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Outlines on Old Testament Texts (Synodical Conference)

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sum not sufficient for my part in this matter, your further pleasure known, I shall be as glad to conform myself thereunto in this, or any other matter concerning the church as any your subject within your province; as knows Almighty God, who long preserve you. At Hoxne in Suffolk, the 14th day of June, 1527. Your humble obedience and bedeman, R. Norwicen."

On December 5, 1527, before Cuthbert, Bishop of London, Thomas, cardinal of York, Nicholas, Bishop of Ely, Henry, Bishop of St. Asse, John Bishop of Lincoln, and John, Bishop of Bath and Wells, commissaries, Richard Foster confessed he had accompanied with persons of the manner of living of Martin Luther and ate flesh on a Saturday and swore he will not return to these heresies.

John Hig, or Noke, or Jonson, confessed "That Martin Luther was more learned than all the doctors of England. . . . That he had "a boke of the Gospels in the Doche tonge," by the which he expounded in alehouses to people there the Sunday Gospels.

His penance—That on Palm Sunday he should head the procession to St. Paul's Cathedral, bare-headed, bare-legged, shoeless, and carrying a faggot on his left shoulder; that he should remain in the custody of the apparitor until Good Friday, and should then stand at Paul's cross bare-headed, with his faggot as before, all the time of the preaching of the sermon. The same on Easter Sunday 1528.

Oak Park, Ill.

WM. DALLMANN

Outlines on Old Testament Texts
(Synodical Conference)

Second Sunday after Easter

Psalm 23

Intentionally the names of the Sundays between Easter and Pentecost refer to characteristics of the Christian's life. *Misericordias Domini*—the Christian lives all his life in the shadow of the Lord's mercy. Very appropriately, the old Sunday Gospel speaks of Christ as the Good Shepherd. This text presents the same picture, but from another viewpoint; while the former shows why and how Jesus is the Good Shepherd, this leads us to consider when and how we are able to call Him our Good Shepherd.—Everybody knows the 23d Psalm; but only the Christian can understand it and pray it.

The Christian's Prayer "The Lord Is My Shepherd"

1. *A penitent confession*
2. *A grateful conviction*
3. *A confident hope*

1.

David knew sheep; he had been a shepherd. He knew that a sheep is altogether dependent on the shepherd's care. More: he knew that without this care a sheep will always go astray and perish (Ps. 119:176). The prophets take up the same figure: Is. 53:6; Ezek. 24:5; in the New Testament, Jesus: Matt. 9:36; Matt. 10:6; the Apostles: 1 Pet. 2:25. A sheep, running everywhere but in the right direction, straying, but never finding its way home again, starving, or perishing in danger if left to its own resources — a picture of man in his natural state.

We must realize both our folly and our dependence on God before we can truly call the Lord our Shepherd. Without Him we are lost sheep because of the straying of our first parents and because of our own actions; nor can we without Him ever find back to His fold. A tragic picture!

2

But thank God! The Lord is my Shepherd. He loved His sheep and made provision for their restoration: redemption; regeneration. That applies to each individual: *my* Shepherd.

Because He is my Shepherd, I shall not want. David explains in detail: v. 2. God not only provides all that we need for body and soul, but He leads us to these treasures, so that we, who are too blind to find them, may nevertheless have them and be nourished by them. Note that the words indicate not only a sufficient supply of whatever we need, but peace of mind and repose of the soul to appropriate and enjoy it. — V. 3a: if we stray from the right path into bleak and dangerous ways, He brings us back, Luke 15:5. — V. 3b: sanctification: He points out the right way and gives strength to walk it. — All this not because we merit it, but "for His name's sake," because He is our Shepherd and has undertaken to lead us safely.

There is a jubilant tone to this section of the Psalm. With this conviction, what could happen on the way of his life to disturb the Christian's calm trust in the Lord? His whole road mapped out, every way station provided with supplies and with new means of progress — how grateful a Christian should be under this all-overshadowing providence of his Shepherd!

