the beginning, not by creation, but as the One who already was, existed, in the beginning, who is Alpha and Omega, Rev. 22:13; cp. Ps. 2:7; Heb. 13:8, the eternal, unchanging Jesus. The fathers are told that they have known Jesus. Their life's history may be summed up in these words: They have known Him who is from the beginning. No matter whether their names are inscribed in the halls of fame, whether their biographies will be written by noted historians and eagerly read by hero-worshiping multitudes, or whether they were unknown, overlooked, despised, trodden under foot, 1 Cor. 1:26-28, their life's history as Christians is the history of such as have come to know and love and serve the eternal Son of God, who are acknowledged by Him as His own in time and eternity. Their love, alas, was not always as fervent as it ought to have been. Their service was not always rendered with that willingness, that loyalty, that unselfishness, which their Redeemer deserved and asked for and looked for. Their life was a series of failings, of shortcomings, of sins, of wrong-doings; daily they sinned much, daily they deserved nothing but punishment. But through all their life's battle they ever experienced, they ever learned to know better, the unfailing grace and loving-kindness of Him who was from the beginning, of Him who has ever been their perfect Savior. The forgiveness procured by Him on Calvary never once failed them; the fountain opened up when He hung forsaken by God on the cross, to which they were given access by their regeneration, never once ran dry, never once was closed against them. No matter how often they came, no matter how scarlet their sins, how black their guilt, how shameful their disobedience, plunged beneath this flood, they lost all crimson stains. Daily, richly, their sins were forgiven, Ps. 103:3, 4. Through all the vicissitudes of life He remained their one loyal Friend, sticking closer than a brother: in days of joy and sorrow their Companion, their sympathetic High Priest, in perplexities their Counselor, in agonies of conscience their Prince of Peace, in battles and struggles their Captain of salvation, in temptations their Guardian and Shield, in sickness their Physician, in bereavement their Comfort, their Hope, the Resurrection and the Life. Always, ever, He remains what He was from the beginning, their God, their Brother, their Redeemer, their Savior. As such they have learned to know Him, as such they know, love, and serve Him. Shall they become disloyal to Him?

As the apostle twice addresses the fathers, so he twice speaks words of assurance to the young men. *I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the Wicked One.* Young men, youths, in full possession of youthful strength, their vigor unbroken, their vitality unimpaired, just ready to begin, or just having begun

life's battle, are addressed. That life's battle will be to every Christian youth a fierce struggle against bloodthirsty enemies that are using all their skill, all their strength, all their cunning, all their artifices, to rob him of his soul's salvation, of his Jesus. For this battle the young man needs above all strength and confidence, that strength, that assurance, which comes with faith, and with faith alone. A weak, faint-hearted, timid Christian, who despairs of victory, of success, of his Savior's grace and strength, will never gain the victory. In order to give to young men just that courage and assurance needed for their long warfare, the apostle tells them that he writes them because they have gained the victory. The verb *νικάω* and its nouns are used in the New Testament almost exclusively by John. Matthew uses the noun once in a quotation from the Septuagint, Matt. 12:20. Paul uses it three times in direct quotations from the Old Testament in an allusion to it, Rom. 3:4; 1 Cor. 15:54, 57, and only twice more, in Rom. 12:21, whereas John uses it at least 24 times, once in his gospel, 16:33, 6 times in his epistle, 17 times in Revelation. The apostle of love is the apostle of victory, and he wants his Christians to be victors. Yes, he tells his young men that they have overcome (note the perfect). The enemy is defeated, beaten, vanquished; the battle is won, the Christian is the victor. How is that possible? The apostle had told his readers that they had fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, 1 John 1:3. Christ has obtained the victory, John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11, 33; Col. 2:15; Rev. 5:5. With Him and in Him the Christian has gained the victory over the Wicked One. Though Satan still goes about as a roaring lion, though he still scowls fiercely, though he still breathes out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, he is judged, the deed is done, and one little word can fell him. Would you submit to a vanquished foe? Why yield to him who lies defeated, whose head is crushed beneath your conquering feet? Why permit the prisoner to chain the victor?

