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Homiletics: Sermon Studies for the New Church Year

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HOMILETICS

A Series of Sermon Studies for the Church Year

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

LUKE 13:10-17

The Text and the Day.—Our text plays the theme in sharps which the Standard Gospel for the day gives in flats, and thus the text serves well to strike a new key on the well-known theme that should catch the ear of the hearer.

Notes on Meaning.—There are no exegetical difficulties in this text. It may be well, however, to carefully note all the details and thus lift out the striking incident in the text. Note: Jesus was the Guest Speaker "in one of the synagogs on the Sabbath," v. 10. He carefully observed the worship part of the Sabbath ordinance. And what a zeal for churchgoing, v. 11, when among the audience there is a woman "bowed together," who "could in no wise lift up herself." The "behold" seems to express surprise over it. Had she made excuses because of her infirmity, no one would have questioned it. Note, also, that v. 16 brands her infirmity as Satan's work. The old devil has his fingers in all the miseries of life, even if, as in this case, he has to be satisfied with the affliction of bodily deformity without touching the moral nature. Nor does he hesitate to trouble the children of God, for note that Jesus calls this woman "a daughter of Abraham," which surely means more than simply that she was a Jewess. But what a love and grace of the Savior, vv. 12 and 13, when, unasked, Jesus calls this woman, lays His hands on her, and miraculously straightens her crooked back. God's love is its own motive! Unasked, unsought, Heaven sent a Savior! Note, also, how wisely Jesus stimulated in her, yes, literally handed her, a faith by which to straighten her bowed form. First, the call that brought her to Him (she could not mistake His special attention!), then the word of assurance, "Thou art loosed from this infirmity," and finally "His hands on her" to give the needed confidence. Indeed, "she was *made* straight" and did not do it herself,

but the lifting and straightening of that crooked back was done in faith. Don't miss it in v. 13 that the woman "glorified God." They who wait on Him often find more than they expect in His house, and would have to be tongue-tied not to glorify God.

V. 14. "Note the blindness and coldheartedness born of religious formalism. This synagog official has no eye for the beauty of Christ's pity, no heart to rejoice in the woman's deliverance, no ear for the music of her praise. All that he sees is a violation of ecclesiastical order. That is the sin of sins in his eyes. He admits the reality of Christ's healing power, but that does not lead him to recognition of His mission. What a strange state of mind it was that acknowledged the miracle and then took offense at its being done on the Sabbath! Note, too, his disingenuous cowardice in attacking the people when he meant Christ. He blunders, too, in his scolding; for nobody had come to be healed. They had come to worship; and even if they had come for healing, the coming was no breach of Sabbath regulations, whatever the healing might be." (Alexander Maclaren.) To get the full force of the Lord's reply in v. 16, one must read the lengthy and minute rules for leading out animals on the Sabbath as set forth in the Talmud.

Preaching Pitfalls.—Not even the ruler of the synagog could find a pitfall any more for a false emphasis in that incident. His standing openly ashamed in that synagog, v. 17, was a thorough acknowledgment of the Lord's Gospel emphasis throughout that service.

Problem and Goal.—"There are plenty of people like this stickler for propriety and form (the ruler of the synagog), and if you want to find men blind as bats to the manifest tokens of a divine hand and hard as millstones towards misery, and utterly incapable of glowing with enthusiasm or of recognizing it, you will find them among ecclesiastical martinets, who are all for having 'things done decently and in order,' and would rather that a hundred poor sufferers should continue bowed down than that one of their regulations should be broken in lifting them up. The more men are filled with the spirit of worship, the less importance will they attach to the pedantic adherence to its forms, which is the most part of some people's religion." (Alexander Maclaren.)

*Outline:***THE MASTER LAYS ON HIS HANDS**

- I. He lays them in mercy on a soul bound by Satan.
- II. He lays them in judgment on a Church bound by a religious strait jacket.

A. W. SCHELP

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY**JOHN 9:39-41**

The Text and the Day.—The Gospel for this day has the challenging question "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" The Epistle underscores the grace of God through which the Corinthians were called unto the fellowship of Jesus Christ, our Lord. The Collect ascribes all spiritual life and activity to God. The text before us ties in with these thoughts, inasmuch as it teaches that our attitude toward Christ determines our spiritual relation with God and that the right attitude is a gift of God's grace and power.

