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Outlines on the Standard Epistle Lessons

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Outlines on the Standard Epistle Lessons

Third Sunday in Advent

1 Cor. 4:1-5

The pastor is the leader of the congregation. As such the congregation looks to him as its teacher and its representative to the public. What are its norms? How is the congregation to regard him? What has it a right to expect of him?

The Congregation Looks to Its Pastor

1. *It rightly regards him as a minister of Christ and as a steward of the mysteries of God.*

a. A minister of Christ.

Of Christ. This assumes that the pastor is a Christian, one motivated in his task by the love of Christ (Rom. 12:1); else Ps. 50:16-17 would apply to him. It assumes that he is called by God into the service (Rom. 1:1b); therefore like Paul, "necessity is laid" upon him to preach the Gospel. Not a hireling, not a "professional" Christian.

Christ's *minister*, the underling of Christ, one who takes his instructions directly from Christ (lit.: underrower). The congregation wants its pastor to take his orders directly from the King and not to be browbeaten by human or ecclesiastical pressure, nor driven by the ebb and flow of public opinion, nor guided by the inclinations and whims of his own person. Christ is the Ruler, the pastor the servant. (Matt. 23:10-12; 2 Cor. 4:5.)

b. A steward of the mysteries of God.

God has left with the pastor the mysteries, secrets, which he is to dispense to his people, i. e., the Word and the Sacraments. They are not his own property; so he will not act as though they were. God has left them with him, but He will hold him accountable. (Luke 12:41 ff.) Hence the congregation rightly looks to its pastor for the correct use of these mysteries for the benefit of the entire congregation, knowing too that God will hold him accountable. There will be no difference between the rich and the poor, the influential and the "forgotten" fringe. The pastor will bring the mysteries to the spiritually mature and immature, the novice and the veteran, the spiritually weak, the "dead," and the manifest sinner; none must be overlooked. These mysteries must be brought to the individual members and to the collective congregation that none may be lost in the statistical jumble of human mathematics.

2. *It expects of its pastor only that he be faithful.*

a. Faithfulness is required, v. 2. The congregation has a right to expect this of its pastor because this is a part of his ministry

and stewardship. When the Word rules, they will follow. They have the right and duty to judge this faithfulness on the basis of Scripture (the Bereans).

They will expect their pastor to preach the Word, *all* of it, not only that which tickles a few or is convenient for the times. His purpose will be to preach for entry into, and life in, the kingdom of God (John the Baptist). He will be expected to admonish the erring (Ezek. 33:7-9; Luke 3:10-14), to strengthen the weak and to comfort the penitent.

b. But the congregation will not expect more than faithfulness, not any gifts which the Lord did not give the pastor.

There was trouble in Corinth. Partisanship had sprung up. Some favored Apollos, others Peter, and still others Paul. All were faithful ministers and stewards, but God had bestowed different gifts upon these three. Perhaps Peter was more aggressive, Apollos the better speaker, and Paul a better executive. Some judged Paul because he lacked the gifts of Peter or Apollos. Others criticized Peter and Apollos for the gifts they lacked. Concerning this type of judgment Paul says: vv. 3-5. Paul was not conscious of any guilt because he lacked one or the other gift as long as he was a faithful minister and steward. He had the assurance that he could stand before their judgment because he could stand before Christ's judgment. His conscience was bound only in the Word.

c. Since the congregation rightly expects its pastor to be faithful in the Word and is aware of the fact that he too is human, they must pray for him, offer him co-operation, and encourage him in a faithful ministry and stewardship. ARTHUR C. REPP

Fourth Sunday in Advent

Phil. 4:4-7

In the next two days we shall once more join in the celebration of one of Christianity's greatest festivals, Christmas. What a joyful season it will be in this year of 1945! The world's blackest of all wars is over. Many of our dear ones are back at the family hearth for the first time in years. Others will return soon. But our greatest joy will always center about the Christ Child, whose birthday it is. Hence how timely the theme of today's Epistle:

"Rejoice in the Lord Always!"

1. *Our text gives us two reasons for joy in the Lord.*

A. Because "the Lord is at hand," v.5; i. e., His coming is very near and very certain. The Lord's imminent nearness in the second advent was a common theme in the early Church (Rev.

