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## Homiletics: Outlines on the Standard Epistle Lessons

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# Homiletics

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## Outlines on the Standard Epistle Lessons

### SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

1 JOHN 3:13-18

Am I a Christian? How can I know that I am a Christian? You say: When a person repents of his sin and in faith accepts Christ as his Savior, he is a Christian. That is very true; the Apostle says, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26). But faith is not a dead, but a living thing; it must show that it is there. The fruit of faith is love. Cp. John 13:35; 1 Cor. 13:2, 13.

#### LOVE TO THE BRETHREN IS A CHARACTERISTIC OF THE CHRISTIAN

*I. Such love a Christian must have in his heart.*

A. 1) Hatred is in the heart of natural man (v. 13). The mother loves her child, and the child its parents; that is natural affection. One may show a liking or fondness for some other person because that person has benefited him or because of that person's good social qualities; that is attraction. But true love is not found in the heart of natural man. Not love, but hatred brings about war; not love, but hatred causes strife among men; not love, but hatred breaks up homes and separates husbands and wives, parents and children; not love, but hatred causes dissension, strife, and bloodshed; and the Cains still hate the Abels, the world still hates the Church (vv. 12-13).

2) "Marvel not" (v. 13). This hatred on the part of natural man should not surprise us. Love is found only where there is spiritual life, but natural man is dead in his trespasses and sins (v. 14 b; Eph. 2:1). "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer" (v. 15 a). Hatred is a sin against the commandment that says, "Thou shalt not kill." A man who nurtures hatred in his heart abideth in spiritual death (vv. 14 b, 15 b).

B. True love is found only in the Christian, in him who has passed from death to life (v. 14). "Love is of God," etc.

(ch. 4:7-8, 10, 19). The fruit of the Spirit is love (Gal. 5:22). Only he whose heart has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, only he who has been brought to a knowledge of his sins, has repented, and accepted Christ as his Savior, has true love and therefore can love. Love does not come from the old man, but from the new man.

*II. Of such love the Christian must give evidence in his dealing with his brethren.*

A. When we love the brethren, that is an indication to us that "we have passed from death unto life" (v. 14; John 13:35). Observing the early Christians, the heathen said, "Oh, how they love one another!"

B. The incentive of true Christian love is God's own love shown to us (v. 16 a). "All that a man hath will he give for his life" (Job 2:4). The surrender of life is the costliest sacrifice that true love can offer. Christ gave His life for us and thus redeemed us from sin, death, and hell. This great love of Christ should induce us to love our brethren (v. 16; ch. 4:11). True love must be like the love of Christ, not in degree but in character.

C. But true love is not something which is only on the tongue, only uttered in words, a mere sentiment, but it manifests itself in active service, in love shown to the brethren (v. 18). It is so very easy to say that we love someone, but to give evidence of it in *deeds* of love is quite something else.

How shall we show our love to the brethren? Christ laid down His life for us; if necessary, we should lay down our lives for the brethren (v. 16). If greater good can be done by surrendering our life than by keeping it, then we should surrender it. That, of course, is an extreme case; but we should readily sacrifice comforts, home, and even life itself if thereby we can serve our brethren; especially if we can help them on the way to life. So Paul (Rom. 9:3). We should be ready to relieve all the needs of our brethren (v. 17). "True love expresses itself not only in great and heroic acts, but in little deeds of thought and kindness, in lowly ministries to the poor and the needy." The Lord fed the hungry, healed the sick, etc. We should do likewise. If we love not the brethren, the love of Christ is not in us. Love also shows a forgiving spirit. Those who bear hatred in their heart

toward others can not pray the Fifth Petition of the Lord's Prayer. Christ loved His enemies. Even so we should love our enemies (Luke 6:27-28). We are to love all men, friends and enemies, and all irrespective of race, color, or whatever may distinguish people one from another in this world.

Let each one examine himself. How about *love* in our life? (Ch. 4:10-11.)

JOHN H. C. FRITZ

### THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

1 PET. 5:6-11

While a bright girl announced most ambitious aspirations and purposes for her own life, one who had been listening answered gently: "You may be right, dear child, but do not forget that 'the singing birds build low.'" More emphatically pride is condemned and humility exalted in the verse preceding our text (v. 5). Jesus extols Christian humility (Matt. 5:3).

