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## Outlines on the Wuerttemberg Gospel Selections

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a pastor. Then, too, it sounds somewhat scientific for an humble pastoral visit. I see no good reason, however, why the term could not be introduced among the clergy as the most satisfactory term to cover the subject and gradually be brought to connote what it literally means. If we can speak of homiletics, hermeneutics, and dogmatics, why not psychotherapy? Of course, we would not try to teach our people to refer to their pastor as a psychotherapist, no more than we urge them to call him a homilist or a dogmatist. But considering the valuable and really scientific nature of the pastor's work as a *Seelsorger*, why should we hesitate to call it psychotherapy?

Whatever the term that we adopt, it is my hope that, to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, we may all become better servants of His in our ministry to the individual through our study of case histories in psychotherapy.

Wollaston, Mass.

ELMER A. KETTNER

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## Outlines on the Wuerttemberg Gospel Selections

### Pentecost

John 14:15-21

We are rejoicing today over the great miracle of Pentecost; and that is as it should be, for the great acts of God in behalf of His Church should fill our hearts with joy and praise, Ps. 106:1, 2. The importance of Pentecost is indicated by the prediction of the event in the Old Testament, especially in Joel 3:1 ff. But just when God would pour out His Spirit among men and what would be the full meaning of it for believers remained for our Savior to reveal to His disciples. And this He does in our text.

#### Our Lord's Comforting Declarations Regarding the Coming and the Work of the Holy Ghost

1. *Jesus promises His disciples another comforter after His departure*
2. *Jesus outlines the work of the Holy Ghost in His disciples*

#### 1

The text is part of Jesus' last utterances. His Passion is about to begin and will terminate with His death. Though He will rise again, He will thereafter not be visible to human sight. Therefore: v. 19a. Hitherto Jesus' presence in the flesh had been a source of consolation to His disciples, e. g., Matt. 14:27. The climax which would take Him from them was rapidly approaching, John 13:21. The "little while," v. 19, had shrunk to a few hours. True,

Jesus had prepared His disciples for the coming events on three different occasions, Matt. 16: 21-28; 17: 22, 23; 20: 17-19, and parallel passages. But the thought of parting with the Master filled the disciples' hearts with sorrow. What would become of them? The outlook was gloomy, as the disciples considered that hereafter they would have to face the world alone. The truth of their characterization Acts 4:13 weighed heavily upon them.

But our compassionate Lord has words of consolation for them. The key-note of chap. 14-16 is sounded in 14:1. In v. 15 of our text Jesus first reminds them that they are His true disciples. To "keep Jesus' commandments" means the same as "continue in His Word," His Gospel, John 8:31. Being His true disciples, they are the object of His particular solicitude. He will not leave them orphans, v. 18. They will not remain unprotected in the world. Jesus promises that He will make intercessions in their behalf with the Father, so that He will give them another comforter after His departure. For "comforter" the Greek has the word "paraclete," literally, an advocate, one called in to aid or support another who is in a difficult position. Hitherto Jesus, the intimate Companion of His disciples, had performed this duty. Now, as He withdraws His visible presence, He promises His disciples the Holy Ghost.

How gloriously did the Savior fulfil His promise. The eloquent description found in Acts 2 of the great events of Pentecost speaks for itself. The Paraclete had come, and all fear of the hostile world had been driven from the disciples' hearts. With a boldness such as they had not known before they proclaimed repentance and salvation in Christ under the guidance and instruction of the Holy Ghost.

But let us note that Jesus promises the Comforter, or Paraclete, not only to the early Christian Church. He is to come "that He may abide with you forever," v. 16. This fact explains the growth of the Christian Church in spite of adverse circumstances and open opposition by the unbelieving world. The coming of the Paraclete and His abiding forever with the Church is a source of consolation for us and reassures us also that out of the present turmoil the Church Militant shall emerge victorious.

But besides dwelling on the coming of the Paraclete, Jesus also outlines the work of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of His disciples.

