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Outlines on Old Testament Texts (Synodical Conference)

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656 Outlines on Old Testament Texts (Synodical Conference)

as Members of the Church of Christ. Christian children are to obey their parents; Christian parents are to give their children a Christian training; Christian servants are to serve their masters faithfully; Christian masters are to be considerate toward their employees. — Taking v. 21 as the starting point, one may speak on *Christian Submissiveness* as shown 1. in the home, vv. 1-4; 2. at work, vv. 5-9; or 1. by children; 2. by parents; 3. by employees; 4. by employers. — *The Blessing of Bringing Up Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord.* This training will produce obedient children, pious parents, faithful servants, considerate employers. — There is sufficient material for a series of four sermons on the duties of Christian parents, Christian children, Christian employees, Christian employers. — On vv. 1-4. *The Christian Home a Church of Christ.* There Christ is the Ruler. There parents and children serve Him. — Before preaching on this text, the pastor should read Luther's explanation of the Fourth Commandment in his Large Catechism, *Triglotta*, pp. 611-631.

THEO. LAETSCH

**Outlines on Old Testament Texts
(Synodical Conference)**

Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

Ex. 34:29-35

The outstanding character of the Old Testament is without question Moses, the servant of Jehovah. It was he who was privileged to lead Israel out of the house of bondage, Egypt, to the edge of the promised home in Palestine. By Moses' hand God performed many of the most striking miracles recorded in the Sacred Record, and on Moses God bestowed honors such as were shared by no other human being. One such instance is related in our text for today. We dwell on the theme

The Supernatural Brilliance of Moses' Face

1. *A sign of God-given authority*
2. *A source of terror for the children of Israel*
3. *A symbol of the transitory glory of the ministry of the letter*

1

Moses' return after his first stay on Mount Sinai to receive the Law from Jehovah was marred by Israel's idolatry. After the people had repented, Moses ascended the mountain again. Moses had fashioned new tablets, 34:1, and God Himself once more wrote

the Law, 34:1, 28. Moses' life had been sustained for forty days and nights in a miraculous manner, 34:28. He was now returning to the plain where the children of Israel were encamped.

But this time Moses' appearance was strikingly different from any other time. His face shone as he descended Sinai, v. 29. He had been in the presence of God's glory, vv. 5, 6, and his face reflected the divine splendor by which he had been surrounded. His was a miraculous experience. According to v. 29 rays of a supernatural light emanated from Moses' face, unknown to himself.

God had His purpose in view in working this miracle. Moses was God's prophet in an exceptional degree, Deut. 34:10. God wished to demonstrate to all who saw Moses on this occasion that he was vested with divine authority. He was God's ambassador, and his face documented this fact. God identifies His messengers by special means as the circumstances may require. To what length our gracious God will go to meet doubt and unbelief is shown in the case of Joshua, Josh. 3:7; Elijah, 1 Kings 18:38; the Apostles on Pentecost, Acts 2; and, especially, Jesus, the Messiah, Acts 2:22.

All who saw Moses' face shining with this mysterious brilliance had to acknowledge him to be the incumbent of the highest office that man can hold, God's own minister.

2

The supernatural brightness of Moses' face had its effect upon the children of Israel, v. 30. They saw reflected in it the glory of the Lord whose inexorable demand upon the human being is perfect holiness, Lev. 20:7, and in whose presence none but the holy can stand, Is. 6:5. As the people came near Moses, the dazzling brightness on the face of the bringer of God's Law made them conscious of their own sinfulness, and their feeling of guilt overwhelmed them. Awe-struck, they saw in Moses a flaming minister from heaven. If they could not endure Moses' shining face, how much less would they be able to face God Himself!

Israel's reaction towards Moses' shining face is the reaction of the sinner towards God's Law. Moses here represented the dispensation of the Law which brings God's demands in graven letters, but is dead in so far as it gives no power to keep the Law. The letter killeth, 2 Cor. 3:6. The Mosaic office is the ministration of death, 2 Cor. 3:7, even though God's Law as the manifestation of the holy will of the ever-supreme Lord of lords is glorious.

Let us rejoice that we are living under the ministration of the Spirit which leads to righteousness, 2 Cor. 3:8. Christ has broken the power of sin over us, Rom. 8:1. We can face the shining skin of Moses, yea, God Himself, without fear. When the disciples saw

658 Outlines on Old Testament Texts (Synodical Conference)

the transfigured Christ, their reaction was Matt. 17:4. These words express the conviction of every believing Christian who has been cleansed of his sins by the blood of Jesus Christ, his Savior, whenever he thinks of himself as walking in the presence of the living God.