#### CHRISTIAN HUMILITY UNDER FIRE

*I. Casts life's cares upon God*

*II. Rests steadfastly upon God in temptation*

#### I

"Therefore" (v. 6) refers to the foregoing verse. God must resist the proud, for Prov. 21:4. But He "giveth grace to the humble." Humility is like dry ground that thirstingly takes in the rain, like a dry sponge that soaks up the water. Christian humility is to show itself under fire, "under the mighty hand of God" (v. 6). This mighty hand of God revealed in life's lesser and heavier burdens, *e. g.*, sickness, unemployment, wars, famines, family troubles, etc. Natural reaction is to suffer it stoically or cheerlessly, grumblingly or rebelliously. But Christians are to "humble themselves" under these cares. How? "Casting all your care upon him" (v. 7), thereby confessing the utter need of God.

How is this possible? Not by own power. Power for such humble dependence upon the Lord is found in His care, "for He careth for you" (v. 7 b). Sufficient proof found in Creation, Preservation, Redemption, and Sanctification (Rom. 8:32; Matt. 6:25-34). Another powerful divine help towards Christian

humility under fire is the assurance "that He may exalt you in due time" (v. 6). A fulfilled promise, *e. g.*, David, Joseph, Mary, the mother of Jesus.

So we pray that through the compelling love of our humble Savior, conveyed to us through the Word and the Sacraments, ours be Christian humility, which in all life's cares humbly, yet confidently, "casts all its cares upon Him who careth for us."

## II

Christian humility also rests steadfastly upon God in the hour of temptation. Christian humility is bitterly hated by the devil, for pride was the cause of his and his allies' fall (Jude 6). As a result he endeavors to frighten Christians away from their childlike dependence upon their God and Savior (v. 8). The natural human heart is his ally (Mark 7:21-23). Real spiritual soberness is necessary to see through his trickery — a sober evaluation of Satan's power and a sober evaluation of one's own helplessness. Added to this, there must be a Christian watchfulness, the humble Christian ever being on the lookout for devilish pitfalls. This spiritual soberness and watchfulness is gained from God's Word, *e. g.*, from Jesus' words "Without Me ye can do nothing."

"Whom resist steadfast in the faith" (v. 9). Not any kind of faith, but the only saving faith in God as Creator, Savior, Sanctifier, and Comforter. This faith, created in the human heart by the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacrament, is mighty because it makes us partakers of Christ's victory over Satan (1 Cor. 15:57). Here again, in v. 10, the Apostle holds forth the blessings of such Christian humility under fire as it rests steadfastly upon God and His promises. It is more and more perfected, established, strengthened, and settled, even as the Christian himself, by God's grace.

So, then, also this Christian virtue of humility, as it emerges victorious from tests, trials, and temptations, is a glorious tribute to the grace of our God and Savior: "To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

EDWIN H. PFLUG

**FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY****ROM. 8:18-23**

We are merely sojourners on this earth. Heaven is our goal. But the present trials are likely to make us forget the great heavenly glory in store for us and what this glory should mean to us already now. Scripture therefore in many passages, also in our text, reminds us of these things.

**THE GLORY WHICH WILL BE REVEALED IN US**

- I. How great this glory will be*
- II. How it is a source of comfort and strength in our suffering*

**I**

Our faith in Christ has as its ultimate goal eternal life, which is therefore properly mentioned last in the Creed. Paul calls it the glory about to be revealed in us (v.18). Not merely around us will be this glory, but it will be part and parcel of us. We shall see God (Job 19:26); shine as the sun (Matt. 13:43); praise God (Rev. 7:10); our body will be changed (Phil. 3:21); there will be no more death or sorrow (Rev. 21:4). All this is included in the glorious liberty of the children of God (v. 21). A great glory indeed.

But in our text Paul shows in two additional ways the greatness of our future glory. First he points to the longing of the creature for the day when we shall be glorified (v. 19). "Creature" is here the irrational world of creatures. This, too, suffers in consequence of man's fall into sin, without any fault on its part (v. 20 a). The groanings which result in the creature are vividly described v. 22. A bold personification. Yet the creature will be ultimately delivered from its bondage (vv. 20 b, 21). Then the creature will no longer be compelled to function under the curse (Gen. 3:17) and in the service of sin. If our glorification brings about such a happy result for the creature, how great must this glory be in us who are directly affected?