1:7; 3:11; 22:12, 20) and with Paul (1 Thess. 2:19-20; 3:13; 5:1-10). And since our Savior's second advent is at the very door (Jas. 5: 8-9), we ought to rejoice in Him always, in fair weather and in foul (Ex.: Paul in prison, Phil. 1:7, 12-14; writing an epistle of joy, Phil. 1:18-25; 2:2, 17-18, 31; 4:4, 10); for when the Lord is come, all things earthly, viewed in their proper perspective, will look trivial indeed, and the only things of value will be the treasures of heaven (Matt. 6:19-21; 16:24-26). The celebration of our Savior's birth also reminds us forcibly of God's literal fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ's first advent (Gen. 49:10; Is. 7:14; 11:1-10; 40:3; Jer. 23:5-6; Micah 5:2). Shall not God, therefore, just as literally fulfill also all the promises concerning His second coming (to wreak vengeance upon all adversaries, Jude 14, 15; 2 Thess. 1:7-8, and to reward His own, 2 Thess. 1:10; 2 Tim. 4:1-8; 1 Pet. 5:4; 4:13; Rom. 8:8; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 4:17; John 10:28)? Hence: v. 4.

B. Our second reason for joy, v. 7 (literally: "And the peace of God . . . shall guard your hearts. . ."). Here God assures us that if we, like Paul, rejoice not in our own spiritual achievements, but in the Lord and in His righteousness, imputed unto us by faith (Phil. 3:4-9), then we shall have the peace which was attained for us all by Christ, v. 7 (Luke 2:14; Eph. 2:17-19; Col. 2:19-23). And this peace, which passes all human comprehension (1 Cor. 2:7-14), shall be like a faithful watchman about the castle of our lives on account of Jesus, v. 7. Hence: v. 4.

2. *However, our text also tells us how we are to manifest this joy in the Lord.*

A. We are to show it towards all our fellow men by the practice of "moderation," v. 5 (lit. "reasonableness"; Matthew Arnold: "sweet reasonableness"; including gentleness, patience, selflessness, equity, and mildness). We have Paul's example in Phil. 1:15-18; 2:1-8; 4:1-3, 10, 18). Do we always show a similar spirit of love and forbearance? Admonishing and warning, as did Paul (Phil. 3:2-15, 17-19), but always with "sweet reasonableness" (2 Tim. 2:24-26; Philemon 7-10; 14, 17-21; Gal. 6:1)? How often we sin here!

B. We are to manifest our joy also in our attitudes towards care, v. 6 (lit.: "Be full of anxiety for nothing"). How beautiful the example of Paul! He wrote this letter while in prison (Phil. 1:7), rejoicing (v. 4 and Phil. 1:12-14) while facing a possible death sentence (Phil. 1:20-26; 2:17-18), taking all to God in prayer (v. 6; Acts 16:25). How often we fail here! (Hymn 457.)

Conclusion: That God should offer us His peace in the Christ Child (Luke 2:14), so that when He shall come again, we may

stand in His presence with everlasting joy, is something of which we are not worthy. When we, therefore, hear the Christmas angel declare unto us: Luke 2:11, may we—with hearts full of joy, with lives rich in forbearance toward others, with lips moving in trustful prayer with thanksgiving, and with souls made calm and secure in the possession of the peace of God—"to Bethlehem hasten to worship the Lord."

THEO. F. NICKEL

Christmas Day

Titus 2:11-14

Christmas is recognized by nearly all people as the greatest of all festivals, but its true significance and importance is frequently misunderstood and ignored. To many people Christmas is merely a time for good food, brilliant lights, and holiday gaiety, a time to make children happy. We must emphasize the real meaning of Christmas. Our text teaches us

The Importance of the Christmas Festival

1. *It commemorates a sublime historical event*
2. *It has a tremendous significance for humanity*

1

The most important pages of history are those that depict the appearance of something new in the world—the discovery of a new continent, the founding of a new nation. The most sublime event of history was the appearance of the grace of God that bringeth salvation (v. 11), the birth of the Savior (Luke 2).

