

4-1-1938

## Sermon Study on 1 Pet. 1:3-9

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

Laetsch, Theo. (1938) "Sermon Study on 1 Pet. 1:3-9," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 9 , Article 27.  
Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol9/iss1/27>

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](mailto:seitzw@csl.edu).

## Sermon Study on 1 Pet. 1:3—9

Eisenach Epistle for the First Sunday after Easter, Quasimodogeniti

In the opening greeting of his epistle Peter had reminded his readers of the eternal foreknowledge and predetermination of God the Father according to which they had been elected, chosen, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Obedience here signifies the obedience of faith, 1 Pet. 1:22; Rom. 10:16; 2 Cor. 10:5, that obedience which gladly receives the Word of God, Acts 2:41. Through such faith the believers are sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, all the blessings procured for man are appropriated to them. For such obedience and sprinkling they were elected, not by an absolute decree of God but "through sanctification of the Spirit." As the decree of election is based on the grace of God and the merits of Christ, so it has for its purpose, as its object, the sanctification of the elect and is carried out in time through, *év*, within the sphere of, this work of the Holy Spirit, in this manner, that the Holy Spirit in time calls, regenerates, preserves, and finally brings them to eternal salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Having called the attention of his readers to the hidden wellsprings of their salvation, the eternal decree of election, he now points out the realization of this decree in their own lives and the glorious goal toward which God has decreed to lead them. He does this in the form of a most beautiful eulogy of the Author and Finisher of their salvation.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, v. 3.* "Blessed be God." Cp. 2 Cor. 1:3; Eph. 1:3. This phrase, so often met with in the Old Testament and in rabbinical writings, is not intended by the apostle as an exhortation to bestow upon God a gift, a blessing. God is not in need of man's gifts. He is ever blessed, 1 Tim. 1:11; 2 Tim. 6:15. Nor is there anything in the gift of man that could enrich God. Man can only stand before the throne of the ever blissful God and sing the praises of His holy name and magnify His mighty deeds. That is exactly what the Greek term for blessed here denotes. *Εὐλογητός* means well spoken of, praised, lauded. In the New Testament the word is used exclusively of God, though in the LXX it is applied to men also, while the New Testament writers use *εὐλογημένος*.

Peter now continues: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* God is to be praised not only because He is God, the Creator of the universe, to whom all creatures owe their life and existence and therefore never-ceasing praises; He



is here called the God and Father of Christ. Peter knows of no other God than Him who is at the same time the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the God of Christ, the God who took Him out of the womb, Ps. 22:9; in whom He trusted, Ps. 22:9, 10; to whom He prayed, Heb. 5:7; Luke 6:12; 9:28, etc.; to whom He addressed that agonized cry, "My God, My God," Ps. 22:1; who raised Him from the dead, Acts 2:32; Eph. 1:20; who remained His God even in the state of exaltation, John 20:19; Eph. 1:20-22. This God is at the same time the Father of our Lord, and His Father not merely in the sense in which He is the Father of all mankind, Mal. 2:10, or of the Christians, 1 John 3:1. Such a Father He became in time. He is the Father of our Lord from eternity, Ps. 2:7; the Father of that Jesus whom Peter calls the Son of the living God, Matt. 16:16; John 6:69; the Prince of Life, Acts 3:15; the Lord of all, Acts 10:36; the Judge of the living and the dead, Acts 10:42; whom time and again He calls Lord, the term being on his lips merely as a synonym of God, the Lord, Jehovah, Jer. 23:6. All the blessings that have been decreed for us in eternity and that are coming down upon us from the throne of God are ours only because God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that Lord whom we confess as our God and Lord, John 20:28; that Lord and God through whom God, the everlasting I Am, has become our God and Lord, our Father. For this our Lord is Jesus, the Savior, Matt. 1:21. He is the Christ, the Anointed One, sent by God to be our Redeemer, to make us children of God. This mission for which the Son was sent was not in vain. Its purpose to gain children for God was accomplished. Peter blesses the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has begotten us again, ἀναγεννήσας. The word is peculiar to Peter, found only here and 1:23. Like ἀνα in ἀναζάω, live again, Rom. 14:9; in ἀναψύχω, refresh, 2 Tim. 1:16, the ἀνα here means again, the English prefix *re*, hence reborn, born again. This rebirth is the regeneration, παλιγγενεσία, of Titus 3:5; the γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν of John 3:3. See also Eph. 2:5, 6, 10; Gal. 6:15; Col. 2:12; Jas. 1:18.