A second argument is introduced in v. 23. Being Christians, we now have the Holy Spirit in us as the first result of believing. He it was who kindled faith in us. That is something glorious. We are even now twice-born men, children of God, saints, elect, a royal priesthood, and many other names

are given us in the Bible. But all this is only the beginning, the first fruits (v. 23), of what we shall be (Eph. 1:14). We still wait for the culmination of our faith, the adoption, the redemption of our body (v. 23), our glorification in heaven. What we already possess now in time warrants the conclusion that our future glory will be immeasurably greater.

But this future glory has a meaning also for meeting the situations of this life.

## II

The Apostle has a practical end in view when he speaks of our glory in heaven. In v. 17 he states that suffering with Christ goes hand in hand with being glorified with Him. Paul was well acquainted with such suffering. Cf. 2 Cor. 11:23-27; 12:7; Acts 14:19. He could well say, 1 Cor. 4:9. In spite of it all he draws the conclusion v. 18. It is a well-reasoned one ("I reckon") and not snap judgment. He thinks of his suffering and the future glory as being weighed in a balance. Glory far outweighs suffering. Therefore he was willing patiently to bear his burdens in Christ's service until the Master should call him home (Phil. 1:23-24).

Just like Paul all Christians have to endure suffering in one form or another. Especially in these late evil years has suffering descended upon us in large measure, afflicting millions at home and abroad, and the end is not yet. Fears and doubts assail the minds of many. Their faith is put to a test. The truth of Acts 14:22 b is only too apparent. But let none of us who is suffering forget the glory which awaits us with Christ in heaven. It is far greater than anything on earth, even all of our suffering. Let not the joyful expectation of our heavenly glory be dimmed by the sufferings of this present time. They terminate according to God's good will, our glory never. May we remain steadfast, so that at the end of our course we may say with Paul 2 Tim. 4:7-8.

G. V. SCHICK

## FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

1 PET. 3:8-15 a

Many people have the mistaken idea that Christianity consists in merely knowing God and the Gospel. Throughout the Epistles the necessity of faith is emphasized, but throughout

the Epistles those same Apostles repeat over and over again the admonition to holiness of life, not as a way to salvation, but as a fruit and result of faith (Rom. 12:1-2). This is also the message of our text.

### THE GOD-PLEASING CONDUCT OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN

*I. As it manifests itself in many positive virtues*

*II. As it shows itself in the things that the true Christian avoids*

#### I

a. The First Epistle of St. Peter was written while Peter was still in Rome, not long before his death under Nero. Peter foresaw that his Christians would have to face some very trying days. He wished to prepare them for these events by strengthening their faith and by admonishing them to a Christian walk of life.

b. V. 8. True Christians show their Christianity particularly in their relationship to the members of their own church. The Apostle admonishes them to be of one mind. There is to be no division in the Christian congregation. Nothing will impress the world about us so much as real unity, real same-mindedness, in the church. The same thought is expressed by the Apostle when he says, "Having compassion one for another." True Christians share the feelings of others, whether they are joyful or painful, particularly the feelings of their fellow church members. They are fraternally affectionate.

c. It is well for us to look at ourselves, at our own congregation, at our own church body in the light of that admonition. Are we all of one mind? Have we compassion one for another? Do we love as brethren? Is it not true that many of us fall short of that mark? Is it not true that also in our churches there is much lovelessness, much carping criticism, much factionalism? All of that is not an evidence of true Christian conduct, but points to the weakness of the flesh, to the strength of the old Adam that is in us.

d. True Christian conduct is to show itself also in our relationship to non-Christians. The Apostle says, "Be pitiful." He does not mean that we are to be people to be pitied, but that we are to be full of pity regarding anyone who may be in distress. Certainly we dare not forget that we have an obliga-



tion of true compassion over against the suffering of the world. They may have been our enemies, but Luke 6:27; Rom. 12:20.

e. The true conduct of the Christian also manifests itself in other ways (v. 11). These words are a part of a quotation from Ps. 34:12-16. Anyone who wishes to lead a life here on earth that is truly worth while, anyone who wishes to see days that are truly good, days that are really beneficial, not vain and empty, must do good and follow after peace. Good days, not merely easy, pleasant days, but days full of the fruit of righteousness. The true Christian leans toward all that is truly good and truly beneficial. He follows after peace, pursuing it in order to capture it. Peace not merely with his fellow men, but peace with God, peace with his soul.

f. Again it is well for us to examine ourselves in the light of these suggestions of the Apostle. How much real good do we do? How often do we really exert ourselves in order to do that which is truly good? How often do we really seek peace? How often do we not by our weakness and frailty cause disturbance, strife, and contention, harming ourselves, harming others?