God was always gracious (Ex. 34:6; 2 Chr. 30:9). His grace was always known to believers (Jonah 4:2). But its fullness appeared to all men when Christ was born (John 1:14). Men conscious of their sin might believe God to be forever angry, unapproachable, vindictive; but the birth of Christ exhibits Him as a gracious God. The simple Christmas story of the Gospels, known to every Christian, taught to little children, portrayed in picture and celebrated in song, is lifted to the height of sublime importance. It is the most important event in all the world's history, because in the birth of Christ there has appeared to all men the grace of God. Many events in history are important only for some people, some nations. This event is important for all people (v. 11; Luke 2:10). It is no wonder that this event has engaged the skill of the greatest artists and the pens of the greatest poets. It is right that the Christian Church celebrates the Christmas festival like no other in the church calendar and that we urge all the world to celebrate this glorious event with us.

2

But what can be the significance for humanity of the birth of this Child in Bethlehem? Once a child was born in the little city of Eisleben in the Old World; that was an important event because that child became the great Reformer. Once a child was born in the backwoods of Kentucky, and that child became the emancipator of the slaves in our land. But the birth of the Child in Bethlehem had epochal significance for humanity, because that Child was the Savior of the world.

Jesus has redeemed us from all iniquity by His vicarious suffering and death, v. 14. Forgiveness of sins is available for all who accept Him in faith. The greatest burden of humanity is taken away. The wall that separates men from God is torn down. The greatest need of humanity is supplied. The most fearful disease of the race is cured. The greatest fear in the hearts of men, the fear of divine wrath and eternal punishment for sin, is removed. Truly, the event at Bethlehem has tremendous significance for humanity.

But is there any significance in the birth of Christ for *this life*? We are concerned very much with the things that make this a better world. The grace of God brings about virtue and goodness in the world (vv. 12 and 14b). Men who believe in the Savior, whose sins are forgiven, will strive to deny ungodliness, to avoid sin, to live orderly and decently, to be kind and friendly. It will be a better world. There will be more happiness. And when there is unhappiness, trouble, and sorrow, those who believe in the Savior have hope and comfort (v. 13), the assurance that Jesus will come again and take them to heaven, where there will be no sorrow nor crying (Rev. 7:16, 17).

All this comes from the event that we celebrate today, this event of sublime importance and greatest significance for humanity. Hymn 107: 1, 4.

FREDERIC NIEDNER

Sunday after Christmas

Gal. 4:1-7

Great are the honors and distinctions the world bestows upon those it deems worthy of them. The military leaders who conquered in the late war, the heroes who emerged safely from feats of reckless daring, are lauded by the press and feted by dignitaries. Sometimes a grateful generation will remember the founders and saviors of nations for centuries and place them into the hall of fame. Yet the dictum of Solomon applies: "All is vanity." Of a distinction to be coveted much more the text speaks: the simple honor of being a Christian, or, in the language of Paul, a son of God.

Blessed Are the Sons of God**1. Who are the sons of God? 2. Why are they blessed?****1**

a. The Apostle writes of a time when he and his fellow Jews were believers, but had not yet come of age in the sense of the text, vv. 1-3. He refers to the Old Testament economy, when their status was that of minors, who are subjected to restrictions. Under the Old Covenant the Jews were held in bondage under the "elements of the world," the Law with its moral and ceremonial and political statutes. Their condition then was like that of a child whose father had died and who, although the heir of the house, as a minor is under the guardianship of tutors and governors. Virtually the state of the minor heir did not differ from that of a slave (chap. 5:1), since he could not exercise control over his property. Just so the Old Testament Israelites sighed under the "weak and beggarly elements" (v. 9; Col. 2:20), which held them in virtual serfdom. They could not even kindle a fire on the Sabbath day or walk farther than a Sabbath's journey.

b. That economy ended with the "time appointed of the Father" (v. 2), "the fullness of the time" (v. 4). Jesus Christ came forth from the throne of the Father. God's and the Virgin's Son subjected Himself to the same law that held the world in thralldom, fulfilled its requirements and suffered its penalty, and so merited divine sonship for all mankind (chap. 3:13). This emancipation releases the former slaves, both Jews and Gentiles, and renders them sons of God the moment they accept it in faith. What a glorious redemption! St. John exclaims: 1 John 3:1; cp. 2 Pet. 1:4. They breathe the air of full New Testament liberty, free from restrictions (Rev. 5:10).

c. Who, then, are sons of God? All those who are not only created, but also begotten of God (James 1:18; John 1:13; 1 John 3:3; 5:4; 1 Pet. 2:2; 1:23). Not sons in a figurative, but in the real sense. Sons of God live on earth, but their conversation is in heaven (Phil. 3:20; Eph. 2:6). Natural ties bind them to their families, but holier bonds unite them with Christ (Matt. 12:50). They are lights in the Lord (Eph. 5:8), walk in the light (1 John 1:7), shine as lights in the world (Matt. 5:16). A temple of God, associates of the angels, and the horror of Satan. Their hearts are filled with a heavenly fire, their lips with the praises of God, and their hands with good works.