Rebirth, regeneration, is a very appropriate term for this work of God. It is indeed the creation of a new life, a life that did not exist before, the birth of a new man with a new heart, new powers, faculties, emotions, will, 2 Cor. 5:17. By his first birth man enters into a state of spiritual blindness and death, 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:1; of sinful depravity, John 3:6; of ignorance concerning spiritual things, 1 Cor. 2:13; of thinking and doing only evil continually, Gen. 8:21; Matt. 15:19; of enmity against God, Rom. 8:7; without Christ, God, hope, Eph. 2:11, 12; Col. 1:21. All that is now changed. In regeneration spiritual life is engendered, Eph. 2:5, 6; Gal. 2:20; man's eyes are opened, so that he sees in Christ Cru-



cified and His Gospel true wisdom, 1 Cor. 1:30; Gal. 6:14; he loves God, Ps. 73:23-28; he delights in God's Word, Ps. 119:24; Rom. 7:22; 2 Cor. 1:4; he is zealous of good works, Titus 2:14; Eph. 2:10.

It is God that regenerates. Natural life exists only by the power and wisdom of Almighty God, the Author and Fountain of life, Ps. 36:9; Job 10:8-12; Ps. 139:14-16. It is impossible for man to give life to himself, or to restore life to himself once he has lost it. Just so impossible is it for man to give unto himself spiritual life or to restore it to himself if it is lost. To beget himself either naturally or spiritually is impossible for man, a contradiction in itself. It is a work, a miracle, of God, a new creation. We believe according to the working of His mighty power, Eph. 1:20. This manifestation of God's creative omnipotence in man's regeneration is motivated by His loving-kindness and grace, or, as Peter puts it, *according to His abundant mercy*. Mercy, *ἔλεος*, is pity, compassion, called forth by the misery of man and manifesting itself in deeds of mercy. Note the emphatic placing of the word *abundant*, much. Marvelous, indeed immeasurable, is His mercy which prompts Him to regenerate men. God, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and who sent His Son to be the Redeemer of the world, saw that man would not and could not by His own reason or strength save himself. Life, salvation, heaven, immortality, may seem to natural man prizes worth striving for. But if he looks for life after death, it is a life earned by his own efforts. If he hopes for salvation, it is a salvation by character, by virtuous living. Salvation through Christ, life in the Crucified One, perish the thought! This pride, this opposition to God's plan of salvation, this rejection of Christ and His redemption, was all that God saw in man. That is all the gratitude He experienced for His great love, John 3:16. Did He cast all men away forever, these ungrateful wretches? No, as His love prompted Him to redeem them, so His "abundant mercy" moved Him to commiseration with their helplessness, their natural hopelessness. He did what man could never do—He gave to them new life, a spiritual life. He Himself brought them to faith through the means He Himself had appointed for this purpose, His Gospel, 1 Pet. 1:21; 1 Cor. 4:15; and Baptism, John 3:3,5; Titus 3:5. He did not force regeneration upon man against his will. He made of unwilling enemies willing children. Graciously, lovingly, in the abundance of His mercy, in the fulness of compassion truly divine, Eph. 2:4, He melted their hearts of stone and filled them with faith and love and hope.

The heart of the reborn man is filled with hope. That is the purpose which God had in mind when He regenerated us —He



*hath begotten us unto a lively hope.* The absence of the article does not denote this hope as one of many hopes, but, as so frequently, brings out the qualitative force of the noun. This hope is really and actually hope, one worthy of the name, which has every characteristic of hope, making it not a vain illusion, but hope based on a solid foundation. This hope is a lively, living, hope. What hope natural man has of salvation, of a life after death, does not deserve the name of hope, much less of living hope. As man himself is spiritually dead, so his hope in all matters pertaining to spiritual welfare is a dead hope, which can at best deceive him by fairy-land visions and beautiful castles in the air but will vanish in the hour of death and will then turn into everlasting despair. The hope of regenerated man is a living hope; it is a hope characterized by life, having within itself an inexhaustible fountain of life, continuously living (present participle), remaining a living, undying hope, though all the forces of sin and hell rise up against it. Living hope conquers the fear of death, even death itself, even as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has begotten His children unto this living hope, knows neither fear of death nor death itself.