3

According to vv. 32-35 Moses put a veil over his face when he transmitted God's Commandments to Israel. How long a period of time was involved the Scriptures do not tell us, but the brilliancy faded in the course of time, 2 Cor. 3:7 (end). It was merely a temporary expedient meant to serve God's purpose.

Similarly, it was God's will that the Old Testament covenant symbolized by Moses should come to an end and be superseded by the New Testament covenant in Christ Jesus. The Prophets already indicated this in the Old Testament, Jer. 31:31; Ezek. 37:26. That new era, described Rom. 7:6, was ushered in by the coming of Jesus into the world and became an accomplished fact through His atoning death on the cross. To all who believe in Him apply the Apostle's words Rom. 6:22, 23.

As we review our blessed state, we join the Apostle in saying
2 Cor. 1:3.

G. V. SCHICK

Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

Ex. 20:18-24

Sinai the scene of a most unique revelation of God. Some of our brethren in the armed forces serving in the Middle East report that they have had the opportunity to see this awe-inspiring region. We all should frequently visit Sinai in spirit and learn its lessons. On the basis of our text we shall try to study some of them under the theme (*Luth. Hymnal* 21:1):

"Where Is There a God Such, Lord, As Thou?"

1. *A God before whose holy Law none can stand*
2. *A God, however, who is accessible through mediation*
3. *A God whose service is blessing and joy*

1

Briefly set forth the situation (Ex. 19). Amid the peals of thunder, the flashes of lightning, the blasts of the trumpet, the quake of the flaming mount, a Voice sounded forth from the fiery center of the thick darkness lodged on the summit. Several million people heard that Voice above the uproar of the tempest, proclaiming the Ten Commandments (vv. 1-17). As the Voice ceased, the thunders continued, re-echoing, as it were, the "Thou

shalt! Thou shalt not!"; the lightnings continued, recalling the words that threatened wrath upon the disobedient (vv. 5-7). The Voice was that of the living God Himself (vv. 1, 2, 19, 22)!

Stripped of a few features that belonged to the O. T. dispensation, as Luther presents them in our Catechism, the Ten Commandments given on Sinai are the codification of the original Moral Law inscribed upon man's heart, whose lettering has been obscured but not entirely effaced by sin (Rom. 2:14-16). They are binding upon all men (Sermon on the Mount; Rom. 3:19; Eph. 5:5, 6; Gal. 5:19-21, *et al.*). One Law over all, valid for Christians and non-Christians, valid forever, searching the innermost recesses of the soul, embracing every idle word and every action and every secret thought of the heart, inexorable, perfect, holy as its Author — and if man has not thoroughly kept it, he has thoroughly failed (James 2:10)!

Israel could not stand before this Law (vv. 18 b, 19; Deut. 5:25). Moses could not (Heb. 12:21). Can you? (Let the preacher here apply the rigorous requirements of the Law according to the needs of his people). "This do and thou shalt live" (Jesus in the Gospel for the day). Have you done it? "Cursed, etc." (Gal. 3:10). The Law has no hope for lawbreakers, for any of us. But there is an appeal from the Law to the holy Lawgiver, who is so hostile to sin that He has provided a means to deliver the condemned sinners. "Where is there a God such, Lord, as Thou" — accessible through mediation?

2

Israel requests Moses to be mediator between them and God (v. 19; Deut. 5:23-27). This was one of the purposes of the theophany (Ex. 19:9; Deut. 5:28). But while Moses as mediator of the further laws might relieve them of the fear of death at hearing the voice of God directly, his mediation could not relieve them of their fear of the Law's terrors. For that a higher Mediator was needed (Heb. 12:24). And even here on Sinai He is promised. Carefully compare v. 21 with Deut. 18:15-19, with its great Messianic promise of the "Prophet like Moses." Israel asked God to speak to them by a man like themselves. "They have well spoken," says God and grants their request beyond what they were able to ask and think, promising the God-man, the Word, who in the fullness of time was made flesh, and they beheld His glory not, as at Sinai, full of majesty and terror, but full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

The hope of this coming Prophet — God's last Word to men (Heb. 1:2), promised as the Seed to Adam and Eve and to the Patriarchs, typified in the law-regulated sacrifices, the Goal of all history (Epistle) — was the refuge for sinners under the Old

660 Outlines on Old Testament Texts (Synodical Conference)

Covenant as faith is for us now (Acts 15:11; Gal. 3:17). Through Him alone is God accessible (John 14:6). From Him there is no further appeal, as there is from the Law to His mediatorial work (Deut. 18:19; John 3:18). (The preacher will, of course, expound this work more fully. This may well be done on the basis of the opening words of the Epistle, Gal. 3:13,14.) Through this "one Mediator between God and men" (1 Tim. 2:5,6) we have access to God and all the treasures of grace (cf. Rom. 5:2; Eph. 2:18; 3:12; Heb. 4:16; 10:19-22; 12:18-24). What a privilege to serve this merciful Savior-God!