2

Their blessedness consists in:

a. The absence of slavish fear of God. V. 6, sons, in contrast to minors, v. 1. V. 7, son, in contrast to slave. "Ye" and "thou" express

that the Gentile Galatians are no more under the Law than the New Testament Israelites. The "weak and beggarly elements" have been abolished (Col. 3:16). The Moral Law still stands, but cannot condemn them (v. 5; chap. 3:13). Yes, they are no longer under the Law (1 Tim. 1:9). They delight to do His will (1 John 3:22; 5:3).

b. The intimate relationship to the Father (v. 6). They have the privilege of communing with Him 24 hours of the day, knowing that He answers all their prayers in Jesus' name (1 John 3:21-22; Ps. 10:17; Mark 11:24). The Spirit of the Son bears witness in them to their sonship (Rom. 8:16), and prays in them and for them (v. 26).

c. The inheritance bestowed on them with sonship (v. 7; Heb. 9:15; 1 Pet. 1:4). Their exalted Brother inherits because of His divine sonship; so the sons and daughters of God, as real children of their heavenly Father, become joint heirs through and with Christ (Rom. 8:17). And what a glorious inheritance! (1 John 3:2.)
Hymn 391.

L. J. ROERM

New Year's Eve

Psalm 107

The beginning and the end of the text are supported, sustained, and illustrated by the middle. The verses between the first and last relate historical events covering the passing of many years. As the years roll on, these events re-occur. The fleeting years are a record of God's enduring mercy.

The Christian Earnestly Ponders the Course of Events

1. *In wisdom* 2. *In comfort and hope* 3. *In gratitude*

1

As the wise children of God, we observe, and keep in memory and contemplation: 1. the decline of humanity, of a nation, of the masses, of a community, of a church, or of an individual, which is sometimes slow and gradual, sometimes speedy and sharp, and always by choice of the backsliding and slipping; 2. the resuscitation and restoration, the deliverance and salvation, wrought by the Lord in mercy and kindness (vv. 1, 43). 3. The Psalm depicts by a succession of contrasts: a. that man can only fall, being a fool, dead in transgression, in darkness, bound, rebellious; b. that the Lord alone lifts up and saves. — The Psalmist carries out a double theme, the leading one the Lord's enduring mercy, developed in many variations, and the counter theme, man's sin, helplessness, pride, in as many variations. Man stumbles to perish whenever he departs from the Lord; but the Lord delivers those who repent and return and then cry unto Him.

As we number our days and close this year, let us be wise. This past year, with the year of creation and the years of our Savior's sojourn, is history above every preceding year. The wise consider to understand the history of the Lord's kindness against the black background of the history of man. We pray for such wisdom (Ps. 90:12). We were in great trouble during the year as a nation, as a church, as individuals, and we are in great trouble now. Repent! Why? Pray! Why? The text answers. Cp. Ps. 50:15a. And the wisdom of the Holy Spirit prompts us to observe Eph. 4:22-24. True wisdom presupposes faith in Jesus (vv. 1, 2, 43).

2

The Lord's kindness experienced and learned by others (vv. 2-30) is promised generally vv. 31-43. For our comfort. 1. The days are evil. Temptations to sins of all kinds are strong in this solemn hour: to worldliness, to worries, to despair, to pride and self-righteousness. The Old Adam does not want to resist the downward pull. And where is the promised freedom from fear? Oppression is active. 2. The Lord's mercy in Christ, His judgments upon all ungodly men, His wise government and gracious providence, all this is promised to us by His lavish kindness. In Him who dispels all fear we have true freedom from fear. (Ps. 50:15b.) For our hope. The Christian is not a pessimist, because his faith and hope is centered on the goodness and mercy of the Lord in Christ Jesus. Jesus is determined to deliver us (Ps. 50:15b). We are hopeful for ourselves (1 Pet. 1:5; Luke 12:31). We are hopeful for His Church (2 Tim. 2:19; Luke 12:32). The new man rises on wings of hope far above the hopeless confusion of this transitory world to realize the promises of the enduring mercy of Jesus. Hope is another year closer to the final redemption.