We were begotten unto this living hope *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.* The resurrection is mentioned here as the key-stone, the crowning feature, in Christ's glorious work of redemption. He had been among the dead. He had been placed in the grave, a corpse. The Prince of Life had been killed. Yet it was impossible that He should be holden of death, Acts 2:23, 24. He rose from the dead as the Conqueror of death. By this resurrection we are regenerated. The resurrection of Christ is not only a symbol of our spiritual resurrection, it is not only the immovable foundation on which the possibility of our regeneration rests; it is more than that. It is the fountainhead, the source, the generative power, of our rebirth unto a living hope. Christ's resurrection was not only the conquest of temporal death; it was His triumph over all our enemies, including spiritual death. Even spiritual death was conquered, vanquished, slain, by this Prince of Life, and life, not only temporal life, but spiritual and eternal life, was brought to light through His resurrection. The new birth, regeneration, was one of the gifts He brought out of His grave on resurrection morn and is now being offered to all men through His living Gospel, 1 Pet. 1:23. The risen Christ, the resurrection of Christ, regenerates. Through the risen Christ, the resurrection of Christ, God has begotten us. Cp. Eph. 2:5, 6. The Father and Christ are One; therefore the Son does whatsoever the Father does, John 5:19-21. Thus Is. 53:10-12 is fulfilled. (On "pleasure of the Lord" see Ex. 33:11, same word-stem; cp. also 2 Thess.



1:11.12.) Says Luther: "Therefore we must teach in this manner: Behold, Christ has died for you. He has taken upon Himself, and placed Himself under, sin and death. Yet they could not conquer Him, for He was too strong. He is risen and has conquered and subdued unto Himself all enemies. And He did this in order that you might be delivered from them and be a lord over them. If you believe this, you have it."

*To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, v. 4.* The apostle takes up the *et*; of v. 3 and repeats it in order to expand on our Christian hope unto which we have been regenerated and to show that it indeed deserves the name of hope and living hope. We are begotten again to *an inheritance*. Children are heirs. Having been begotten by God, having been born as His children, we are His, God's, heirs, Rom. 8:17; Gal. 4:7. This inheritance is worthy of our Father. Like Him, it is *incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away*. As our divinely engendered hope is a living hope, so this divinely prepared inheritance is a living inheritance. Incorruptible! Who can fathom the contents of this one word while dwelling in this world, the abode of corruption? Wherever we look, corruption, decay, stares us in the face. Heaven and earth shall pass away, the mountains, emblems of eternity, shall vanish. Man is born with the germ of death. "Change and decay in all around I see." Yonder inheritance is not subject to corruption, to change; it is indestructible, eternal, as God Himself is eternal, Ps. 90:1. Undefiled, uncontaminated by sin, unspotted by unrighteousness. In this world the Serpent's slimy trail is everywhere in evidence. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one!" Job 14:4. "Forgive us our trespasses." My sin, my guilt, my enormous guilt! Father, I have sinned against Thee! Our inheritance there shall be undefiled! What ecstasy to breathe the pure air of Paradise, where righteousness and perfection shall dwell! Ps. 85:10, 11; Rev. 22:27. — *That fadeth not away*. How quickly do we tire of our joys in this present world! How soon are we dissatisfied with our pleasures and look for new ones! The pleasures of heaven, the bliss of eternity, will never fade. Never shall we grow weary of them. Time, even eternity, cannot age nor custom stale this perfect bliss. For then time will have ceased. We shall have left days and years and centuries and millenniums, all measurements of time, behind. Ageless, endless eternity, unlimited, unbounded, lies before us, embraces us, takes us up in its arms. The time of change and decay, of birth and death, of gaining and losing, of defilement and cleansing, of passing from one state to another, will be past and gone forever. Then we shall be like God in perfect holiness and righteousness, like



Him also in the enjoyment of that everlasting changelessness, that unending freshness, that never-ceasing novelty of heavenly bliss, Ps. 102:27; 2 Pet. 1:4. Calov quotes John Huss on this verse: "This inheritance is incorruptible in itself, undefiled by any other matter, it cannot be faded by time. It is incorruptible because it never depreciates, being affected neither by age nor sickness nor any sorrow. It is undefiled because it receives nothing unclean into itself. It fadeth not away because even long-continued enjoyment cannot finally impair the enjoyment of this heavenly life of the blessed."