3

Yes, there are shadows, v. 4a. There are tempests to weather and torrents to cross. Acts 14:22. Examples: David himself; Job; St. Paul, 2 Cor. 11:26, 27. There is the end of the way that looks like death; but it is only a shadow; the Shepherd has abolished death, overcoming it. And in all these evils He has promised not

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to leave us alone, Matt. 28:20. So we have the confident hope that we shall walk right through the dark valleys and fear no evil. Ps. 91:10; 1 Pet. 4:12, 13; 2 Tim. 4:18—these promises of our Shepherd are His rod and staff which He has given us to comfort us.

There is the wolf, a ravaging brute who tries to slay our soul by leading us astray from the right path into ways that end in the real death, the perdition of souls; there are countless minor beasts in his service, working toward the same end. But in the presence of all these enemies our Shepherd prepares a table for us where, unconcerned and undismayed by all their threats and schemes, we may sit down to enjoy the blessings of our Lord.

Misericordias Domini! "My cup runneth over!" V. 6. For time and for eternity he who is in the care of the Good Shepherd is well provided for.

THEO. HOYER

Third Sunday after Easter

Psalm 100

Jubilate—that is the name given to this Sunday in the church calendar. *Jubilate*: praise, sing praises unto our God. This Sunday invites us to make our service today a special service of praise and thanksgiving. Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday—on all these days and seasons we have again been reminded of the greatest of blessings which our God has showered upon us. Are we truly thankful? The psalmist, in our text, says: "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. . . . Come before His presence with singing. . . . Be thankful unto the Lord and bless His name." Let us consider

The Exhortation to Praise the Lord, Our God

1. *Why we should praise the Lord*
2. *How we should praise the Lord*

1

The psalmist gives three reasons why we should praise the Lord:

a. "Know ye that the Lord, He is God," v. 3. Millions worship idols, Ps. 115:4-8, not the true God. The Lord whom we worship is God. How thankful we ought to be!

b. "God hath made us," v. 3. We are "fearfully and wonderfully made," Ps. 139:13-16. God also provides us with the necessities of life, v. 5a; Matt. 6:25-34. Even the rationing of food need not unduly alarm us; God cares for His own. He can still send His ravens, 1 Kings 17:4-6, and multiply the loaves and fishes, John 6:5-14. First article of Creed and explanation. How thankful we ought to be!

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c. "We are His people and the sheep of His pasture," v. 3. God in Christ has made us His children and heirs unto eternal life! this is the greatest blessing, John 3:16; 1 John 4:9, 10; 2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 2:8, 9. In our Lutheran Church this Gospel is preached in its truth and purity. Explanation to second article of Creed. God also through faith keeps us in His grace to everlasting life and makes all our trials and tribulations, which are but for a season, serve a good purpose, 1 Pet. 1:3-9; John 10:27-30. "His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endureth to all generations," v. 5; Ps. 136: 1-26. God is faithful; He keeps His promises. How thankful we ought to be!

2

a. Our praise should not be mere lip service, but the expression of a thankful heart. "Be thankful unto Him," v. 4; Is. 29:13.

b. We should show our thankfulness.

1. By "making a joyful noise unto the Lord," vv. 1, 2. Loudness of voice indicates earnestness of heart, 1 Chron. 20:19; Ezra 3:12, 13; Neh. 12:42, 43. We should not mumble our praise, but speak it with animation; not lisp when we ought to sing aloud our praises to our God;

2. By "entering His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise," v. 4. This refers to the Temple worship. Not only in our homes but also in our churches should we praise God, uniting with fellow Christians in the Lord's sanctuary to sing the praises of our God — our good Lutheran hymns and church music;

3. By "serving the Lord with gladness," v. 2. Our entire life, in all its phases, should in thankfulness be dedicated to the service of our Lord, 2 Cor. 5:15. With Paul we should say, "To me to live is Christ," Phil. 1:21. We serve the Lord when we serve our fellow Christians and all our fellow men, doing good unto them, helping them on the way to life, warning and encouraging and comforting them, ministering to their bodily needs and welfare, Matt. 25:31-45; 1 John 4:7-12, 20, 21. And the service to our Lord should be given not haltingly nor carelessly nor grudgingly nor unwillingly, but "with gladness," cheerfully. Only then will it be of any value and have the promise of a gracious reward, Matt. 10:42.