3

The Psalmist rehearses man's ingratitude to God and its dire consequences. The ungrateful are sullen and envious in this evening hour. Ungrateful people are never really happy, because the unpaid debt of gratitude to God distresses them in spite of their boasted independence, flightiness, and daring.

The refrain (vv. 8, 15, 21, 31) is one of the chief lessons of the text, and it must be the Christian's chief concern at the turn of the year. The Lord was merciful and good. He averted all evil. We were dangerously close to devastation, to riots, to collapse of trade and commerce; we were threatened by the antichrists and their destructive schemes; we were in peril of death; always Satan prowled about to devour us. The Lord delivered us.—The Lord

blessed us: our person, work, family, church, fields, nation, even as the text states. He has blessed us with the grace of gratitude. Let us now use this gift and display our virtue (v. 1, 32; Ps. 34, 3; 50:15c).

Conclusion: v. 7.

G. H. SMUKAL

New Year's Day

Gal. 3:23-39

As today's Gospel stresses the changeless name, person, and work of our Savior, so the Epistle emphasizes the changelessness of the way to salvation through faith in the name, person, and work of Christ Jesus.

In the Constant Change of Times the Way of Salvation Is Always the Same

1. Times change.

Vv. 23-25. Paul speaks of a great change that had come for his readers when they were brought to faith in Christ Jesus as the promised Messiah. They had been transferred from the era and domination of the Mosaic Law to the era of faith and its glorious freedom. ("Faith" = the New Testament condition of believers.) That was a very real change. Under the Mosaic Law the Jews, including the Galatian Jews who were now Christians, "were kept" (like prisoners) deprived of much of the liberty of New Testament Christians, watched lest they escape. "Shut up" again states that the Jews, also the believing Jews, were *restricted* by the Law, but the stress is now on the limitation: "unto the faith," etc. The imprisonment was but for a limited time, the Old Testament era of waiting and hoping for the New Covenant, to be ushered in by the coming of the Messiah.

V. 24 compares the irksome domination of the Mosaic Law with its multitudes of rules and regulations to the rule of a "school-master," i. e., a guardian of boys, supervising them and correcting their deportment. The restraining influence of the guardian was of course beneficial to the boy; but it was nevertheless a bondage for him, making him sigh for the time when it would be lifted. In a similar situation were the Jews, also the believing Jews, under the Mosaic Law. Describe some of the restrictions placed upon the Jews; cp., e. g., Lev. 11, particularly vv. 24-40. However, with the coming of Christ that irksome bondage ended for such Jews as became Christians, for He brought them to the full freedom of God's children.

The new year brings changes for our generation, also for us Christians: change from wartime to peacetime living, change in

the nation's politics, in the lives of individuals, etc. Such changes often very vitally affect our lives for the better or for the worse.

Since so many things change, since times and conditions change, it is often thought and taught that similar changes must take place in religion also. But that is a disastrous fallacy.

2. The way of salvation is always the same.

For the Jews the way of salvation did not change at the coming of Christ. Vv. 23-25 do not say that the Jews of old were saved by the Law. The preceding context argues that they were saved, like Abraham, by faith in God's gracious promises (see esp. vv. 21-22). Abraham and many of his descendants were saved by such faith long before the Mosaic Law came, and that Law was not intended to supplant the promise, but came in between for other purposes (better knowledge of sin, to make them more desirous of the salvation to be wrought by the Messiah, to keep them separated from the Gentiles, so that salvation might be of the Jews, John 4:22).

When Christ had come, the Mosaic Law was lifted from off their shoulders and never placed on the shoulders of the Gentile Christians. The second part of the text makes it a point to show that there is no difference between the members of the New Testament Church. The Jews who had been under the bondage of the Law were now just as free as the Gentiles who had never shared in that bondage. Through Baptism they all alike came to faith in Christ and have also put on Christ like a garment, and are therefore all alike. Their spiritual beauty is Christ, who of God is made unto them wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30).