*Reserved in heaven.* Τηρέω, to guard, keep, reserve. The perfect participle indicates that this reserving of our inheritance has taken place in the past and that the inheritance is still being carefully guarded, kept safe. As valuables are put in a safe-deposit box and this box is placed in a burglar-proof vault and, in addition, carefully watched over and protected against theft by special guards, so our inheritance has been placed in safe-keeping and is being carefully watched and guarded against all attempts to destroy it. It is reserved *in heaven*. The Bank of England is regarded as almost absolutely impregnable. Heaven is a safer place, Matt. 6:20. Heaven is where God is, where the angels, mighty men of valor, Ps. 103:20, are, where the forces of evil cannot enter. Those angels which seek to destroy the works of God and frustrate His plans are no longer in heaven, Jude 6; Rev. 12:7-9. They cannot cross that gulf, Luke 16:26. In heaven dwells only God and His holy angels, and God has prepared and reserved the inheritance for His children on earth, and His angels delight in safeguarding it. *For you*, εἰς, denotes motion, direction, unto, toward you, here in the sense of to the advantage of, for. A miser hoards and carefully guards his treasures for himself. The God of grace, who is abundant in mercy, has placed the inheritance in safe-keeping for others, for such as He wants to share with Him the possession and enjoyment of these heavenly treasures. For you, scattered strangers, v. 11, who have here no continuing city, Heb. 13:14, who nevertheless are elect according to God's grace, begotten again by the resurrection of Jesus, for you the Father has reserved, and is guarding, your inheritance.

*Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time*, v. 5. God is not satisfied with safeguarding the inheritance of His children. He knows that they themselves are in need of His constant watchful care and defense. They are kept, being kept, φρουρουμένων. This word, a military term, as Calov calls it, is used 2 Cor. 11:32 to describe the efforts to prevent Saul's escape from Damascus by setting guards at every gate. It is used Gal. 3:23 of the children of God



in the Old Testament whose every step, every movement, every action, was being watched, who could not escape the surveillance of the Law, which like a military guard was everlastingly calling, Halt! Forbidden! Thou shalt not! They were under the watchful eye of an untiring schoolmaster, Gal. 3:24, kept in bondage, 4:1, 3. That is the one activity of a guard, to prevent escape of those committed to his watch. So Christians are kept safe in their faith and hope, guarded against escape from, loss of, their glorious estate. That citadel of Christian faith and hope seems to the flesh a dreary dungeon, an intolerable imprisonment. Our state of adoption and sonship appears to the flesh as abject slavery, degrading serfdom. From this prison, this bondage, our flesh seeks to escape, longing for the liberty of walking again the broad and easy path of its own desires and lusts. We are kept safe from, guarded against, our own flesh and blood, prevented from escaping, running away from our glorious estate. The word *kept* includes more. A guard will guard his *protégés* also against attacks from without. We are kept safe, protected, against all efforts of our enemies to rob us of our glorious inheritance. All efforts of our own flesh to run away from God, all efforts on the part of Satan and the world to deprive us of our faith and hope, will be foiled. No enemy is strong enough to wrest from us our precious possession. We are kept by the power not of man, nor of angels only. Though our fellow-Christians may pray for us, admonish and strengthen us, though angels protect us on all our ways, there is needed, and there is active on our behalf, a stronger power than that of mortal man or created angel. We are kept *by the power of God*. The omnipotence of the God who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the mighty strength of Him who has begotten us again, is our guarantee that we shall be kept, guarded, protected, until we have arrived at our precious heritage. That does not mean that we ever shall be unassailed by temptation, be exempt from all danger, free from all attacks. Our own flesh, the evil Foe, and the unbelieving world are constantly, twenty-four hours of the day, exerting all their power to regain us as their slaves and bond-servants, to rob us of our hope and inheritance. Yet just as continually, just as assiduously, just as ceaselessly (note the participle present), the Keeper of Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps, is watching over us. There is not a moment during which the Father's watchful eye is not upon His children, His powerful arm is not protecting, His mighty hand not upholding them, John 10:28; Ps. 27:1-6; Ps. 91. This truth does not contradict such passages as attribute the preservation of Christians to the grace, 1 Cor. 1:4, 8, and peace of God, Phil. 4:7, His faithfulness, 1 Cor. 1:9; 10:13. God's grace, peace, faithfulness, is omnipotent grace,



almighty peace and faithfulness. The grace, the peace, the faithfulness, the power, of the never-sleeping Keeper guards us against losing the inheritance which is reserved in heaven for us, unto which we were chosen from eternity.

