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## Miscellanea

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## Miscellanea

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### An Interesting Testimony of the "Fathers"

The following paragraphs are taken from the preface of *Lehre und Wehre* of 1876. The *Vorwort* of that year was written by Professor Martin Guenther and touches upon some points of importance which are again engaging the attention of Lutheran pastors in America today. We quote in a translation which is as exact as possible without becoming un-English:

"Another reproach which is brought against us is that accusing us of fanaticism and sectarian conduct. There are many points which our opponents here allege, but in part they do not strike us, and in part they are not a proof of fanaticism on our part but a testimony in our favor. . . .

"As for the *doctrine of Antichrist*, we do not believe that it is a primary article of faith, without a knowledge of which one could not come to the knowledge of saving faith, such as the doctrine of Christ or of redemption; nor do we regard it as a secondary article of faith but as a dogma, as a proposition of belief. Cp. Quenstedt, *Theol. Did.-pol.*, IV, c. 16, s. 2, p. 1688.

"But the fact that this doctrine of the Roman Pope as the Antichrist in the proper sense is neither a primary nor a secondary article of faith does not detract from its high importance. It is to be regarded as important even on this account, that it is clearly revealed in the Word of God. It is not merely a conclusion out of history, but out of Scripture as it was fulfilled in history (*nicht nur aus der Geschichte, sondern aus der geschichtlich erfüllten Schrift*). The marks of Antichrist are exactly indicated in Scripture. All these characteristics are found only in the Pope of Rome, and that perfectly, so that it is not necessary for Scripture to say *expressis verbis*, The Pope is the Antichrist! Did not Jesus of Nazareth have to be recognized as the true Messiah by the fact that in Him all the characteristics were found which the Messiah was to have according to the Old Testament prophecies, since God did not desire to call down from heaven to every individual, 'This is My beloved Son.' Before there was an Antichrist in the true sense of the word, it was not necessary for men to know that there was one and who he was. But when Antichrist actually appeared, the Church of God realized at once that it was the Pope of Rome, and Luther and the ancient theologians proved with great power that all the prophecies of Scripture concerning Antichrist were literally fulfilled in the Pope. Dannhauer says correctly: 'Either no Antichrist will come, or it is he who presides at Rome, whom all the characteristics fit.' *L. Consc.*, I, 536.

"This doctrine is important also for the reason that Antichrist is so dangerous. It has indeed been remarked that the expression 'man of sin' does not fit the Pope. And yet there is no expression which more fittingly characterizes the Pope than just this one. Against the holy Gospel, which is to cancel our sins, he rages with all his might; he everywhere creates sin and plunges into sin, as he himself is full of

sins. Can there be a more horrible sin than that of persecuting and execrating the Gospel of the free grace of God, of the merit of Christ, and of the faith in Him? All the activity of the Pope is against Christ; he is the greatest enemy of Christ, although he still uses the name of Christ. It is this fact that makes him so dangerous. And it is truly nothing but the craft of the evil Foe that he causes man to deny not only his own existence but also the existence of his most active ally against Christ. Spenser writes: 'This truth and matter, namely, that the Pope at Rome is the Antichrist, we are diligently to note. . . . This article is one which our Church in the Smalcald Articles has expressly confessed, and we may not give up this truth. And I on my part regard it as certain: Any one who does not recognize the kingdom of the Pope as the kingdom of Antichrist does himself not yet stand so firm that he may not by the one or the other deception be seduced into it; but he who holds this conviction in his heart will be pretty well fortified against apostasy.' (*Reformat.-Pred.*, 1687.)

"And, finally, we should make ourselves guilty of the most shameful ingratitude over against the blessings of Luther's Reformation, by which the Antichrist was fully unmasked and the doctrine concerning him brought to the proper clearness, if we should not adhere to this doctrine; we should not be worthy of enjoying even the slightest blessing of the Reformation if we would not receive also this blessing gratefully. . . .

"This also we must definitely deny, when we are reproached, in order to accuse us of fanaticism, of making use of unchristian, quarrelsome, proud polemics, which presumes to judge motives (*herzensrichterisch*). . . .