## II

a. V. 9. Here the Apostle tells us not to render evil for evil. The true Christian shows his Christianity by avoiding revenge. They who say, "Tit for tat," "Pay him back," are not showing the marks of true Christianity, but rather the marks of the Evil One (Rom. 12:17). The true Christian will not be guilty of reviling when he is reviled. The true Christian follows in the footsteps of the Savior (1 Pet. 2:22-23; cp. Luke 6:28). He has been so greatly blessed by the Lord, he has had so many blessings bestowed upon him, that he is ready and willing to share these blessings with others, and so he will rather bless than curse.

b. The true Christian refrains his tongue from evil and his lips that they speak no guile (v. 10 b). The Bible again and again points out the power of the tongue, a power for good and a power for evil (James 3:5-8). Many people manage to control strong and powerful animals by bit and bridle, but they cannot control their own tongue. Lying and slander, evil speaking, are the order of the day. Even many Christians fall into this error. (Develop application).

c. The true Christian will also eschew evil (v. 11). This

term means to incline away from all that is base. By nature we lean towards that which is evil (Matt. 15:19). But after we are Christians (Gal. 5:24), we make a conscious effort to fight against that which is evil and wrong to do that which is good.

d. The Christian knows that God is keeping his eye upon him (v. 12), that even in trouble—in trouble perhaps because he has sought to live that life which God prescribes—the ears of God are open unto his prayers. The Christian knows that when he lives a God-pleasing life, the Lord is on his side. The world may be against him, but he is in the hands of the Lord, and the Lord will keep him from real harm (vv. 13-14).

Conclusion (v. 15 a). Final appeal for full sanctification. We who are Christians and know the conduct that is pleasing unto our Maker will not follow the path of least resistance, go the easy way, but we will constantly endeavor to live a life of true sanctification and holiness, not in order to gain heaven, or to win eternal life, but in order to praise Him who hath bought us with His own precious blood. E. L. ROSCHKE

## SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Rom. 6:3-11

St. Paul had set forth the grace which abounds more than sin (Rom. 5:20). However, none should argue: Continue in sin that grace may abound (Rom. 6:1). Grace never becomes license to sin, but rather leads to godliness. This is of practical value for our life. As Christians we still must fight against sin. Our life of godliness is still so imperfect. Hence St. Paul argues: Rom. 6:2 and then refers to our Baptism.

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM FOR OUR LIFE

- I. *We became partakers of Christ's death and hence are dead to sin*
- II. *We became partakers of Christ's resurrection and hence are alive unto God*

#### I

A. We are baptized into Christ. This means not merely that we have had Christ's name spoken over us, nor merely

that we have received the benefits which He wrought for us, but also that we have become Christ's very own, that we belong to Him.

B. We are baptized into His death (v. 3); buried with Him by Baptism into death (v. 4); planted together in the likeness of His death (v. 5); crucified with Him, etc. (v. 6). Christ died as a result of our sin. He atoned for our sin and buried our sin. With His death our sin was removed.—By our Baptism we became partakers of that death and all its effects. Our sin is removed. We are dead unto it. Sin no longer has any control over us and our life (v. 7).

This definitely should have an influence upon our life and conduct. The purpose of our death with Christ is "that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (v. 6., cf. vv. 12-13). When death has entered, sin no longer exercises control; temptations, lust, anger, etc., can no longer exert any influence. Even so we should remember that by our Baptism into Christ's death we are dead to sin. When devil, world, and flesh would lead us into sin, shame, and vice; when they would arouse hatred and bitterness in our heart against God and our fellow men; when they tempt us into misbelief and all its concomitant evils, we are to remember that we have been baptized, that we are dead unto sin, that we would be serving something which has been defeated for us. As we remember this, we have an earnest warning, a strong motive, and a mighty weapon in our fight against sin.