## 2

The Holy Ghost is "the Spirit of Truth," v. 17. He is this in a double sense. He Himself is Truth. But He is the Spirit of Truth also in so far as He leads into the truth, v. 26; 16:13. It is His particular function to dwell in the hearts of Christ's disciples, v. 17, and to keep alive in them the knowledge of, and the faith in, the

great spiritual truths of God's Word. It is only natural that this Spirit of Truth cannot be received by the world, v. 17, which Christ characterizes John 8:44. But we know Him. "Every bit of faith, love, obedience, every holy motion, delight in God and His Word, its promises, comfort, etc., is both a mark of the Spirit's presence in us and of our knowledge of who and what He really is."

Another result of the work of the Comforter in the hearts of Christ's disciples is that they see Jesus, v. 19. The Holy Spirit makes them different from the children of this world, who have sight only for material things. The believers have spiritual sight and see their Savior with the eyes of faith. Thus He is ever present with them according to His promise: Matt. 28:20b. In Jesus' company they feel safe and secure on life's journey though there be trials and tribulation.

To the Holy Spirit, Christ's disciples also owe what is stated in v. 20. "At that day" refers to Pentecost. Through the gift of the Spirit they will realize fully what human reason cannot grasp, that Jesus is one with the Father. Therefore He is true God from eternity, and His redemptive work has boundless merit. Furthermore, they will know that they are in Christ, safe in His wounds from the threats of sin and damnation. And, finally, they will also know that Christ is in them, imparting to them His strength and power to bear testimony of Him before the world in life and word.

Let us thank and praise our Lord for the gift of His Holy Spirit and pray that He may ever abide in us with His gracious working.

G. V. SCHICK

### Pentecost Monday

Acts 19:1-7

Again Christendom has commemorated the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Though the miraculous manner and manifestations of that first Pentecostal outpouring are no longer to be expected, and though the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit have ceased, yet the essence of Pentecost continues to the end of days. Now, as then, through appointed means of grace, God's Holy Spirit enlightens, quickens, comforts, Christian hearts and fills them with holy, joyful courage to proclaim the great deeds of salvation. Now, as then, God's Holy Spirit works through the testimony of those who have received Him, for the salvation of souls and the building of the Savior's kingdom.

Certainly the contemplation of all this suggests the pertinent question to all believers: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since

ye believed?" This question addressed by Paul to the Ephesian disciples might well be addressed to Christians of our day and should, by the grace of God, result in the happy experience of those disciples. To this end let us consider:

### The Resemblance of Many Christians to the Ephesian Disciples

#### 1. In their weakness

#### 2. In their strengthening

##### 1

A) The Ephesian disciples had been disciples of John the Baptist. Coming to Ephesus recently, they had embraced the Christian faith. They were indeed Christians. However, they were still weak in knowledge. Frankly they answered Paul's question: "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." Of course, they had heard something and knew something of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. Their former master, John, had certainly included this in his instruction. They were acquainted also with the Old Testament, which certainly time and again speaks of the Holy Ghost. They had become Christians only through the gracious operation of the Holy Ghost.

They had not heard of the miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. They had not experienced the blessed manifestations of the Spirit of Pentecost. As the apostles before Pentecost, so these disciples were still much in need of enlightenment concerning Christ, concerning the Baptism instituted by Christ, and that it had supplanted the Baptism of John. Cf. Stoeckhardt, *Bibl. Gesch.*, N. T., pp. 386—388. No doubt they lacked clear knowledge of other parts of Christian faith. So they were still without that Pentecostal joyous zeal and courage with which the abundant outpouring of the Spirit had filled other disciples. In short, while disciples, yet much weakness.

B) *Application.* — A striking resemblance indeed to many Christians of our day. (a) In weakness of spiritual knowledge. In an age in which false doctrines run rampant, there is yet so much inability to discriminate, to distinguish, truth from error. So many not well grounded in important doctrines of Holy Writ (election, conversion, etc.). — How many Christians have the knowledge to take a helpful part in doctrinal discussions with friend or foe?

b) Weakness in Christian zeal in the service of Christ and His kingdom. Witness present status of our church-work—mission opportunities unheeded, challenges unanswered, idle candidates, etc.

Surely the question is pertinent "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed," the Spirit of Pentecost with His enlightening, quickening, comforting, sanctifying power? May each and

every one of us in all sincerity put the question to his own heart. And when so we note the resemblance of weakness, may God grant that there arise ever more a resemblance of the Ephesian disciples in their strengthening.