Application: Do we keep in mind the many blessings which God gives us daily for soul and body, for time and eternity, and how are we showing our thankfulness and our praise of His goodness and mercy and grace?

NOTE. — Hymns 13, 14, and 44 (new hymnal) are taken from Psalm 100. J. H. C. FRITZ

Fourth Sunday after Easter

Jer. 15:15-21

Formula of Concord, Of Articles in Controversy, §§ 1 and 2 ("Moreover, since . . . must be reprov'd"), *Trigl.*, p. 855. The controversialist is, to say the least, *persona non grata*, and his motives are misunderstood. The teaching of the true doctrine is of greatest importance; controversy is of equal importance. The text introduces to us

The Christian Controversialist

I. His God-appointed, honorable duty.

V. 19. (a) The "vile" are the same whom the text calls persecutors, rebukers, mockers, fighters, the wicked and terrible. The "precious" are those who stand in opposition to the "vile," as in Ps. 1; Ezek. 22:26; 44:23. (b) The duty imposed is to cause the "precious" to go forth from among the vile, therefore to cause and create an actual and noticeable separation to the advantage of the precious, by exposing the vileness of the opponents and by insisting on the truth against every error.

When the truth is to be defended, every pastor (2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:9; 1 Tim. 6:3), every Christian congregation (Phil. 1:27, 28; Rom. 16:17; Rev. 2:14-16, 20-25), every Christian (Jude 3; 2 John; 1 John 4:1), must be a controversialist.

Not by choice but by God's will the Christian controversialist is what he is. Whoever opposes him has set himself against God. A church, congregation, or individual should never despise that controversialist who is constrained by God's will to be like Paul, like Jeremiah, like Jesus Christ, the Leader and Champion of all God-appointed defenders. Every congregation of the true visible Church obligates its pastor and itself, in the name of God, to the duty of engaging in controversy. See *Agenda: Installation of Pastor*. Does the pastor remember to keep his oath, and does the congregation remember to pay its vows?—To exalt the "precious" is a most honorable thing, though it involves spiritual warfare. We appreciate our national defenders. What reason can there exist, except spiritual ignorance or spiritual treason, for allowing error to reign unchallenged or unchecked or for disparaging the Christian soldier? Yet Jeremiah lamented, and we lament.

II. His God-given support and victory.

Controversy is labor and travail. Text. The defender must be strong, bold, determined. God indicates by the phrases in which He expresses His promise (vv. 19-21: brazen wall, prevail, save, deliver, redeem) that this consuming duty can be performed successfully only by His help. Jeremiah was exhausted, confused, hopeless, except in his utter dependence upon God.—God supplies

1. The means and weapon of defense, namely, His Word, that error may not rule, v. 16; Ps. 119:42, 110-119. This Word was the sword of Jeremiah, the defense of Paul, the weapon of Luther, the victory of Jesus. This Word only is profitable for reproof, 2 Tim. 3:15-17.

2. The strength. The argumentative, pleading, and persuasive question in v. 18b is to be answered with an emphatic no; for God promises (a) to supply the strength, v. 19; (b) to speak through His servant: "thou shalt stand before Me," sc., as My prophet, to serve as My mouth, v. 18; (c) to render him invincible, vv. 20, 21.

3. Success and victory under His protection, vv. 20, 21; Luke 21:12-15. Is ever any means, strength, success, victory, supplied by God to be despised? Why, then, become discouraged and yield to unionism?

III. His God-fearing attitude.

In respect to himself. 1. He rejoices in his state of grace, v. 16c; 2. he loves God's Word, v. 16a, which he studies laboriously — professionally and for his own edification, v. 16b.

In respect to his opponents. 1. The necessity of controversy, due to their errors, casts him into extreme sadness, v. 10; 2. yet he is filled against them with godly indignation and just zeal, v. 17; Ps. 69:9; 3. also as testimony against them he avoids their fellowship, v. 17; Ps. 119:101; 4. he does not begrudge them God's long-suffering toward them, but he prays that he might endure patiently their enmity until God's purpose has been accomplished, v. 15, and he is hopeful according to God's promise that they shall return, v. 19.

In respect to God. While suffering, he trusts in the Lord with firm conviction of final vindication and stands with brave heart and sparkling eye, his youth renewed like the eagle's, to wage the war of the Lord.