## II

A. Christ died, but rose again (v. 4). He "dieth no more" (v. 9). Death, the result of our sins, which were placed upon Him and which exercised such power over Him, no longer has any dominion over Him (v. 9). Death and sin lost completely. They cannot touch Him any longer. Christ came forth from death unto a new life, a glorified life. He now lives unto God. He sits at the right hand of God and rules over all things.

B. By Baptism into Christ we become partakers of Christ's resurrection, of all its blessings, especially also of the newness of life (vv. 4, 5, 8).

C. This definitely should exert a great influence upon our life and our conduct. We are "alive unto God through

Jesus Christ, our Lord" (v. 11). Our body with all its members, our mind, and our soul are alive in the service of God. As baptized children of God we find genuine joy in the service of God.—Of course, our life is full of weaknesses and failures, our efforts to do good works, unto which we have been called, are often so weak and so negligible. Then we remember that we have been raised with Christ unto newness of life. More than that, we shall experience the power of Christ, into whom we have been baptized.

Our Baptism is of deepest significance. We should devote more thought to it and emphasize its great importance.

J. W. BEHNKEN

## SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Rom. 6:19-23

Is the Christian a free man? True, the Scriptures say we are no longer servants but Christ's friends (John 15:15), God's sons (Gal. 4:7). Yet it is equally true that Christians are yoke bearers of Jesus (Matt. 11:28-29), and Paul refers to himself as a bondsman of the Lord (Rom. 1:1; Titus 1:1). The world thinks we are not free, not free to do as we will, but bound by restrictions and precepts. It is said that a Christian cannot truly be objective, because his mind is always attached to the Word.

On the other hand, is the man of the world free? When Jesus offered the Jews liberty, they objected to the assumption that they were in bondage (John 8:33). Men think that if they attain "the four freedoms," they will be free indeed.

What is the answer? Is the man without Christ free? Is the man with Christ free? Both are free, and both are servants.

### I

*The man without Christ is free, yet a servant.*

What is the freedom of which the world is so proud? Is it real or is it a sham? Paul says, v. 20. He admits man is free, but free from what? Righteousness and its consequences. Man may speak of social and political freedom. At best, this doesn't mean that he has real freedom. He is free from a true guide, from the power of God's grace, from eternal life. Is that real freedom?

Men without Christ are free, yet actually servants of sin. They enter this servitude willingly, to be sure ("yielded your members," v. 19). They revel in it, are even proud of it, but this makes their bondage the greater.

And there is no escape from the servitude, no release as with an indentured servant. Their condition grows worse; they yield themselves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity (v. 19 b). How well Paul remembers his own condition when he harassed the Christians! Not satisfied with the damage in Jerusalem, he ran to Damascus, breathing threats and murders against those who belonged "to the Way."

What is the result of this freedom? Shame (21 a), and, above all, death. This freedom "pays off," but what wages! Death, spiritual, temporal, eternal.

Free? No, slaves. Slaves of the deepest dye. True of all men without Christ. True of the Christless American who walks the streets of our cities as well as of the unbelieving European prisoner in a far-off concentration camp. Without Christ — only bondage.

## II

*On the other hand, the man with Christ is a servant, yet free.*

A servant of the Lord. Man cannot be sovereign. He may think he is, may shout, "I am the captain of my soul," but he is always a bondsman. The Christian is the servant of Christ.

Christ took the bondage of sin and served it out, met the adversary who had us enslaved and singlehanded sent him to his defeat. As the angel freed Peter by a touch (Acts 12:7), so Christ frees with His blood those enslaved in sin and the power of hell.

This is real freedom because the Christian has a sure guide and knows where he is going. He has the Word, not visions, dreams, and opinions (John 8:31).

He has the absolute truth. While men set up million-dollar organizations and laboratories to study facts and obtain new truths, we have the truth for the life that now is and the world to come (John 8:32).

In Christ we are free from the condemnation of sin (v. 22 a) and from its power (Rom. 6:14); yes, from all our enemies, for we are more than conquerors (Rom. 8:37-39).

We are free to grow in holiness (v. 22 b). We have the

liberty to do that which is good. With the Spirit's help we are able to live more and more unto holiness.