"Nor is that true when we are accused of declaring even such as heretics as *err from weakness*. For what does it mean to declare a person a heretic? It means to label him as a person who errs against the foundation of faith and deliberately adheres to, and propagates, his error. Have we ever regarded such as *err from weakness* in this way or treated them so? Never. What is said in the preface to the *Christian Book of Concord* with regard to the 'condemnations, censures, and rejections of godless doctrines,' namely, that 'it is in no way our design and purpose to condemn those men who err from a certain simplicity of mind but are not blasphemers against the truth of the heavenly doctrine,' but 'that it has been our intention and disposition in this manner openly to censure and condemn only the fanatical opinions and their obstinate and blasphemous teachers' (*Trigl.*, 19), that is also our confession, and we have always acted accordingly. In the preface to the 14th volume of this periodical the declaration was made: 'Nor do we wish to say this, that no distinction is to be made among the members of the Church and that from them all an equally correct judgment must be demanded also with regard to such points of the doctrinal content of the Bible as do not belong to its dogmatic foundation. It may very well happen that a *simple Christian*, because he is not able to see the correctness and the necessity of a certain conclusion, will deny even a secondary fundamental doctrine till his death, and yet one could not, on account of this persistent denial or only on account of his adherence to a secondary fundamental error, exclude him from the fellowship of

the Church as a heretic. How much more will this be the case with reference to such points of faith as do not at all belong to the fundamental articles of the Christian faith! . . . This is true indeed in particular of laymen who are in error, since such errorists as desire to teach others must on the whole be judged differently. That those who love a false peace consider some of those whom we attack as weak Christians will hardly decide the matter. These people themselves will hardly want to be regarded thus. And we are certainly not under obligation, by any commandment of the Lord, to call such men 'dear brethren' as, in spite of one or more admonitions, turn away from the truth. But those who really erred from weakness we have always borne with patience.

"Therefore we must also reject as untrue the accusation which, in order to stamp us as fanatics, is raised against us that we *acknowledge only such an organization as a true Church as is fully correct in doctrine*. For if we practice patience against individuals who are weak, why should we not act in the same manner with regard to entire organizations? . . . We have always held that it is much more important that the right spirit rule in an organization than that every doctrine should be presented in the most correct manner. Where, in spite of the correct presentation of the truth, a false spirit rules, there pride, the mother of all heresies, rules; but where the right spirit rules and the right doctrine of justification is in force, there the false doctrine will gradually be consumed. Therefore the preface referred to above declared: 'We definitely do not want to say, when in a church organization any error still has sway which does not subvert the foundation of faith, although it clearly militates against a clear word of God, that this organization has already lost the character of a Church with which an orthodox Christian may have communion. To admit that every individual member of the Church may err and yet to deny that the entire true Church may err, would be a miserable contradiction, of which only a papist could become guilty. So long, therefore, as a Church does not become obdurate in its error, its error, even if grievous, does not form a dividing chasm, least of all, if it has already entered upon the way toward a union in the full truth.' (P. 66 f.)

"This naturally does not mean that, in case we do not refuse to acknowledge an organization which does not take the totally correct attitude in doctrine, we must keep silence with regard to its aberrations. It is a strange opinion of our opponents that, in case one censures something in an acknowledged organization, one thereby annuls the acknowledgment, 'breaks' with that organization or even 'excommunicates' it, or that the acknowledgment of an organization [as a Christian body] involves also the approbation of everything that is found in it. While the enemies of polemics regard silence in such cases as being demanded by love, we believe that we are acting contrary to love if we keep silence. Oh, that people would but realize that rebuking of error is not a matter of our choice. We are servants of the Lord, of whom He demands faithfulness. As faithful servants we must guard the treasure entrusted to us. . . .

"If our opponents, furthermore, with the accusation of fanaticism and sectarian ways, would also raise the further accusation that we

earnestly testify against all error contrary to Scripture and against all the cunning as it is revealed, we on our part can find no fanaticism, no sectarian ways, in such testimony. For we have the definite command not to deviate from the Word of God, neither to the right nor to the left, and neither to subtract from it nor to add anything thereto. We cannot give up anything of the Word of God; we must be zealous for every word of the Lord and therefore also rebuke every error seriously. . . .