God keeps us by His power *through faith*. Faith alone saves, Mark 16:16; and this faith must be persevering faith, Matt. 10:22. But such persevering faith God Himself keeps and preserves in us. By keeping us in faith until the end, He keeps us through faith unto salvation. Needless to say, as children of God we use those means by which God preserves faith, Word and Sacrament, John 8:31; Heb. 12:15; 2 Cor. 6:11.

*Unto salvation.* That is the blessed goal of our faith and hope, unto which we were begotten again, unto which we are kept by the power of God: salvation, deliverance from all evil, 2 Tim. 4:18, the final redemption from all sin and unrighteousness, everlasting bliss in the presence of God and our Savior. This salvation is ready, has already been prepared. It is that inheritance which is reserved in heaven ever since Christ suffered and died for us, John 14:2; invisible to mortal eyes, hidden, Col. 3:3; yet "ready to be revealed." All it needs is the lifting up and away from it, ἀπό, the covering, the veil, now hiding it from our view.

*Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations*, v. 6. "Wherein ye greatly rejoice," ἀγαλλιᾶσθε. The apostle uses a word denoting exceeding joy, exultation, shouting for joy. Matt. 5:8 the Lord uses this word in exhorting His followers to rejoice in tribulation. Many commentators find a similar exhortation here. Others regard it as the indicative and refer it to the present joy of the Christian, a foretaste of heavenly exultation. We prefer to take it with Luther as the futuristic presence. This usage is quite common in the New Testament, especially in predictions, as Robertson says: "The futuristic presence startles and arrests attention. It affirms and not merely predicts. It gives a sense of certainty." This sense fits in well with the context. The apostle, as it were, sees his readers on that Day assembled before the throne of God; he hears their glad shoutings of heavenly joy. He predicts not merely, he asserts, he assures them of the fact. If he referred to the present joy, it would seem that "now" would have been connected with "rejoice" rather than with "are in heaviness." In keeping with Peter's style "wherein" must be connected with "last time." Compare the similar construction, vv. 5, 8, 10, in each of which a new sentence connects with the last word of the preceding sentence. Finally ἐν denotes the time, not the object, of their rejoicing; that is added by ἐπὶ or a ἵνα clause. Cp. John 5:35: "rejoice in his light," "while his light shone," Thayer. In that



last time ye rejoice, shall rejoice, *though now*, in this present time, which hurries past, Job 7:6, 7; 9:25; 24:29; Ps. 39:6 ("now" points to a future time, when they will not suffer but rejoice), *for a season*, ὀλίγον, denotes both a short time and a small number or measure. Both meanings fit here. What are the few years of life on earth compared with the eternity of heaven? And what are all the sorrows of this present time, even though they be exceedingly grievous, Job 10:20; Lam. 3:1-19, compared with the glory to be revealed in us? Rom. 8:18. *If need be*. Christians suffer only if in the wisdom of their God and Father, who has chosen and begotten them, it is necessary, if it is helpful, beneficial, to them, Lam. 3:26, 27, 31-33; Heb. 12:4-12. If it is not necessary, our Father will not once afflict us.

*Ye are in heaviness*, λυπηθέντες. The aorist again proves that the rejoicing of the Christians will take place after they have sorrowed. The present participle would have been the proper tense if their rejoicing were to be contemporaneous with their suffering. *Through manifold temptations*, testings, provings. Because these testings are often vexatious, agonizing, to the Christians, the word is often used in the sense of afflictions, trouble, adversity, exactly as the English word trial is used in both senses. What intense anguish did the testing of Abraham's faith cause him! Yet he stood the test, Rom. 4:18-21. What a trial for Jesus were the temptations which He underwent! Can the children of Abraham, the brethren of Jesus, look for a life of ease, free from trouble, untouched by storms? These trials are *manifold*, of divers sorts, varied. Not all Christians have the same experiences, and every Christian has many different trials, as his individuality, his personality, differs from that of other children of God and as he is gradually being developed unto a perfect man, Eph. 4:13, under the wise training and discipline of the Father. This is the thought brought out in the next verse.