G. H. SMUKAL

Fifth Sunday after Easter

Gen. 18:16-33

Scripture brings many exhortations unto prayer. It contains many wonderful promises of answers to prayers. It furnishes many beautiful examples of prayers and of answers to prayer.

Abraham's Remarkable Prayer for Sodom and Gomorrah

1. *What prompted the prayer?*
2. *What were the outstanding features of the prayer?*
3. *What were the results of the prayer?*

1

God encouraged Abraham to pray. When Abraham accompanied the heavenly visitors as they concluded their visit, the Lord

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said: vv. 17-22. He dealt with Abraham as with His friend, Jas. 2: 23, as with one whom He decided to take into fullest confidence. God revealed to him His intentions concerning the just punishment of the wicked cities. — Even so God in His Word has revealed important matters to His Christians today, which the world does not recognize.

Abraham immediately thought of “the righteous” in Sodom, v. 23. He realized their distress. Undoubtedly he was moved also to think of his nephew Lot. We may well suppose that he thought also of the dreadful doom which would befall the wicked unawares. This distress moved him to pray. — So we also should be moved to sympathetic intercession by the bodily and spiritual distress of others. The war-torn and strife-rent world today, the catastrophe which has befallen our country, the men and women serving under the flag, call for fervent prayer.

God promised Abraham repeatedly that He would spare Sodom if, etc. This certainly encouraged Abraham to plead again and again and to become all the more bold in his requests, vv. 24-32.

2

Abraham prayed as a child of God. He realized that only the grace of God permitted him to pray, vv. 27, 30, 32. We today should ever remember that only the grace of God in Christ Jesus enables us to pray. This should be a distinct feature of our prayer.

Abraham’s love toward his fellow men was outstanding. He was vitally interested in others.

Abraham was very bold. His actions border on the presumptuous. It was the boldness of faith. We should be encouraged unto greater boldness in prayer. Let us ask great things of God.

Abraham’s persistence impresses us. He came again and again. Are we easily discouraged when our prayer is not answered immediately?

Note also the confidence which Abraham manifested. He was certain that God would show mercy.

3

God certainly proved His justice in dealing with the wicked cities as He did. Abraham had asked until he felt that it would be improper to make further requests, and thereby confessed that God was more than justified to inflict righteous punishment upon the wicked cities.

God is revealing His righteous wrath upon a wicked and impenitent world today. We must emphasize guilt of the nations and justice of God. Also the Church failed to be faithful and deserves just judgment of God.

God saved Lot and his family. The Lord’s messengers even

took them by the hand and led them out when they wanted to tarry.

God certainly will not fail to guard and protect His own to-day. He still stays the doom of the world for the sake of the righteous. He still desires to save brands from the burning. The Lord hears prayer today.

J. W. BEHNKEN

Ascension Day

Psalm 47

Our text is a prophecy of Christ's ascension. It calls upon us to

**Sing Praises unto God Who is Gone Up with a Shout
and with the Sound of a Trumpet**

1. *He is a great King over all the earth and rules the universe with His almighty power*
2. *He is especially King of His Church and in every way promotes her interests*

1

V. 5. The Lord is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet, like a prominent general who is returning from war and victory. From where? Evidently from the earth. Whereto? V. 8b, to the throne of His holiness, heaven. He has taken His seat upon that throne as a great King over all the earth, v. 7.

Who can this be? None other than the God-man Jesus Christ. Acts 1:9; Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51. He has come from a bloody battle, Is. 63:1-4, for our salvation in triumph and is received by the shouts of angels, v. 5; Ps. 68:17, is escorted to His throne of honor and majesty at the right hand of God as Ruler over all the earth, vv. 2, 7. All things are under His feet. But being God, was He not at all times Ruler of the universe? Even while He was on earth, nature did His bidding, John 2:7-9; Mark 6:48b; Matt. 8:27. Angels ministered unto Him, Matt. 4:11b; Luke 22:43. Devils had to obey Him, Matt. 17:18; 8:29-32. Enemies felt His power, John 18:6. These were flashes of His divine majesty; in His state of humiliation He did not, according to His human nature, at all times and fully use the divine majesty communicated to His human nature. But now He is greatly exalted, v. 9, is set on the right hand of the throne of majesty in the heavens. Also according to His human nature He now rules and fills all things with His unrestrained divine power and majesty, Ps. 8:5b-8; 1 Pet. 3:22; Eph. 1:20-22a.