## 2

A) The Ephesian disciples strengthened. (a) Paul instructs them. V. 4 certainly implies and includes an instruction that supplied what those disciples still lacked in knowledge of Christ's person and work, the operation of God's Holy Spirit through Word and Sacrament, etc.

b) V. 5. They were baptized with the Baptism commanded and instituted by Christ.

c) The happy result, v. 6. The happy experience of the disciples on the first day of Pentecost, Acts 2, was now the experience of these Ephesian disciples, with respect to the miraculous and extraordinary gifts and manifestations as well as the abiding ordinary blessings of enlightenment, joy, and zeal.

B) May Christians everywhere ever more resemble these disciples in this experience!

To the end of time God has appointed the means by which the Holy Spirit comes abundantly and dwells in the hearts of Christians, *viz.*, Word and Sacrament. Surely, God has blessed our Church with the purity and abundance of His holy Word. We have our Bibles, beautiful services of worship with proclamations of God's grace, the Sacraments as Christ instituted them. Think of the many agencies available to increase our knowledge, a wealth of Christian literature, educational institutions for young and old (schools, Bible classes, etc.).

Word and Sacrament are vehicles of God's Holy Spirit. As indifference and neglect in the use of these means accounts for the lamentable weakness in Christians today, so diligent, prayerful use of them will surely bring about a greater resemblance to Pentecostal Christians of those early days. Today, through these means, God's Holy Spirit will fill abundantly the hearts of Christians and unfold therein that blessed activity of enlightening, quickening, guiding, etc., which those disciples experienced. And today the Spirit of God will work through the testimony of strengthened Christians as He did of yore, to the glory of our Savior and the extension of His glorious kingdom.

Close with urgent appeal and Hymn 255, sts. 1 and 5.

AUG. F. BERNTHAL

## Trinity Sunday

Matt. 28:18-20

The festival of the Holy Trinity is dedicated to the emphasis and glorification of a great doctrine. This doctrine does not spring from an event in the life of Christ (Christmas, Good Friday, Easter) or in the history of the Church (Pentecost) but is the divine revelation of an eternal truth, which lies beyond the bounds of human experience and can neither be discovered nor analyzed nor comprehended by man—the doctrine of God.

Many would discard all doctrinal preaching. Such preaching, they say, is too theoretical and abstract and not practical enough. They are in error. Every doctrine of the Bible is of practical value. Moreover, there can be no practical Christianity without a doctrinal foundation in Scripture.

So in an eminent degree the doctrine of God. It is basic and indispensable. Every phase of Christian faith, life, work, and hope is anchored in it. Today we restrict ourselves to but one aspect of its practical worth.

### The Scriptural Doctrine of God the Supreme Requirement for Successful Mission-Work

Because of

1. *The purpose of mission-work*
2. *The methods of mission-work*
3. *The difficulties of mission-work*

#### 1

A) What is the purpose of mission work?

1) Not to bring about reforms in the character and conduct of individuals and society nor to build and strengthen the external organization of the congregation or the Church. All this will gradually follow if the purpose of mission-work is achieved, but it dare never be regarded as the purpose itself.

2) But to bring the sinner to God, v. 19: "Make disciples of all nations." Cf. John 17:3; Acts 26:18. (Explain briefly what this implies.)

B) If we would bring the sinner to God, we ourselves must know who the true God is and be able to tell others. It will not suffice to speak of God in vague and general terms, after the manner of pagan philosophers and Modernists; we must proclaim Him as He has revealed Himself in the Scriptures— as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. For this reason the Holy Trinity is stressed in the Great Commission, the Magna Carta of Christian mission-work. (Concise summary of this doctrine, guarding against Unitarianism, on one hand, and tritheism, on the other.)

2

Christ charges His Church to "make disciples of all nations." But how? What are the methods to be employed in mission-work?

A) Baptism, v. 19. But not Jewish or pagan baptism, but baptism in the name of the Triune God. The facts that Baptism was to be performed "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" and that converts were required to profess faith in the Triune God in their baptismal confession, proves that this doctrine is basic. No one can be a Christian without it. Missionary preaching and persuasion which ignore it are a fraud.