"That the rejection of an outward union in the Church without an inward unity in doctrine and faith is not fanaticism, not sectarianism, is not difficult to see. [Reference is here made to Eph. 4:3-5; 1 Cor. 1:10.] An organization, therefore, can be considered as united only when it is truly inwardly united in the faith. If it attempts to simulate an external unity without being inwardly united, this is nothing but hypocrisy and therefore an abomination before God. To inveigh against such hypocrisy is certainly not fanaticism. And if our opponents make our rejection of all such outward semblance-unity (*Scheineinigung*) an accusation against us, they thereby give us the testimony that we do not want to take part in a matter which is an abomination in the eyes of God."

P. E. K.

### Texts of the Wuerttemberg Gospel Selections

Since the texts of the Wuerttemberg Gospel Selections, outlines on which are being offered in the Homiletic Department of the current volume, are not readily accessible to our readers, we are publishing by request the Gospel texts of this series.

Advent 1	_____ Luke 17:20-25	5 p. Easter	_____ Luke 11:9-13
Advent 2	_____ Luke 12:35-48	Ascension	_____ Luke 24:49-53
Advent 3	_____ Luke 3:2-18	6 p. Easter	_____ John 7:33-39
Advent 4	_____ John 3:22-36	Pentecost	_____ John 14:15-21
Christmas	_____ John 1:14-18	Trinity	_____ Matt. 28:18-20
Sunday after Chr.	_____ Luke 1:46-55	1 p. Trinity	_____ Mark 4:26-32
New Year's Eve	_____ Ps. 102:26-28	2 p. Trinity	_____ Luke 15:11-32
Sunday after N. Y.	_____ John 12:44-50	3 p. Trinity	_____ Matt. 15:1-14
Epiphany	_____ Matt. 2:1-12	4 p. Trinity	_____ Matt. 8:5-13
1 p. Epiphany	_____ Mark 10:13-16	5 p. Trinity	_____ Luke 10:38-42
2 p. Epiphany	_____ Luke 4:14-24	6 p. Trinity	_____ John 5:19-29
3 p. Epiphany	_____ John 4:5-14	7 p. Trinity	_____ Luke 13:10-17
4 p. Epiphany	_____ John 4:15-26	8 p. Trinity	_____ Matt. 19:16-26
Septuagesima	_____ Matt. 11:16-24	9 p. Trinity	_____ Matt. 16:24-28
Sexagesima	_____ John 8:21-29	10 p. Trinity	_____ Luke 19:1-10
Quinquagesima	_____ Matt. 16:21-23	11 p. Trinity	_____ Mark 12:41-44
Invocavit	_____ John 2:13-22	12 p. Trinity	_____ John 8:31-45
Reminiscere	_____ Matt. 12:38-42	13 p. Trinity	_____ Luke 6:20-31
Oculi	_____ John 6:47-56	14 p. Trinity	_____ Matt. 13:44-50
Laetare	_____ John 6:57-69	15 p. Trinity	_____ Luke 12:13-21
Judica	_____ John 12:20-23	16 p. Trinity	_____ John 15:1-11
Palm Sunday	_____ Luke 19:29-40	17 p. Trinity	_____ John 9:1-7
Maundy Thursday	_____ Luke 22:7-20	18 p. Trinity	_____ John 9:24-39
Good Friday	_____ Mark 15:33-39	19 p. Trinity	_____ Luke 7:36-50
Easter Sunday	_____ Matt. 28:1-10	20 p. Trinity	_____ Luke 18:1-8
Easter Monday	_____ John 20:11-18	21 p. Trinity	_____ John 11:32-45
1 p. Easter	_____ Luke 24:36-47	22 p. Trinity	_____ Matt. 22:23-33
2 p. Easter	_____ John 10:22-30	23 p. Trinity	_____ Luke 14:16-24
3 p. Easter	_____ Matt. 10:16-20	24 p. Trinity	_____ Matt. 16:5-12
4 p. Easter	_____ Matt. 10:24-33		

T. L.