Why did He not then prevent the war? He does not force men to refrain from wickedness. He permits war as a punishment for the evildoers, Ps. 32:10a, as a chastisement for His Christians, Heb. 12:6, 7; Rom. 8:28; as a sign of Judgment, Matt. 24:6. The

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time will come when He will put an end to it in one way or another, Job 38:11a; Ps. 46:9.

Jesus Christ, the God-man, is truly King over all the earth. Terrible, v. 2, to be feared by His enemies, to be held in awe and reverence by His votaries as the Lord most high, v. 2. O clap your hands, sing praises, vv. 1, 5, 6, 7. The Lord, our Brother, our flesh and blood, sitteth upon the throne of His holiness and is Ruler of the universe. What an honor! He is at the same time our loving Savior, who will direct and control all things in such a way that no *real* evil shall come to us, only blessing. Let us sing His praises, proclaim His glory and majesty.

2

The psalmist is calling upon the Lord's *congregation* to sing praises to Him who has gone up with a shout. He is addressing all His people, those who rejoice over His triumph, v. 1, for whom He has chosen their inheritance, v. 4, His Church.

Christ is gone up with a shout and with the sound of a trumpet; sitteth upon the throne of His holiness, at the right hand of Power; is especially Head of His Church, Eph. 1:22; 5:23.

As such He *governs* His Church with His Word. He is the King of Truth, John 18:37; Eph. 4:10-12.

As Head and King He *protects* His Church. He is King over all the earth, vv. 2, 8; has dominion over all creatures, all things are under His feet, Eph. 1:22; and as our exalted Lord protects His Church against all enemies, Matt. 22:44. Illustration from Acts and the later history of the Church. His promise: Matt. 16:18.

As Head and King He *enlarges* His Church. He subdues the people under us, v. 3, brings them into our subjection by His victorious Gospel. Nations under our feet, not in cringing servility, but in humble submission to Him whom we adore, Acts 2:41; 4:4. — V. 9. Even the princes of the people, the great and mighty, gather together as members of the family of the God of Abraham, forming the great throng of spiritual Israel. The shields of the earth belong to Him. The great and mighty lower their standards and weapons before Him and do homage to Him. True, not all of them. 1 Cor. 1:26, 27, not many, yet some, *e. g.*, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Cornelius, Sergius Paulus, Lydia, Crispus, Erastus, some in Caesar's household, *et al.*

Finally He *leads* His Church to *glory*, v. 4. He has chosen their inheritance for them, blesses them in this life with all spiritual blessings. At the last He leads His Church to the excellency (excellent inheritance) of Jacob, whom He loved, to the heavenly Canaan, 1 Pet. 1:4.

Vv. 1, 6, 7. Clap your hands, shout unto God, sing His praises.

R. NETZEL

Sunday After the Ascension

Isaiah 55

The Ascension is past. Christ's disciples are to await in Jerusalem the coming of the Comforter (Acts 1:4, 5), and "through their word" (John 17:20), inspired and guaranteed by the Holy Ghost (John 14:26), they are to become His witnesses unto the uttermost parts of the earth. (The Gospel of the Day, John 15:26; Acts 1:8.) However, we, too, are to be witnesses for Christ. Hence the theme:

Our Solemn Duty, to Bring to Our Fellow Men

We ask: God's Gospel Invitation

1. *What is God's Gospel invitation?*
2. *Who is to bring it?*
3. *For whom is it meant?*
4. *How are we to offer it?*