B) Indoctrination, v. 20: "Make disciples," that is, learners. However, all Christian doctrine is rooted in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. 1. The Father: creation plus the Christmas Gospel; 2. the Son: redemption as portrayed in the Good Friday and Easter gospels; 3. the Holy Ghost: sanctification as taught in the Pentecost Gospel. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is the plan of salvation in a nutshell. Hence the fundamental creed of Christendom, the Apostles' Creed, is an expansion of it. 2 Cor. 13:14. Faith grows and deepens with the understanding and appreciation of this doctrine. Much of the uncertainty and fogginess of modern preaching and Christianity is the result of its neglect.

C) Training, v. 20: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Also the Christian way of life has its origin in the Holy Trinity. 1. The Father: this very name reveals what our relation to God is to be and in what spirit we should strive to keep His commandments (Luther's explanation of "Our Father who art in heaven" and of the Commandments—"We should fear and love God that. . ."); 2. the Son: our great Teacher with supreme and universal authority, v. 18; Mark 9:7, the divine pattern after which we should fashion our lives, 1 Pet. 2:21, the source of our sanctification, 1 Cor. 1:30; John 15:5; Phil. 4:12, 13; 3. the Holy Ghost: without Him all Christian training and all efforts at Christian living must prove futile, Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:16; 1 Thess. 5:23.

Accordingly, even the methods we apply in our mission-work are determined by the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

3

A) Our mission-work is beset with great difficulties and many apparently insuperable obstacles. Some are the result of the spiritual attitude of those to whom we bring the Gospel; others of external conditions. (Examples.)

B) Thank God, these difficulties are conquerable in the light of the Holy Trinity. 1. We have a heavenly Father of supreme



authority and power, with whom nothing is impossible and before whose omnipotence even the gates of hell must crumble. 2. We have a Savior to whom the Father has given all this authority and power and who is with us in our work, v. 20b; Matt. 18:20. Hence, we are never alone. 3. In the Holy Ghost we have a Comforter, a Helper, whom Christ has placed at our side, John 14:16, and who has the power of molding the hearts of men and breaking down their resistance to the truth, Zech. 4:6; Luke 24:29; John 15:26; Heb. 2:4. With such aid we need not despair in the face of perplexing missionary problems and apparent reverses.

*Conclusion.* — This, then, is the practical value of the doctrine of God for our missionary endeavors. (Brief recapitulation following line of direction in theme.) May we immerse ourselves in this glorious truth and employ it conscientiously in all our work.

E. J. FRIEDRICH

### First Sunday after Trinity

Mark 4:26-32

In this text Jesus tells us how things are in the kingdom of God. To understand the text, we must first know what He meant by the expression "kingdom of God." He did not mean something earthly that you can see, Luke 17:20; He meant something inside the heart, Luke 17:21; He meant our faith, our religion, and everything connected with it—the Church, the preaching of the Gospel, and heaven. So we may learn something of very great significance from this text:

#### What Jesus Teaches about Religion

1. *There is sowing of seed*
2. *There is life and growth*
3. *There is fruit and harvest*

#### 1

The kingdom of God is like a man sowing seed. Seed is being sown on the grain-fields of the world. You may watch the sower on one field, and you may think that this is being done in the next field, in the next county, in the next State, over all the nation, over all the world. It is a stupendous activity. — In religion the seed of God's Word is sown far and wide, over all the world. Jesus commanded this, Matt. 28:19. Through the medium of pulpit, school, Sunday-school, books, periodicals, radio, and in other ways the seed of the Word is sown. That must be done in the kingdom of God. — Seed is sown on all kinds of soil—fertile, barren, rocky, weedy ground, on level fields and sloping hillsides. — The seed of God's Word must be sown where rich harvest may be expected and where

results are meager, in organized congregations and in foreign mission-fields.—Something will grow on the fields without sowing seed, but it will be weeds. Only where grain is sown, will there be a crop of value. Something grows in human hearts without God's Word, but it is error, hypocrisy, wickedness, Matt. 15:19. Only when God's Word is sown, is there truth, sincerity, piety. Only where the Gospel of Christ is preached, can there be saving faith and a good life.