3

Isaiah 57:15; 1 Tim. 6:16: This God yearns to commune with us creatures of the dust. The barrier to such communion (Is. 59:2) has been removed by the Mediator—for Israel in promise, for us in reality. To bring us to the faith and keep us in the faith through which we have access to God, God "records His name," reveals Himself. To Israel He promised: v. 24 b and prescribed: v. 24 a. The "burnt-offerings" were patterns of Christ's offering and the "peace-offerings" were tokens of the gratitude and joy of the pardoned sinner. The O. T. rites have fallen away (Heb. 10:1; Col. 2:17); but the "record of God's name" is with us in His Word and Sacraments. With these means of grace we have the promise of blessing. (Here the preacher will disclose some of the endless riches of this blessing, *e. g.*, on the basis of 2 Cor. 13:14).

"Where is there a God," etc., offering us salvation as a gift, free as the air we breathe, God's alone the cost? Our hearts must well with gratitude and joy. Heb. 13:15 and Rom. 12:1. Freed from the curse of the Law, we will love the Law with all our heart and in the power of the Holy Spirit obey it as never before (Jer. 31:33, 34; Ps. 119:32; John 15:5, etc.). Indeed, because of our Old Adam we shall still require the Law as a curb (v. 20 b), as a mirror to keep us conscious of our abysmal need (Rom. 3:20 b; 7:7); according to the new man we shall joyfully follow it as a guide to the way in which love expresses itself, for faith works through love (Gal. 5:6) and "love is the fulfilling of the Law" (Rom. 13:10).

V. BARTLING

Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity

Num. 21:4-9

If Christian Scientists, "Jehovah's Witnesses," and Modernists who have stricken sin from their vocabulary would read the story of the text without prejudice, they would learn to know God as He actually is and has revealed Himself in His Word.

God's Justice and Mercy**1**

a. The distance between Egypt and Canaan may be traversed by foot in two or three weeks. It took Israel 40 years. And then, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, only their children entered. Those that left Egypt were overthrown in the wilderness because of their repeated offenses. Vv. 4, 5. Israel murmured against Moses and God. They were near the border of the Promised Land. The direct way led through the land of Edom. When, however, the Edomites, the ancient enemy of Israel, refused passage, the Jews were forced to take a long circuitous route through the worst parts of a sandy desert. That was a test which the weary wanderers could not meet. They murmured not only against their divinely appointed leader, Moses, but against the very God. So ungrateful that they cast aspersions upon the wonder bread that had sustained them so many years. They were longing for the more varied fare of Canaan, Num. 14:20-24. Their offense was an uprising against the living God. Paul charged them with "tempting Christ," 1 Cor. 10:9. They ate of "the same spiritual meat," Christ, the "Angel of the covenant," who had so often protected them in danger; yet their souls "loathed this light bread." Vengeance came promptly. The Lord sent fiery serpents among them, from whose venomous stings thousands died. "Fiery," probably because the victims were inflamed with a deadly fever (Luther) and quickly died.

b. If history is the best teacher, it is not the most successful one. Yet "these things were our examples," 1 Cor. 10:16. God is long-suffering. He would destroy no one. However, when the measure of man's iniquities is filled and running over; when the earth can no longer bear the crimes of man, He pours out the vials of His wrath, as in the present carnage of nations. We also bear our share of the nation's guilt. We have been blessed above others. Where are our works? We Lutherans have much reason to say: Ps. 38:2.

c. God's justice is either punitive or corrective. The Great Deluge; the cup which Christ drank in Gethsemane are instances of the former. It is punishment and destruction of life, limb, happiness. Corrective justice proceeds from God's mercy, with a view towards working repentance. So here. Israel had not yet hardened its heart, as later on, Is. 1. It was still amenable to discipline and correction. Without preaching, without rebuke by prophets, the people sensed that their murmuring against God had brought the serpents upon them. They were convinced in their conscience: God is just; we have sinned. Dan. 9:4-11.