Notes on Meaning.—The context must not be ignored, for v. 39 sums up all that has gone before. Jesus is now giving the interpretation and is making the application of the scene before Him. No one specifically is addressed. Christ's words are for all that may hear. "Judgment," not the act of judging, but the carrying out of a judgment, i. e., putting a judicial separation into execution. As Jesus comes into the world, then and now in the Gospel, men take and must take an attitude toward Him. Two classes of people result: they who see not but see, and they who see but are made blind. The former are they who by nature are spiritually blind but who receive spiritual sight by accepting Jesus as their Savior. The latter are they who by nature likewise are spiritually blind but who boast of their spiritual sight, scorn Jesus and His sight-giving gifts, and do not come to faith. V. 40.—"Are we blind also?" can be paraphrased: "Certainly Thou dost not mean to say that we, the religious leaders, also are blind and must come to Thee for sight?" V. 41.—"If you were blind," in the sense of having no spiritual sight like the blind man, there would be some chance of healing your blindness. But you are no longer spiritually blind in that sense, you are deliberately closing your eyes, and that is your sin. You "say," i. e., assert, declare. In your conceit you imagine

that you have spiritual sight, and therefore your sin remaineth, viz., the sin of rejecting the Light, the sin of unbelief. This sin remains with all that it involves. And this is the judgment upon all sinners who do not repent.

Preaching Pitfalls. — Note that both the blind man and the Pharisees were by nature spiritually blind and had no innate ability to accept Jesus as their Savior. The same Savior spoke to them, Jesus Christ with His divine love, grace, and power. That the blind man came to faith was due to divine grace. That the Pharisees remained in their spiritual blindness and did not believe in Jesus was due to their willful stubbornness. They loved darkness rather than light.

Preaching Emphases. — The text is a call to repentance and a warning to all. Are we given to spiritual smugness? Are we guilty of dead orthodoxy? If "now we see," then we have reason for much humility and for acknowledgment of our Savior's healing mercy, and we should diligently use the means by which our spiritual sight is sustained and strengthened.

Problem and Goal. — Christ is the touchstone of humanity, Luke 2:34; 2 Cor. 2:14-16; 1 Peter 2:7. What men think of Jesus is the question, and the only question, which decides their spiritual condition before God.

Outline:

THE JUDGMENT FOR WHICH CHRIST IS COME INTO THE WORLD

I. They which see not shall see.

- A. The young man was blind, both physically and spiritually.
- B. He was given physical and spiritual sight by Jesus.
- C. This was a gift of Jesus' grace and power.

II. They which see shall not see.

- A. The Pharisees were religious people and boasted of their spiritual discernment.
- B. They rejected Christ in unbelief and thus were confirmed in their spiritual blindness.
- C. Their continued spiritual blindness was not the fault of Jesus but their own.

WALTER A. BAEPLER

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

MATT. 10:40-42

The Text and the Day.—The text is in keeping with the day's Epistle, which exhorts the Christians to put off the old man, to put on the new man, and to labor, working with their hands the thing which is good.—Also with the Gospel, which tells of the faith of those men who brought a man sick of the palsy to Jesus and who were thus instrumental in procuring divine healing of soul and body for the doubly afflicted. Matt. 9:1-8.

Notes on Meaning.—The text is the conclusion of the inaugural address which the Lord delivered to His twelve disciples as He commissioned them to be laborers in the spiritual harvest among the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matt. 9:36—10:6. He directed them to be heralds of the Kingdom of Grace now at hand, to perform miracles of mercy upon occasion, to place their trust in the Lord for their sustenance, to expect favorable and unfavorable reaction to their activity, and to await help, comfort, and protection from the Lord in the performance of their various missions. Matt. 10:7-39. Then in the text, vv. 40-42, He encourages them by assuring them that as they labored, they would be the beneficiaries of tokens of love and esteem, which would not remain unrewarded.

V. 40.—The Father sent Jesus into the world. This was a single act. Jesus sent His Gospel messengers into the world. The sending and receiving of these messengers goes on and on. They are welcomed as the Lord's ambassadors not only to house and board, but also their message is taken into the heart and life by faith, because they proclaim the mercy of divine forgiveness, bring men back to God, and thus are the true peacemakers in the world. Luke 10:16; John 17:18; 20:21; 2 Cor. 5:20.