*That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ*, v. 7. The "trial," δοκίμιον, that by which something is tried, used in the LXX of a crucible, Prov. 27:2; Ps. 12:7; used here metonymically, *efficiens pro effectu*, in the sense of approved character, genuineness. The genuineness of faith is described as being *much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire*. Gold is perishable, but, δε, it can be refined. Yet even after refinement it remains corruptible; it wears away, perishes at the end of time. The genuineness of a Christian's faith is more precious, of far greater value, of a far more precious and noble character, than that of gold. It is imperishable, of incorruptible gen-



uineness. This quality of the Christian faith, retaining its trust, its unshaken confidence in spite of all trials, obstacles, oppositions, storms, is generally doubted and ridiculed by unbelievers, cp. 1 Cor. 1:21-28, and is challenged by Satan before the very throne of God, Job 1:9-11; 2:4, 5. Yet in due time, when Christ Jesus, the Author and Finisher of the Christians' faith, shall appear, v. 7, when God, who has engendered this faith in them and thereby has begotten them as His children, will give them their inheritance, then the genuineness of their faith, far more precious than gold, *will be found*, will be recognized by all, will manifest itself in its true character, in its sterling quality, which nothing could change or corrupt or destroy, and it will be *found unto praise and honor and glory*. God Himself will publicly and in the face of all opponents and calumniators acknowledge and praise the genuineness of their faith, 1 Cor. 4:5, even as He praised the faith of Job, Job 1:8; 2:3; 42:7-10. He will grant to them honor and glory by granting them to participate in the honor and glory of Jesus Christ, Heb. 2:7, which itself consists in participating in the Father's honor and glory, 1 Tim. 1:17. Cp. Matt. 13:43; John 17:22-24; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rom. 2:7, 10; 9:21. This manifestation of the genuineness of their faith unto praise and honor and glory will take place at the *appearing of Jesus Christ*; cp. Luke 17:30; Rom. 8:19; Col. 3:3, 4; 1 John 3:2.

*Whom, having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls*, vv. 8, 9. The readers of the epistle have not, like Peter and the apostles, seen their Lord and Savior; yet they love Him, ἀγαπᾶτε, are attached to Him with a constant, enduring love, a love by choice, based not merely on emotion, but on the knowledge and daily experience of what Christ has done, and is daily doing, for them; a noble love, combined with highest veneration for His exalted personality, yet remaining love, deep-seated, whole-hearted, for He is their Savior God. *In whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing*. They have not seen Him, ἰδόντες, and as long as it is *now*, they are not seeing Him, ὁρῶντες, He is still hidden from their eyes. Yet they are believing ones. The invisibility of Christ does not affect their divine assurance. Their faith, begotten of God, reaches out into those hidden realms of invisible glory. Faith is convinced of the reality of its objects. divinely sure, Heb. 11:1.

*Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*. "Rejoice" again is futuristic presence. This is demanded by the contrast to "*now ye see Him not*." Had the apostle meant to refer to present joy, he would have placed the "*now*" before "*rejoice*" or omitted it.



The present joy of Christians cannot be called a glorified joy. The present participle, "receiving the end," etc., denotes a joy contemporaneous with the receiving, hence a joy still lying in the future. *Joy unspeakable* shall then fill their hearts. Human language cannot describe the glories, the joy, and the exultation of eternal life. This joy of heaven is one of those mysteries that the human mind cannot conceive, even though the fact of it is revealed in Holy Writ, 1 Cor. 2:9, 10. Already in this world great joy may surpass verbal expression, may be too deep, too wonderful, for words. Overwhelmed, almost awed, one stands in silence, until finally the pent-up joy finds expression in glad shoutings and jubilant songs of praise. Compare the remarkable passage Zeph. 3:17: "He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest," be silent, "in His love." His joy and love, humanly speaking, are beyond expression. A marvelous example of the love and joy that will fill our hearts and minds, our whole beings, in yonder life. This joy will be *full of glory*, δεδοξαμένη, glorified; cp. Rom. 8:30. As their human bodies will be changed like unto the glorious body of Christ, Phil. 3:21, so their joy, now a joy of humiliation, shall be transformed into a state of glorification suitable to its glorious surroundings. The object of this joy will be Jesus Christ. He is the One in whom they were chosen in eternity, v. 2; through His resurrection they were regenerated, v. 3; through faith in Him they are kept unto salvation, v. 5; at His appearance in glory they shall be glorified with Him and by Him, v. 7; He shall be the chief object of their never-ending joy. In Him they shall truly enjoy the bliss of life eternal. He is the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, and the Everlasting One in the great work of salvation.