## 2

In the kingdom of God there is life and growth.

A wonderful thing is going on under the soil in a grain-field. You may see nothing but the bare soil. But beneath that soil there is stupendous activity; the seed is germinating; soon a slender shoot of green will appear; and after a while the field will be covered with plants, alive and growing. You may look at the same field a few months later on a quiet day. There will be many thousands of plants, but they will appear as if they were standing still. But each plant is growing and developing every minute of the day. The whole field is the scene of teeming life and tremendous growth, though hidden from our eyes.—So in religion there is life and growth. The seed is powerful and produces life, Is. 55:9-11; Rom. 10:17. Where God's Word is preached, there faith and Christian conduct is engendered. Sometimes this life-giving activity of the seed of God's Word is hindered and halted (parable of the Sower), but this is not the fault of the seed. And where the Word is preached, there is constant growth, in knowledge, in faith, in Christian life, Phil. 1:3-11. Often such life and growth in religion are not noticed. We think the Church is at a standstill. We worry about the future of religion, of the Church. Religion sometimes seems dead. But the life and growth are there, hidden from our eyes. Parents and pastors worry about a youth or maiden whose religion appears to be dead. Perhaps there is still something there, and it will show life in due time.

## 3

In the kingdom of God there is fruit and harvest. On the fields the stems produce grain. And when the valuable grain is ripe, it is harvested and brought to the granaries.—So it is also in religion. Christians become fruitful in good works; faith produces piety, Jas. 1:27; 2:17. And when the Christian has been long enough in the world, he is taken away to heaven by the Lord of the harvest, Rev. 14:13.

FREDERIC NIEDNER

**Second Sunday after Trinity**

**Luke 15:11-32**

If by some calamity we were to lose the whole Bible and could save only one chapter, very likely we would choose Luke 15, the chapter from which our text is taken. Three parables: the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, the Prodigal Son — all treating the story of God's love to poor sinners. Among these three jewels one gleams the brightest: the parable of the Prodigal Son.

**The Parable of the Prodigal Son**

Let us consider:

1. *Sin in its depths*
2. *Love at its height*
3. *Self-righteousness at its worst*

**1**

The younger son came from a good home. But sin enters everywhere. The son who had once been the father's pride and joy now becomes the slave of sin. "Father, give me" — he is disrespectful, unfeeling, saying in effect that his father is living too long for him. "Not many days after" — he is impatient to plunge into the new freedom. "Gathered all together" — greed and selfishness control him. "Into a far country" — he will have no more restraining influences. "Wasted his substance" — a spendthrift who knows only how to indulge his baser passions. "Riotous living" (original about this: a hopeless case) — the life of one whom no relief agency can put back on his feet. "Joined himself" (original as much as glued himself to a citizen) — he was one of those characters whose impudence is unbearable. "Husks" — how sin can reduce one's standard of living! "Feed the swine" — sin can bring a man down to the lowest company. No wonder the father said: He was "dead."

All this is typical of what sin can do and does: it hardens men, lures them to a false freedom, makes them impatient of any restraint that decent people may seek to exercise, makes them selfish and unfeeling, and does not stop until it has plunged them into destruction and perdition.

This son is one who had been in the "father's house." This part of the parable therefore applies particularly also to people who once sat in church pews, were confirmed at altars, read their Bible, but became secure, believed they could afford to toy with sin and learned by bitter experience that sin is a hard master.

Let us ask ourselves whether we have already yielded to this sin. Have we left the Father's house into which we had been

placed by faith in Christ? Have we thought that we must flee the restraints of a loving Father in heaven? Then let us penitently confess: "Father, I have sinned."

## 2

The loving father. This father could not forget his son; he longed for his return. "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him"—love still looks for the wayward sinner. "He had compassion"—love wins out over justice. "Ran"—age does not restrain this father. "Fell on his neck and kissed him"—love does not stop at tattered clothes, disheveled appearance, and a disgraceful past. The father refuses to consider that the son be anything but a son in the future. "Bring forth the best robe . . . on his feet"—the promised sonship is to be made outwardly evident to all. "Bring hither the fatted calf . . . be merry"—such joy over the son's return must be shared.