Here Paul said a strange thing. He uses the wickedness of the world as an example for Christians (v. 19). He tells us to look at Sodom, as it were, and says: "See how eagerly these people serve sin, how they yield themselves willingly to a service which leads only to shame and death. Now, you Christians, true free men but servants of Christ, use like initiative, like zeal, in serving Christ and holiness." And, oh, how the world still shames our indifference and lukewarmness! See false teachers zealously going from door to door, on street corners distributing their Christ-defaming doctrines, while we Christians remain silent; see how warmongers work day and night to gain their selfish ends, while we, the children of universal peace, remain idle; see how sinners frantically serve deadly sin, and we, by contrast, serve our Master so ill. Let even the sinful world serve us as an example for greater zeal (Luke 16:8).

Above all, we have the free gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus, which brings us the everlasting freedom (v. 23).

ARTHUR C. REPP

## EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

ROM. 8:12-17

Are you a child of God? — To that important question you should be able to respond not with an evasive, doubtful "I hope so," but with a joyful, confident "Thank God, I am!"

There is to be no uncertainty about this. In His Word God Himself has asserted that if you believe in Christ, you are His child (Gal. 3:26). And to test the genuineness of that faith which makes you His child, He mentions in our text some related marks with which you can easily and unmistakably decide the question:

### ARE YOU A CHILD OF GOD?

#### *I. Do you mortify the deeds of the flesh?*

**Text:** True children of God are moved by the Spirit to "mortify the deeds of the body" (vv. 12-14); those who "live after the flesh" — die and are not sons of God.

**Examples:** When Zacchaeus became a child of God, he mortified his greed, "restored fourfold" (Luke 19:9). — Young Joseph mortified evil lust (Gen. 39:9). — Such mortification of one's old nature and its deeds is evidence of the faith that renders one a child of God.

**Application:** How is it with you? If you willfully foster deeds of the flesh (Gal. 5:19), you are no child of God, even though you are baptized and confirmed. But if you mortify them with contrition and repentance, let that be a sign to you that you are a believing child of God.

## *II. Do you cry: "Abba, Father"?*

**Text:** True children of God regard the Lord as the kind heavenly Father, not as a stranger or a slave master. Not fear, but love for Him fills their hearts (v. 15). They fly to Him in prayer: "Abba, Father."

**Examples:** Daniel, defying King's order, prayed thrice daily (Dan. 6:10). — Isaac meditated in field at eventide (Gen. 24:63). And was not their childlike conversation with their heavenly Father a proof of their faith and spiritual adoption?

**Application:** How is it with you? Despise God's invitation to pray, shun Him like a stranger, and you are not His child, even if many praise you as a good person. But are you drawn to Him as your Father, frequently conversing with Him, regard that as proof of being His believing child.

## *III. Do you perceive the witness of the Holy Spirit?*

**Text:** True children of God have from the Spirit an inner witness, or assurance, that they are His children (v. 16). This the Spirit brings to their hearts not through special visions, etc., but through the Gospel. ("The words . . . are spirit" (John 6:63).

**Application:** People who despise the Word, through which the Spirit witnesses, will have no assurance of being God's children. Those who devoutly use it will soon feel: "Here is comfort, grace, salvation," and so be reassured of being God's own. How is it with you?

**Examples:** Mary, sitting at Jesus' feet (Luke 10:42). — Bereans, searching the Scriptures (Acts 17:11-12). — Were they not blessed by the Spirit with the witness of being God's children?

**IV. Do you comfort yourself with the heavenly inheritance?**

**Text:** True children of God amid all sufferings comfort themselves with being "joint heirs with Christ" and with the prospect of glory to come (v. 13).

**Examples:** Stephen, first martyr, seeing heaven opened (Acts 7:56).—Paul, amid final sorrows, saying, 2 Tim. 4:18. Was this not a proof of the genuineness of the faith which made them children of God?

**Application:** Many sufferers in the world today comfort themselves with anything but heaven. How is it with you? If in sickness you want nothing but prayers for recovery and become angry at any mention of the heavenly home—is that the manner of a true child of God? But if the heavenly inheritance is your comfort and joy, take that as an additional sign that you are a child of God.

ALVIN E. WAGNER