V. 41.—Befriending the representatives of Christ insures the reward of grace to those who do the befriending, even if the befriending is done by an ordinary Christian, one who is righteous by faith. The expression "in the name of" occurs three times in the text and means receiving a prophet, or a righteous man, or a disciple in view of his exalted office, special work, or particular qualifications, especially since each in his own manner or sphere is a bearer of eternal

truth. A prophet does his proclaiming publicly. This designation indicates the possession of courage, zeal, and the power of persuasion. Luke 1:76. A righteous person not only preaches the righteousness of faith but is himself a notable example of the resultant life of righteousness. Luke 1:6. A disciple distinguishes himself by following the Lord in all humility and constantly learning of Him. John 8:31-32. In all three capacities the disciples give more than they receive from their hearers.

V. 42. — Even the most insignificant service rendered to one of the Lord's disciples, who may be little in rank or influence, shall not lose its reward. It is in safe keeping with God. The measure of the reward will depend upon the motive in which the service was rendered. It will, of course, be a reward of grace and not one of merit. (Luke 17:10). The Christian workers will enjoy a foretaste of this reward in this life already when they "grow in grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 3:18. In eternity the reward of grace will come to a glorious perfection. Matt. 25:34-40. It will be "his" reward according to the measure of the service rendered to the Lord's disciples. 2 Cor. 9:6.

Preaching Pitfalls. — Much depends upon the talents and abilities of the minister, but more depends upon the fact that he is a believing and humble disciple of Christ, who seeks the glory of God and the salvation of immortal souls. — The context shows that "these little ones" of v. 42 are not children of minor age.

Problem and Goal. — To exalt the ministry of reconciliation, especially the faithfulness of ministers and the service rendered by all church members to facilitate and expedite the work of the ministry as it becomes more complex in these latter days.

Illustration. — The service rendered by the widow to the Prophet Elijah, 1 Kings 17:8-16; by Obadiah, who fed one hundred prophets of the Lord, 1 Kings 18:4; by Lydia to the Apostle Paul, Acts 16:14-15; Gaius, fellow helper to the Truth, 3 John 5-8. — A Swedish princess sold her diamonds to help build a hospital. When visiting this hospital after its completion, a suffering inmate wept tears of gratitude as she stood by his side, and the princess exclaimed: "Ah, now I see my diamonds again!"

Outline:

THE IMPERISHABLE GOOD WORKS OF CHRISTIANS

- I. Divinely Motivated, v. 40.
 - A. The divine source: The Father sent His Son. The Son sends His messengers.
 - B. These proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom which works faith and motivates good works.
- II. Gratefully Performed, vv. 41 a, 42 a.
 - A. The messengers of the Lord are welcomed for their work's sake.
 - B. Even the lowliest of them are provided for.
- III. Eternally Rewarded, vv. 41 b, 42 b.
 - A. The love shown to the prophetic messengers will be a wellspring of eternal blessings beginning in this life.
 - B. "Verily" — thus spoken to stimulate all acts of charity and to destroy doubts as to the eternal reward of grace.

 HENRY C. HARTING

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

MATT. 5:43-48

The Text and the Day. — God's righteous, yet merciful, nature is such that it deserves the highest praise (Introit) and sanctified service (Collect). This is rendered by Christians who have the proper wedding garment (Gospel). They glorify Him by a circumspect walk (Epistle), an outstanding feature of which is the spirit of Christian love (text).

Notes on Meaning. — Our text is the last of a series of six illustrations on the requirements of God's Law. Like the rest, ours has its "Ye have heard" and "But I say unto you," but it contains the most penetrating point of all, indeed the very "Sum of the Second Table."

V. 43. *Love thy neighbor.* Significant omission of *as thyself*. Cp. Lev. 19:18. God intended not so much to limit the *objects* of love as to indicate the *standard* of love. The rabbinical change opened up the question "Who is my neighbor?" and then limited

the word, finally even permitting hatred of others (racial, national, religious enemies; Samaritans, Gentile "dogs"; personal foes). Though appealing to natural man, this inference has no Scriptural warrant. Neighbor (lit. "nigh-bor," *πλήσιον*, a near one), according to Jesus, is everyone, especially those needing our love; and who may need that worse than our enemies?

V. 44. *I say*, appealing to His authority as divine Lord of the Law. *Love*, *ἀγαπάω*, more than affection (did even Jesus *like* His enemies?), the love of comprehension and high purpose, seeking the welfare of even the undeserving, the unlovely. Of course, such love is divine (vv. 45, 48), but is to be found in believers. Even persecutors belong into the circle of "nigh-bor."—The Christian does all he can to show such love, then enlists God's help besides, namely, in prayer, *ὑπέρ*, on behalf of, for the benefit of others. Cf. Jesus' intercessory prayer on the Cross, Stephen's; the Christian's only revenge. (Note that best texts omit "Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you . . . and despitefully use you" as probably imported from Luke 6:27 f.)