In order to fill their hearts and minds with holy courage and undaunted assurance of victory, the apostle adds his second plea: *I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong and the Word of God abideth in you and ye have overcome the Wicked One.* The apostle is certainly not a defeatist, nor does he want the spirit of defeatism to hamper and weaken his readers. You are strong, he tells them. The Word of God dwells, continues, in you. You have obtained the victory. They are strong in the Lord of course, John 15:5; Eph. 6:10-17, strong because the Word of God abides in them, dwells in them, continues in them, the Word implanted in their hearts by faithful parents and teachers. This Word of God will not leave them; it has no intention to depart and

leave them to fight life's battles alone. It is willing to abide, it actually will abide with them. Need they fear? Need they be discouraged, dismayed? They have overcome the Wicked One. They are the victors in the strife. What bold assurance! Three lightning bolts, three thunderclaps, upon the head of the wicked Foe. Three pillars of strength, three swords that know no failure in the hands of the believers: Young men, you are strong. God's Word abides in you. You have overcome. Here are the facts. Here is the unchanging truth. Away with fears and anxieties! Away with doubts and uncertainty! Only if you dissipate your strength, only if you evict the Word of God from its dwelling-place within your hearts, only if you willingly return to your prison-house, will it be possible for your enemies to defeat you, to overcome you. That is indeed positive preaching. It is by such positive preaching that the apostle succeeded in making his readers certain of their faith, sure of their victory. What the world needs today is more of such positive preaching. The Christians of John's time were not different from the Christians of our day. The temptations of our time and age are not greater, no more alluring, no more seductive than they were at John's time. By his preaching of divinely established facts, he established them in the truth, he made them victors.

The apostle does not intend to flatter his readers, much less to lull them into sleep, into false security and self-satisfaction. No, his purpose is to make them able and willing to live this assurance, to manifest their confidence, to fight the good fight of faith, knowing that victory is assured. His whole epistle is an admonition to sanctification on the basis of justification, and the chief object of his general appeal to all readers, and of his twice-repeated special pleas addressed to the fathers and to the young men, is to prepare them for the admonition immediately following.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, v. 15 a. *κόσμος*, world, here does not signify the world as the well-planned, harmonious creation of God, Gen. 1:31. The term denotes this world as it has been disarranged, corrupted, perverted by Satan, that realm within this world in which Satan is now the ruling spirit, 1 John 4:4; its prince, John 12:31; 14:30; its god, 2 Cor. 4:4; which is ruled by the powers of darkness and spiritual wickedness, Eph. 6:12, and therefore lies altogether in wickedness, 1 John 5:19; whose lusts and desires are ungodly, opposed to God, Titus 2:12; which knows not God, 1 Cor. 1:21; knows not Christ, John 17:25; cannot because of its unbelief receive the Spirit of God, John 14:17; which hates Christ, John 5:5, and His disciples, John 15:18, 19; which is already judged, John 12:31, and will be condemned, 1 Cor. 11:32; whose wisdom is foolishness with God, 1 Cor.

3:19; whose sorrow worketh death, 2 Cor. 7:10; whose fashion passeth away, 1 Cor. 7:31; 1 John 2:17. *Neither the things that are in the world*, those things which the world offers to man, its advantages, its pleasures, its riches, its wisdom, its righteousness, its honors, its glories, every item of which, if not essentially wicked, is steeped in, and contaminated by, that spirit of ungodliness, of hatred against the Lord and His Christ, which characterizes the world, without which it would not be "world."

Being delivered from this present evil world by the Lord Jesus Christ, Gal. 1:3, 4, having been chosen by Him out of the world, Christians are no longer of this world. They are in possession of greater treasures than the world offers or knows; they know the Father; they know Him who was from the beginning; they have forgiveness of sins; they are able to resist the allurements of the world; for they are strong, the Word of God abides in them, they have overcome the world. Therefore the apostle pleads with them, *Love not the world*. Do not direct your love to the world, do not permit your affection to become centered on its vanities and sins. As long as one is of the world, it is only natural that he loves the things of this world. Christians, new-born men with new affections, have but one object of their love, an all-satisfying one, Ps. 73:25. Therefore love not the world; for loving the world is incompatible with, and destructive of, the love toward God.