1

It is an invitation to: a. "mercy," or "pardon," v. 7, "mercies of David," v. 3, defined by David as "forgiveness of transgressions," "covering for sin," or "non-imputation of iniquity" (Ps. 32:1, 2; cp. Rom. 4:6-8); b. mercy in Christ, vv. 3-5 (the "Him" in v. 4 is clearly a reference to the Messiah), since God made His covenant promise with David and the "Seed of thy (*i. e.*, David's) sons," which is Christ (1 Chron. 17:11-14; 2 Sam. 7:1-29; Ps. 89:3, 4, 8-37; Heb. 1:5); c. mercy in Christ alone, v. 2, since all other promises of salvation are "not bread" and "satisfy not" (John 14:6; Acts 4:12); d. an unmerited mercy, v. 7, by which the "wicked" are forgiven and the "unrighteous" are pardoned, for God "justifieth the *un-godly*" (Rom. 4:4, 5; unworthy Israel is brought into Canaan, Deut. 9:6); e. a "sure" mercy, v. 3, because it is not dependent on man's "thoughts," v. 8, but on the pledge and "covenant" of God, v. 3, which "cannot be broken" (John 10:35) and which "*must* be fulfilled," since the Lord has morally obligated Himself thereto (Matt. 26:54, the Greek *dei* being the "must" of moral obligation, Thayer); f. an abundant mercy, v. 7 (Hebrew: "He makes much to take away sin," *i. e.*, His mercy is without limit), and therefore He forgives all sinners (1 John 2:2; Is. 53:6) and all sin (1 John 1:7); g. a glorious mercy which gives life, v. 3, "bread" and "fatness," v. 2, "wine" and "milk," v. 1, "joy," "peace," and everlasting glory, vv. 12, 13; h. a gracious mercy, gained "without money" and "without price," v. 1, "by grace, through faith," as a "gift of God, without works" (Eph. 2:8, 9; Rom. 6:23).

As it would be wicked to keep from a condemned prisoner a governor's signed pardon, even so it is a thousandfold more wicked to keep from condemned mankind God's pardon in Christ.

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2

We are responsible to our fellow men for this Gospel invitation, since Christ, the "Witness" of this Gospel, v. 3 (John 1:18; John 18:37), as our "Commander" and "Leader," v. 3, has appointed us to this task (the Sunday's Gospel, John 15:26; 17:18; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:19); we, of course, are included in these injunctions, since they reach out to the very end of time. Are we being faithful to this divine appointment?

3

We are to bring this Gospel invitation: a. to all who need it, "everyone that thirsteth," v. 1; b. to all races and peoples, v. 5 (Gal. 3:28; Rom. 3:29, 30). Are we doing that? (Am I?); c. to the "wicked" and the "unrighteous," v. 7, the harlot in our community, the drunkard, the blasphemer, to all, whether "good or bad" (Matt. 22:9, 10 and Christ's own example).

4

As "good stewards" we should offer this Gospel invitation: a. Through the Word of God, vv. 3, 5, 8-11, speaking "as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11) and using the Word as the means of grace, v. 11 (Rom. 10:17; John 6:33; 1 Pet. 1:23). — But are we always loyal to God's Word? Do we not frequently hinder its work by sin? b. with importunity, calling to repentance "while" the Lord "may be found," v. 6; c. with confidence, since it is a covenant of God, v. 3, which He has commanded us to deliver, v. 4 (Matt. 28:19, 20), and to which He has guaranteed success, vv. 10, 11 — but do we always manifest such confidence? d. according to our abilities and opportunities, since in the Sunday's Epistle our "Commander," v. 4, requires of us to minister our several gifts one to another "as of the ability which God giveth" and "as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pet. 4:10, 11). Are we to the fullest extent using all our talents for this cause of Christ in Synod, the congregation, the home? (See *Lutheran Hymnal*, Nos. 400 and 496, Matt. 25:14-30.)

Conclusion: Surely, when we consider our many shortcomings with respect to this solemn duty of bringing God's Gospel invitation to others, we cannot but cry out and say, "Hear, O Lord . . . and have mercy upon me! (Introit.) And He will have mercy, for He is also "my salvation" (Introit; Ps. 27:1, 7-10), for by the very Gospel which I am to offer to others He invites me, "without money" and "without price" to receive an "abundant pardon" in my Savior.

Oh, let us, therefore, with thankful hearts pray with the collect of this day for the grace ever more faithfully to "serve . . . with a pure heart," particularly also in the blessed cause of bringing to our fellow men God's gracious Gospel invitation!

THEO. F. NICKEL