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Outlines on Gospels Adopted by Synodical Conference

Theo. Laetsch

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

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from the history of nations and of individuals are plentiful. — Hence our ungrateful nation is ripe for judgment. Notwithstanding internal and international victories, resources, harvests, military strength, things look insecure, gloomy, hopeless. Niniveh.

2

We Christians must proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ that, with us, our fellow citizens may repent, thank the true God, and be spared.

A. The Gospel of Jesus Christ must reach the individual citizen for his personal knowledge of the true God and for his personal salvation. — We Christians (Matt. 5:13-16; 28:19,20) must not be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, but proclaim it with boldness. This is our foremost duty to God and to our fellow citizens, and it is the first and greatest evidence of our own gratitude to God for all His spiritual and temporal benefits. — The Gospel is the power of salvation as to the Jew and Greek, so to the American. To human reason the leap from unrighteousness and death to righteousness and salvation is illogical; but verse 17 is meant for the American citizen. The trust and faith of Niniveh was not collective; it was individual.

B. As unbelief is the source of ingratitude, so faith in Jesus is the source of gratitude to God. — We thank the true God, because we know Him in Christ Jesus. The unionistic services of today, arranged by Modernists, cannot be acceptable to God because of their Christless character. They are a form of idolatry.

C. The Gospel does not promise heaven to any nation as such. It reveals to all nations the way of repentance by faith. It reveals the Creator as the Redeemer. As impenitence evokes the wrath of God, so faith receives the righteousness of God through the redemption in Christ. — Let us by word and example lead others to such faith. For Jesus' sake, for the Gospel's sake, for the sake of His mercy and truth, for the sake of the righteous, God will spare our nation. Let us renew our missionary efforts in behalf of our nation.
Ps. 100.

G. H. SMUKAL

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First Sunday in Advent

Matt. 11:25-30

Standing at the threshold of a new church year, our hearts tremble with fear at the thought of the fate of the Church and the individual Christian in these dark and dubious times. The Lord Jesus, Heb. 13:8, comes to us with a message of instruction, admonition, comfort, hope. Let us hear

**Christ's Message to His Church at the Beginning
of the New Church Year**

- 1. He praises the Father for His marvelous revelation*
- 2. He offers rest and peace to all that are heavy laden*

1

Five times Jesus calls God "Father," not, however, in the sense of Modernism, which proudly hoists the banner of the universal fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man, denying the sinful depravity, the holy wrath of God, and everlasting punishment. The Father as He is known and revealed only by the Son is the eternal Father of the eternal Son, who became the Father of apostate mankind, the children of wrath, Eph. 2:1-3, only by sending His Son to become their Reconciler through His vicarious suffering and death, Is. 53; 2 Cor. 5:18-21.

This Father in turn reveals the Son to mankind in His Gospel; reveals Him as only the Father knows Him, not only as a wise man, a teacher, an example of virtue, but as His own Son, Ps. 2:7; the mighty God, Is. 9:6; John 1:1-3; our Redeemer, Gen. 3:15; Is. 7:14; 9:6; 53:1-12; Jer. 23:5, 6; etc.

These truths surpassing man's understanding, 1 Cor. 2:6-11, the Father has revealed in such a manner that even babes can thereby be saved, v. 25c, instituting Baptism as the water of regeneration, a means of creating faith in infants, and teaching the way to life in language so plain and simple and so powerful that even babes in intelligence, despised by the world, may become God's children, cp. Is. 35:8c; 1 Cor. 1:26-29.

This Father is the Lord of heaven and earth, v. 25a. The almighty Creator and Ruler of the universe is our reconciled Father through Christ, who still governs the world for the welfare of His Church, His children, Ps. 46; Is. 40:26-31; 43:1, 2.

That is the glorious self-revelation of the Father for which the Son thanks Him. This revelation we have enjoyed during the past years; with this marvelous revelation of the Father's love and power we are greeted on the first Sunday of the new church year. With Jesus let us thank our heavenly Father, accept His revelation in humble hearts, and remain His loving, trusting children.