662 Outlines on Old Testament Texts (Synodical Conference)

2

a. V. 7. The severity of the scourge, the appalling mortality, led the Israelites to gauge the magnitude of their offense by the magnitude of the visitation. Cp. Ps. 90:7. They besought their mediator Moses to intercede for them, which he did. Vv. 8 and 9. Moses was directed to erect a standard with a brass serpent, in appearance like the fiery serpents, upon a tall pole that could be seen from all parts of the camp. And every bitten Israelite that looked upon it was healed. Marvelous grace of God; cp. Ps. 103:8; Is. 60:10.

b. A type of Christ, John 3:14, 15. The hellish serpent had poisoned all men with sin, but the Redeemer is lifted up on the cross, that all who see Him by faith, as Abraham saw His day and rejoiced, may forever be healed of sin. Seeing the brazen serpent rescued only from temporal death; beholding the crucified Savior with eyes of faith rescues from eternal death. The cross of Christ is raised high to all the world in the spoken and written word that all men might believe. "In this sign thou wilt conquer," Constantine read and believed.

The brass serpent, the type, was removed by Hezekiah, 2 Kings 18:4. The antitype, Christ, abides unto the end of days to heal men. When we in heaven behold the print of the nails and the wound in His side, we shall forever glorify the crucified and exalted Redeemer who said: "I am the Lord that healeth thee," Ex. 15:26.

L. J. ROEHM

Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

1 Kings 18:21-40

It is important to differentiate between that which is false and that which is true, to know good money from counterfeit; to distinguish between a false friend and a true one. It is also necessary to distinguish false worship from true worship. A study of our text will reveal to us

1. *The folly of false worship*
2. *The value of true worship*

1

Israel had fallen into the sin of idolatry under Ahab, chap. 16: 30-33. The worship of Jehovah was forgotten; God's mercy in leading His people out of Egypt, the miracle at the Red Sea, the words of Moses and Joshua, the glorious worship of the temple of Solomon, all was thrust aside, and Israel worshiped a false god, an idol. They thought they had become wise. Often men think that they are smart when they cast aside the religion they were

taught in their youth. But we can see what colossal stupidity and folly that is! Elijah challenged the false worshipers to a test, vv. 21-24. The people readily consented to make the test. They were sincere in their idolatrous worship; otherwise they would have been afraid to make the test. False worship often does not lack sincerity; but we must not confuse sincerity with truth. They prayed all day to Baal; they became very emotional, v. 28. But Baal did not hear. There was no fire. Crestfallen, disillusioned, they fell silent; their worship was folly.

And so is all false worship in all the world, in China and India, Japan and Africa — and America. All worship that is not brought to the Triune God in the name of Jesus and in conformity with the doctrines of the Bible, is false worship, no matter where it is found, whether in the temple of an idol or in a Christless "Christian" church. All such worship is stupendous folly. It will never bring the fire of God's favor from heaven. It may appear to be ever so sincere and fervent, but sincerity is never a substitute for truth.

We must remember this distinction between false and true worship. We must not be misled by beautiful music, appealing oratory, or the outward forms of an impressive service, or by a show of intense seriousness, or by great numbers; there were 450 Baal worshipers and one Elijah.

2

Our text also depicts to us an example of true worship and its value. Elijah took up his part of the challenge, vv. 30-37. And God in heaven, in order to show Israel the folly of idolatry and the value of true worship, responded with fire from heaven. Now all Israel could see the folly of their idolatry, and they turned back to the worship of Jehovah.

So today true worship brings blessings from God. True worship is worship of the Triune God, Matt. 4:10; Is. 42:8; in the name of Jesus, John 16:23; John 5:23; with a repentant heart, Ps. 96:9; for the glory of God and according to the doctrines of the Bible, Matt. 15:9. Such worship, whether in a beautiful church or on a bed of sickness, in the comforts of home or on a dangerous battlefield, has God's blessing, brings help in days of trouble and forgiveness of sin and the salvation of the soul.

True worship must be confident, vv. 33 and 34. Elijah believed that God would answer his prayer. In our worship we must believe the promises of God. True worship is not ashamed. Elijah was the only one who worshiped the true God, but his boldness was rewarded. Before the day was over, the people were worshipping with Elijah. Do not ever be afraid to let people know that you

664 Outlines on Old Testament Texts (Synodical Conference)

worship God in the name of Jesus. Many may smile at first, others may oppose, but some will follow at last. We may worship God anywhere, but the church is the place where we love to worship, Ps. 35:18; Heb. 10:25. We must not mingle false worship and true worship, v. 21. Elijah did not worship at the altar of Baal after the others were finished. He repaired God's altar and worshiped there. Let us continue to worship God in accordance with the doctrines of Scripture and avoid all false worship, Rom. 16:17; 1 John 4:1.

We thank God that He has taught us to worship Him in truth and purity. We pray that He may guard and keep us from false worship.

FREDERIC NIEDNER