If any man love the world. The present tense is descriptive. If that is the state of mind of a man, then *the love of the Father*, toward the Father, the objective genitive, is *not in him*. These two loves are mutually exclusive. There is here no possibility of union, compromise, neutrality; there is antagonism, enmity, war to the finish. As the love toward our heavenly Father will fill the heart and mind of the child of God to the gradual and increasing expulsion and exclusion of the innate sinful love of the world, so the love of the world will, perhaps gradually at first, but in ever-increasing measure, destroy, exterminate, every vestige and trace of our love toward God.

It cannot be otherwise. The apostle tells us: *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world*, v. 16. The apostle proves the destructiveness of worldly love by its origin. At the same time he explains the term κόσμος, by naming three of its essential characteristics. *The lust of the flesh*. Flesh here denotes the sinful flesh, inherited from Adam, John 3:6, which is enmity against God, Rom. 8:7, sold under sin, Rom. 7:14. The *lust*, ἐπιθυμία, heat, passion, directed upon an object, hence desire, craving, coveting, aspiration, *of the flesh*, peculiar to the flesh, arising from the flesh as from its source, its seat, is bent on such things as are enmity

to God, springing from hatred to Him and therefore hateful to Him who demands love, and love alone. The lust, the desire, of the flesh is bent on such things as are called by Paul the works of the flesh, Gal. 5:19; cp. Eph. 5:3-6, these works being merely the manifestations of the desire hidden in the heart. *Lust of the eyes*. The depraved, wicked flesh rules all the members of the body and makes them all subservient to its sinful, vile desires. The apostle mentions particularly the eyes. It is remarkable how important a part the eyes play in the history of sin. Eve saw that the forbidden tree was good for food and for the acquisition of wisdom. But more than that, it was pleasant to the eyes, and before feasting her palate, she feasted her eyes on the forbidden tree, good in itself, a creation of God, but now an object of sinful desire, because of the sinful, wicked promise of Satan. Potiphar's wife fed the desires of her flesh by casting her eyes on Joseph. David fell because he looked upon his neighbor's wife. The Bible speaks of people having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, 2Pet. 2:14; of wanton eyes, Is. 3:16. Obscene pictures, immoral books, lewd shows on the stage and screen, suggestive clothing, or the lack of sufficient clothing, the nude in art and in fashions, all these thousand and one sights presented to the eyes in order to feed its lust, its desire, are included in this term. The term includes still more. Satan placed before the eyes of the Savior all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them in order to seduce Him by creating in Him the lust of eyes. The Savior speaks of the evil, envious eye, Matt. 20:15, that views with jealous eye the greater wealth, honors, position, talents, of the fellow-man. He speaks in general terms of offenses by means of the eye, Matt. 18:9; cp. also Prov. 23:5, 33; Jer. 22:17; Prov. 27:20; Eccl. 4:8. In brief, looking with longing eyes upon any object which our heart desires, but which has been denied us by a kind and wise Creator, is yielding to the lust of eyes, named here as part of the world which Christians must neither love nor covet.

Pride of life. 'Αλαζονία, empty boasting, vainglorious ostentation, presumptuous glorying in βίος, the mode, manner, of life. The value of the objects on which the world centers its affection is either an exaggerated one, cp. Matt. 16:26, or it exists only in the fancy of the worldly-minded, is created only too often by clever advertisement, by the tyrant Fashion, by any mood which makes things which have no intrinsic and lasting value matters of utmost importance until the whim, the mood, the fashion, changes. Which woman would wear today the up-to-the-minute styles of yesterday? And still these fleeting vanities to a large extent make up the "life" of the world; these vanities they love, of them they boast, without them life is not worth living. One must keep up with

the Joneses and Blacks and Browns, at least pretend and boast about it. It will not do to have last year's model if the Whites have purchased next year's. One must put on a front, whether genuine, whether sham; what difference does it make? Read Is. 3:16-26; Amos 6:1-6; Hag. 1:4, on such pride of life found among "God's own people" and God's judgment upon these people. How can such as love the world and the things of the world still call themselves lovers of God? All these things are *not of God*. He has created gold, and silver, and jewels, and wood, and stone. He has given to man skill and wisdom and beauty. He has fashioned the waves of the air and the currents of electricity. To him all things owe their origin, their being. But the sinful use to which they are being put, the exaggerated values placed upon them, the eagerness with which they are sought, the vainglory with which they are displayed and spoken of, all that is not of the Father, all that is of the world, is the world's own and peculiar product, abhorrent to God. Love not the world!