In spite of all changes time and conditions may bring, there will be in the new year, and until the end of time, no other way to salvation than faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever, and His atoning sacrifice. Hymn 346. F. WENGER

Epiphany

Is. 60:1-6

Today we are celebrating a joyous festival — Epiphany. Epiphany means manifestation. It is called the Feast of Manifestation because it is celebrated in memory of the first manifestation of Jesus to the heathen (Matt. 2:1-11). This introduction of the Christ is to continue till Christ comes again, when every knee shall bow before Him. In our text for today we hear God Himself calling upon His people to show the Christ Child to the Gentiles.

Arise, Shine!**1**

To whom is God addressing this invitation? Isaiah spoke to Israel. There can be no doubt about it, therefore, that these words are addressed to the children of Abraham, to the true Israel of God. And who are these blessed people? The Bible tells us: Gal. 3:7. Cf. Rom. 9:8b; Rom. 4:16b. These are the believers who are justified by faith. They are blessed people (Luke 10:23). They are the people who have suffered the cutting, painful blows of God's Law and have by the grace of God accepted the healing balm of Gilead, the gracious forgiveness of sin through the blood of the Redeemer (John 3:16; 1 John 1:7). They are the people in whom the Holy Ghost has through the Gospel begun the good work of true faith and godliness (Gal. 3:2).

In short, this glorious invitation is addressed to us Christians, to you and to me; cf. Matt. 5:14-16.

Are you telling me that you do not consider yourself such a light? If you are a Christian, even though you are but a "smoking flax," a very weak Christian, God tells you to fan that little spark into a bright flame. That is the very purpose of these words: "Arise, shine!"

How are we to accomplish this?

We are to remember that Christ in His Word is the Light of the world (John 8:12). Because we have this Word, we Christians also are the light of the world. Christ wants to shine in this world through us, through you. Therefore He calls to you, "Arise, shine!"

All about us the unbelieving world is sitting in darkness (darkness of sin, of ignorance, of despair), v. 2. God has given us a glorious Light (Rom. 1:16; Ps. 119:105, 130). He wants us to let it shine for those who are in darkness, so that they may come to this Light. However humble we are in ourselves, however much of sin we still see in ourselves, however severe our temptations and trials may be, in spite of all this, God wants us to shine with the light that He has given us. You Christian parents can shine before your children both by word and by life; you Christian young people can shine by your devotion to God and to parents. Wherever we are, we can shine by testimony of mouth and by our life as Christians (Titus 2:12; 1 Pet. 2:15).

Ah, it is necessary for God to appeal to us in these words, "Arise, shine!" for it is true what we sing in one of our hymns: "We are sluggish, thoughtless, cold." What would you think of a man who denies himself no comfort, who has money far above his needs, and yet can quietly see others starving and perishing? Such a one is like Dives, who ended in hell. But worse still it were

for us if we, whom God has blessed so richly, would refuse to let this light shine so that other poor, darkened souls might see it. Hymn 495:3. We are so rich in good Christian books, Bible, Catechism, hymnbook, periodicals, pamphlets, tracts; we have, moreover, so many opportunities of speaking God's Word and of living a simply Christian life that every one of us should shine in this dark world. Hymn 496:4.

2

However, our text also *paints for us a beautiful picture of the success of this work*. It assures us of rich dividends for our investments of time, strength, and money (vv. 4-6). That promise was fulfilled during the abject humiliation of the children of God in the Old Testament when the Hebrews were carried away captive to Babylon and other places, when many were won through the testimony of these captives. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did shine even in prisons. It was fulfilled when the Wise Men, the captain of Capernaum, and the Syrophoenician woman and other Gentiles came to the faith; when Paul went out to the Gentiles and gathered churches in Ephesus, Philippi, Corinth, Athens, and Rome. Since then millions have turned to the shining Cross of Christ. New victories were won by the Christians who did rise and shine at the time of the Reformation. What light has been spread throughout the world through the Bible Societies of Great Britain and our country and of other countries! (If time permits, tell more of the spread of Christianity, of the great lights that were won for Christ: Augustine, Charlemagne, Luther, and others.) It is true what one has said: The Christian Church began to invite the weary and heavy laden, the beggar and the leper and the outcast, and succeeded in gathering in kings, princes, philosophers, and intellectual giants.

Dear Christian, God wants to do great things through you. He does not want you to hide yourself, He invites you to *rise and shine* with the light which He Himself has given you, and He promises you that His Word shall not return void. What our text promises, that shall be fulfilled again and again. Hymn 503.

MARTIN S. SOMMER