This joy and rejoicing will reach its perfection of glory when they shall receive the end of their faith. Κοιτῶ, to carry off as a prize, receive, obtain. Even if moments of unspeakable joy, almost approaching heavenly rapture, may be granted to believers already in this vale of tears, yet they are only brief moments, followed by periods of quiet joy or even of sadness, of bitter sorrow, almost stifling all expressions of joy. Only when He, their Life, shall be manifested in His glory, then for the first time, and then forever, their joy will be a glorified, a perfected joy, a never-ceasing jubilant service of God and their Savior, in which Ps. 118:15 ff. shall be then fulfilled in perfection. Then faith and its sister, hope, will cease to be, for then they have reached *the end*, the goal, of faith. Faith and hope shall have served their purpose, and served it well. Faith has brought them to the goal, put them in possession of their prize, and hope has cheered them on the way. Now there is no more need of faith, because they see Him as He is; now there is no more need of hope, for they are in full possession and enjoy-



ment of *the salvation of their souls*. The word "soul" does not exclude the body but is used in the sense of individual life, personality, the ego; cp. Acts 2:41, 43; Rom. 13:1, etc. In that day the same Jesus Christ who rose from the dead on that first Resurrection Day will be manifested as the Savior of our bodies also from the power of death, John 5:25-29; Is. 25:8; 26:19; Rev. 20:13. What a glorious resurrection morn for all believers! What a glorious day of home-coming that will be! Ps. 126. Then salvation full and complete will be ours. No longer shall we be tossed about by wind and weather but be safe in the harbor from which we never again shall launch forth. No longer shall we be beset by sin, no longer harassed by doubts, assailed by enemies, afflicted with tribulations; no longer will it be necessary constantly to crucify the flesh, Gal. 5:24; 1 Cor. 9:27; but finally and forever we shall be delivered, saved, from the hand of all that hate us, Luke 1:71, 74, 75; Is. 35:10; Rev. 7:14-17.

---

This passage has been admirably chosen as the pericope for the First Sunday after Easter, Quasimodogeniti Sunday. It speaks of the resurrection of Christ as the source of our regeneration. Christ's resurrection and the Christians' regeneration are intimately connected. *Easter Time a Time of Rejoicing*. 1) Christ is risen from the dead. 2) Through His resurrection we are begotten again unto a lively hope. 3) As children of God we are sure of our inheritance. — *The Resurrection of Christ the Heart of Christianity*. 1) It is the source of our regeneration. 2) It is the fountainhead of our hope. 3) It is the well-spring of eternal joy. — *Thanks Be to God, who has Begotten Us Again*. 1) By His abundant mercy; 2) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ; 3) unto a lively hope. — *At Easter-time We Praise God* 1) for Christ's resurrection from the dead; 2) for our resurrection from spiritual death; 3) for our resurrection unto eternal joy. — The keynote of our passage is Christian hope based on Christ's resurrection. On my way to church I pass a street called Hope Street. It leads off one of the main highways of the State, but leads nowhere. At its head is a sign "No Through Street." After running 200 feet, it ends abruptly, a fence of heavy timbers effectually making further progress impossible. That is a symbol of the hope of the unbeliever. *Christian Hope Is Sure Hope*. 1) It is based on Christ's resurrection. 2) It leads to an incorruptible inheritance. — *The Christian Religion a Religion of Certainty*. 1) God has regenerated us unto a sure hope. 2) God keeps us through faith unto salvation. 3) God will finally give unto us our inheritance.

TH. LAETSCH