2

V. 28. This is an invitation such as Jesus alone can truthfully extend. It is based on His entire life's work, His perfect fulfillment of the Law, His atoning sacrifice for our sins, which He bore for us. He offers rest. This term means "ceasing from any movement or labor in order to recover and collect one's strength." Thayer. It is what Christ Himself calls His peace, John 14:27; 16:33; 20:19, 21, 26. It is rest from anything and all things that may disturb the soul or

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body of man, from all burdens, be they physical, mental or spiritual; rest from all efforts to establish one's own righteousness; rest from the agonizing accusations of a violated conscience, of Satan, of one's fellow men; rest from all worries and heartaches that harass the spirit and weary the body; rest and peace and quiet in Him, our Savior, who loved us and gave Himself for us, and who holds us firm and fast in His loving arms.

He asks us to accept His yoke, assuring us that it is easy, vv. 29, 30. It is not the yoke of Satan and sin for our condemnation; it is entering into the service of Him who is our Righteousness and Strength, who by forgiving our sins engenders, strengthens, preserves that love to Himself which gladly does His will. He is our Example and Teacher, meek and humble, never harsh, never losing patience, always ready to come to our aid, always willing to supply new strength. And He is our Savior, covering our imperfections with His perfection.

This He has done in the past. Today He again invites us to come to Him for rest and joyous service. O Lamb of God, I come!

THEO. LAETSCH

Second Sunday in Advent

Luke 17: 26-37

Standing before His unjust judges, Christ tells them, Matt. 26: 64. Forty-three days later, angels announced to His disciples, Acts 1:11. The Letter to the Hebrews informs us, Heb. 9:28. In our lesson the Lord calls this day the day when the Son of Man is revealed, and exhorts us all:

Stand in Readiness for the Day of the Revelation of the Son of Man

- 1. This day shall be a day of judgment*
- 2. This day shall come unexpectedly*
- 3. On this day only the righteous shall escape destruction*

1

The day of the Son of Man is compared to two outstanding examples of God's judgment upon wickedness. On the conditions in Noah's time, cp. Gen. 6: 1-7; at Sodom and Gomorrah, Gen. 13:13; 19:4-11. These descriptions fit our time and age. The whole world lies in wickedness, 1 John 5:19, and this wickedness increases and grows from century to century like a malicious cancer, Rom. 1: 21-32; 2 Tim. 3:1-13, until now the world is like a putrid carcass, carrion rotting away in its vices and shameful wickedness. Already we see the eagles of judgment and perdition sweeping down upon their prey. At any time the final Judgment Day may come. Are we ready?

2

This judgment comes unexpectedly, vv. 26-30. Neither the people of Noah's time nor the people of Sodom expected so sudden and complete a destruction, although they had been warned. Carelessly, indifferently, they continued to live as they had been accustomed — until it was too late.

The world has been warned of the final Day of Judgment. 1900 years ago Christ foretold the day and the signs. Before that, prophets had uttered their warnings, Is. 2; Zeph. 1:14,15; Jude 14,15. Man's conscience tells him that Judgment Day impends. Still most men do not take these warnings to heart. While at all times there are scoffers, 2 Pet. 3:3,4, the mass of mankind goes on its way neglecting the signs of the time, taking interest only in this world, giving little or no thought to eternity. Are we ready? Ready today? Ready now? When are we ready?

3

In the judgments named vv. 26-29 all were destroyed save Noah and Lot and their families. Why? Because God regarded them righteous, Gen. 7:1; 2 Pet. 2:7. Like Abraham, they were accounted righteous because of their faith in the promised Messiah, cp. Gen. 15:6. On that Day one shall be taken, lovingly accepted, as the bride is received by the bridegroom, Matt. 1:20; the other, left, forsaken, sent away, as a convicted criminal is sent to prison. Judgment Day will not be a day of indiscriminate mass destruction, it will be a day of just and impartial individual judgment on the basis of Mark 16:16; John 3:36. Though there may be no difference between two individuals with respect to profession, culture, sex, etc., yet the Searcher of hearts knows His own and will publicly acknowledge them, while publicly disowning all that refused to accept His grace, vv. 34-36.

The Lord describes the folly of those who seek to save their life, v. 33, who make their life in this world the sole or chief object of loving care and solicitous attention. Their heart will cling to their treasures even on the Last Day, and together with their treasures they lose their soul, v. 31. While there is opportunity, repent! And obey the Lord's every word! Lot's wife perished because in disobedience to the Lord's word she looked back, v. 32. Escape for your life! Thank God that you have a Savior who opened heaven for you, and for His sake and in His strength deny yourself, crucify your flesh, die to the world. Make Paul's motto your own, Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21, then you can also exclaim, 2 Tim. 4:7, 8.

Conclusion. Deut. 30:19. What will you choose?

THEO. LAETSCH