V. 45. The purpose clause contains the implication as to the source of such love in our hearts, namely, our family relationship to God. "God's sons are to be God-like." Children we are now, but this becomes a settled, demonstrated fact (aorist punctiliar subjunctive) through the evidence of our loving others. Cf. v. 9.—God's love should be sufficient motivation, but also His example can show us the need for such love: His sun it is, made and still controlled by Him; yet He causes it to shine on both classes of men, regardless of their attitude toward Him. So with the rain. Why is this? His *ἀγάπη* is the answer. For the justified He intends pure blessing; for the unjustified (emphasis here), goodness to lead them to repentance (Rom. 2:4); in both instances, purposeful love. We are to be like-minded. Even to *our* enemies.

V. 46 f. Dramatic questions, shattering the false views of those who limit love. *Salute*, the Oriental show of affection, no mere casual "Hello." Reserve affection for our own, and we sink to the level of the despised publicans, yea even of heathen and criminals. What *reward*, then? what recognition by God?

V. 48. No, be *as your Father*, not so much in degree or quantity of love which would be impossible, but in the kind and quality of

love. *Perfect, complete, whole, mature.* "God is what His sons aspire to be" (*Expositor's Greek N.T.*). God never sinks below the ideal. We are ever to strive toward it.

Preaching Pitfalls.—Our text is from the Sermon on the Mount, is Law, not Gospel; not the way of salvation, but a description which is to guide those on that way.—Yet perfectionism is not the lesson, even from v. 48. Rather even the "best" Christian will be led to recognize his unworthiness, his need for more of God.—On the other hand, "love your enemies" is not an elective, is not optional, for the Christian, or perhaps a mark of only the most saintly.

Emphases.—This text offers opportunity for the hearer to gauge his own love: is it better than others'? Is it worthy of our "Father which is in heaven"? Then, recalling our Father's love, which made us His own, we shall increasingly endeavor truly to *be* His children. The reference to the Father-children relationship gives the key to the needed Gospel emphasis. Use Romans 5 and 1 John 4 to expand the thought.

Problem and Goal.—Much that passes for love is only glorified selfishness. Christian love is far higher, is capable of loving even enemies. Secondary goal will be to make all aware of the requirements of their new relationship. That will help reach the primary goal, which will be to point them anew to God's ἀγάπη, which will enable them to become better channels of that same love toward others, indeed even their enemies.

Illustrations.—How love disagreeable neighbors? "By loving God so much we are willing to let Him love them through us. That's how the missionary loves the heathen—not because they are lovable, but because God so loved. . . . When we talk about loving our neighbors, we are beginning with the second commandment. Why not begin with the first one, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind'? That includes all there is of a person, and to the person who has so yielded his life and his love to his Lord, love to his neighbor is possible, because he has lost his self-love." (*Sunday School Times*, 3-3-45, page 159.)

"A heart is shaped somewhat like a funnel. The heart that re-

ceives the love of God will funnel that love into a cold world" (Mahler in *St. Louis Lutheran*).

At the close of the Civil War, General Robert E. Lee said that he never once during the long conflict harbored a feeling of hatred toward his enemies.

One learning to drive an automobile quickly masters steering, shifting, etc., thinks it easy. Have him try the crowded highway, and he will say: "If it were not for the other people. . . ." Some requirements of the Christian life are relatively simple; if only it were not for the other people, especially our enemies!

Outline:

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES!

Christianity's most difficult requirement, "Love your enemies." Yet not to be ignored or rejected as visionary, impossible. Rather listen to Jesus and learn!

I. A searching test: "What do ye more than others?"

- A. Are not higher expectations justified? "Children," v. 45. Sermon on Mount.
- B. Love your own? So do unbelievers, v. 46 f.
- C. Hate your enemies? So do others, v. 43.
- D. What does Jesus say? "I say unto you, . . ." v. 44.
How unworthy we are! Dare we still call ourselves His own? Surely we need more of His grace.

II. A stirring challenge: "Be the children of your Father!"

- A. Impossible? Rather study His requirements (*ἀγαπάω*).
- B. See it in our Father (nature, v. 45).
- C. Witness it in His redemption ("children"). 1 John 4; Romans 5.
- D. He invests us with His nature. "We love because He first. . ."
- E. Thus we are enabled truly to evidence our relationship, vv. 45, 48.