And the world passeth away and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever, v. 17. "The world passeth away and the lust thereof." *Passeth away*, is being led past, is passing by like a pageant, a parade, a circus. We hear the blaring of the trumpets in the distance as the procession approaches. We hear the shouting of the people. We crane our necks to see it come. At last it comes into view. For a few brief moments its tinsel, its gaudy colors, fascinate the eye; for a brief space of time we gaze at its vanities, and already it is passing by, vanishing in the distance, gone. Vanity of vanities! Eccl. 1 and 2; 1 Tim. 6:7. "What is all this life possesseth? But a hand full of sand." The more eagerly we seek to grasp sand, the tighter we clutch it, the quicker it will dribble through our fingers, leaving nothing but soiled hands, disappointments, sorrows. "The world passeth away." And whither does it go? Rev. 21:27; 20:10; 14:10, 11. If one loves this world, if one attaches himself to its vanities, if one's heart and soul cling to its pride and sinful lusts, if one is of this world, how can one hope to escape the fate of the world and the things that are in the world?

But he that doeth the will of the Lord abideth forever. The good and gracious will of the Lord is that we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and are saved, that we let the Crucified One be unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption; that we live in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness; that in fellowship with all believers, in fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, we walk in light as children of light. He that does this will, be he Jew or Gentile, Dives or Lazarus, a Solomon or a simpleton, Greek or Barbarian, he that doeth the will of the Lord, abideth forever. He has lasting, eternal

values in his possession, realities that are imperishable: an unchanging Savior, Ps. 102:27; Heb. 1:12; 13:8; an everlasting God as his dwelling-place, Ps. 90:1; a Gospel that passeth not away, that abideth in him, 1 John 2:14. This eternal God and Savior will by His Gospel keep him in faith until his end, 1 Cor. 2:9, 10, will raise him up on the Last Day, give unto him life eternal, John 5:24.

While the admonition vv. 15-17 immediately follows the apostle's encouraging words addressed to the young men and is certainly meant for them also, it would be a serious mistake to restrict the need of this warning to young people. Old people are not because of their age immune against the danger of becoming enamored of the world, of falling victims to its lures and attractions. David and Solomon, to mention only these two Biblical examples, were old men when they disgraced themselves by yielding to the very sins mentioned by the apostle. There is a reason why a miser is pictured as an old man, because that is one of the besetting sins of old age; there is a reason why the "bald men's row" is the stock in trade of the cartoonist. The pastor in his sermon will not overlook this fact. The underlying thought of the entire passage is a warning against love of the world. One may take as a theme, *Love Not the World*. 1) Remember your privileges: forgiveness, knowledge of Father and Son, vv. 12, 13 a. c, 14 a. What can the world offer in their place? Vv. 15, 16. 2) Remember your glorious future, 17 b, while the world passes away, 17 a. 3) Remember that you are strong, vv. 13 b, 14 b. Why not make use of this strength? — Out of the fulness of his love, kindled by the love of the Savior toward him, the apostle of love writes a letter of love to his children. This letter, and in particular this passage, is addressed to all who, like the apostle, have come to believe in, and love, their Savior. Hence we have here *A Loving Exhortation of a Father to His Children*. 1) He reminds us of our exalted privileges, vv. 12-14. 2) He warns us against loving the world, vv. 13-17. — *The Folly of Loving the World*. 1) For spiritual blessings it offers us worldly gifts. 2) For victory it offers us slavery (to lust and pride). 3) For realities it offers us passing vanities. — *The Fundamental Difference between the Christian and the World*. 1) Christians are of God (and therefore know and love God and His Son); the world is not. 2) Christians have overcome the Wicked One; the world serves him. 3) Christians will endure forever; the world passes away. — *Do You Know that You are Writing the Epitaph for Your Tomb?* Let your life spell these three lines: 1) He had forgiveness, for he knew the Father. 2) He overcame the Evil One, for he loved not the world. 3) He abideth forever, for he did the will of God. (Lenski, *Eisenach Epistle Selections*, p. 405.) TH. LAETSCH