All this is a picture of God's love to the penitent sinner. The parable fairly glitters with detail to show this love, more than a dozen items embellishing the parable just for this purpose.

This is a word of God to every penitent sinner. Your sins may be many; they may disgrace you before God and men; they may be of the vilest kind; yet there is no sin so great, no condition so wretched, but the love of God in Christ is ready to say: "My son." Ps. 86: 5; Eph. 4: 32.

## 3

We might think that the parable should have ended before the third character, the brother, enters the picture. But he is needed that by contrast the love of God may appear all the more impressive and that all self-righteousness be shunned.

The elder son is a typical self-righteous man. "He was angry"—he would have been more satisfied if that lost brother had never been heard of again. "Would not go in"—an ugly attitude expressed in moping action. "These many years do I serve thee"—self-righteousness likes to say: Look what I did! "Neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment"—what a high opinion a self-righteous man finally has of himself! "Thou never gavest me a kid"—he feels that God does not give him a fair deal. "Thy son"—will not call him "brother." "Devoured thy living with harlots"—self-righteousness always finds and mentions the *worst* offenses of a brother. "Hast killed for *him* the fatted calf"—self-righteousness always sees God's favor given to the wrong man.

This brother is a warning against self-righteousness, also that often found among church-members. Satan also tempts church-members to forget that they are saved alone by grace, leads them to believe it is their being better than others which assures them of

God's favor. The self-righteous man rejects the righteousness of his Savior and trusts in himself. Rom. 10:3.

May God ever be our Refuge and Strength that, trusting in His unfathomable love to sinners, we may finally hear His gracious words "This My son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

H. O. A. KEINATH

### Third Sunday after Trinity

Matt. 15:1-14

As Luther pointed out more than four hundred years ago, one of the greatest dangers that confronts a congregation or a church-body is that of externalization. This warning has again and again been corroborated during the past four centuries, in various parts of Christendom. External features, at first introduced or re-introduced for the purpose of embellishment, become ends in themselves instead of being employed as means only. Rules and regulations made in the interest of a better administration of church affairs soon are emphasized more strongly than the purity of Biblical doctrine. Under such circumstances the worship of a congregation, and even of an entire church-body, may soon degenerate into a mere outward form, hiding an empty and hypocritical attitude. Hence the need of the Lord's admonition and instruction just at the present time.

#### The Lord's Distinction between False and True Worship

1. *He shows the shallowness and the insufficiency of a mere outward worship*
2. *He indicates the character of true worship*

#### 1

a) False worship is characterized by an insistence upon outward forms and rites: insistence upon the washing of hands; placing the outward rite of a gift ostensibly consecrated to God above the actual commandments of God; upholding of traditions which had no basis in the Word of God, as essential or necessary parts of worship. See vv. 2, 5, 6.

b) False worship is characterized by a mere outward performance of prayer as a rite. See vv. 7, 8. Commandments of men, v. 9.

c) False worship often results in the blind leading the blind; men who themselves are no longer sure of the divine truth presume to be teachers of others. See v. 14.

Indications of a similar externalization in our days, in insistence upon forms and vestments and particular observances, should prove a warning to us!

2

Over against all such externalism the Lord places the character of a true worship, that which is well-pleasing to Him.

a) It is a worship of the heart, v. 8 b; one which grows from an acceptance of the truth by faith and an emotional reaction in keeping with the true nature of faith. Cp. Gal. 5:6 b; John 13:17.

b) It manifests itself in keeping the commandments of God with a pure heart, for no tradition and regulation of men may weaken or destroy the Word. See vv. 3, 4. Not the choice of foods or the abstaining from certain foods by the commandment of men is a test of true religion, but guarding the mouth against sinful words. V. 11.

c) It avoids the leadership of blind leaders, who lead others astray by their insistence upon the commandments of men. See vv. 13, 14.

The one great need of the Church in these days is the hearing of the Word of God, the constant study of the Holy Scriptures, and the keeping of this truth in confession and in life. Being justified through faith, daily growing in the knowledge of God's Word, we shall bear abundant fruit in true sanctification.

P. E. KRETZMANN