Let us rise to the challenge, grow more mature, perfect, "shine," v. 16.

W. A. SCHROEDER

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

MATT. 17:14-21

The Text and the Day.—The Lord has all power (Introit); with the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit we are strong in the Lord and prepared for the battle against the forces of hell (Epistle); a weak faith made strong by Christ (Gospel) — these thoughts are embodied in the text.

Notes on Meaning.— V. 15. "Lunatic" — epileptic. Epilepsy was believed to be aggravated by the increase of the moon. This boy had more than a severe case of epilepsy. He was demon-possessed. V. 17. "O faithless and perverse generation!" This applied to those who gloated over the failure of the disciples, to those who were waiting for more signs, to the disciples who had to learn over and over to rely on the power of their Lord, and to the father who believed in the Lord's mercy, but doubted his ability. V. 18. A complete cure was effected instantly. V. 20. "Unbelief" — littleness of faith. "Remove this mountain" — do things impossible with mere human strength. V. 21. "Not but by prayer" — this implies that the disciples had neglected to pray, i. e., to rely on Another's strength. Christ had given them power against unclean spirits. Matt. 10:1.

Preaching Pitfalls.— Do not spend too much time describing the affliction of the boy.— Not every epileptic is possessed of Satan.— It will be better not to treat features of the story given only by Mark and Luke. If the preacher wishes to enlarge on Mark 9:22-24, then let him take Mark 9:14-29 as his text.

Preaching Emphases.— We look at this story in the light of Christ's decisive victory over Satan by His death and resurrection. Though Satan still manifests deep guile and great might, he is a defeated foe.— With mere human power we are helpless against Satan; with Christ and His Word we are stronger than Satan. Christ attributes such great power to faith because faith is the trolley which connects us with the power line of the Almighty.— We are to follow Jesus' example, who never avoided scenes of human misery or spiritual distress. Hymn 439, 5.

Problem and Goal.— Does this story have meaning for us today?

We may never see a man possessed by an evil spirit. But we can daily see the power of Satan manifested in the habits and attitudes of men. Eph. 2:2; 2 Cor. 4:4. Satan's destructive activity is denied or ridiculed or at best ignored in many classrooms and much literature. Christ calls Satan *anthropoktonos*, John 8:44. The Gospel effects not only spiritual resurrection and enlightenment but also deliverance from the power of Satan. Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13. The weak faith — whose faith is not weak? — is to be encouraged and strengthened by being directed to the all-merciful, all-powerful Christ. Your Savior is great, even though your faith be small. Even with a small faith you can lay hold of the unlimited resources of Christ's power.

Outline:

DELIVERANCE THROUGH CHRIST FROM THE POWER OF SATAN

I. Satan's power.

- A. The power which Satan wielded over the demoniac boy illustrates the power he employs in deceiving and destroying the souls of men.
- B. Our impotence. Like the disciples we shall fail utterly whenever we rely on our own strength or try to pit mere human resources against Satan.

II. Christ's power.

- A. It is far superior to Satan's power. We see this more clearly in the light of Christ's finished work than the people in the story of the text could at that time.
- B. By faith we tap the resources of Christ's unlimited power. "Nothing shall be impossible unto you," v. 20. Shall we, like the disciples, miss opportunities for glorious victories through lack of faith?

V. L. MEYER

REFORMATION DAY

MATT. 16:15-19

The Text and the Day. — The observance of Reformation Day is becoming more general and popular in America. The civil and political, the social and economic implications of the 16th-century

Reformation are receiving renewed attention. This should prove wholesome for America. But the spiritual nature of the Reformation and the source of its power must chiefly be set forth and duly stressed. This text offers valuable material. Here Jesus Himself, the Founder and great Head of the Church, speaks of the chief purpose of the Church and of its abiding strength and ultimate victory.

Notes on Meaning. — Jesus is here dealing only with the Twelve. His teaching ministry is nearing its close, and He is examining the disciples whom He had been training to become His Apostles. The chief question is that regarding His person. All His teaching, all His work, stands or falls with the answer to that question. — V. 16. "The Christ," the title of His office, the Anointed One, the Messiah. "The Son," the only One. "Living God," not a dead idol or figment of men's fancy, but the *one true* God. "Flesh and blood," human effort and wisdom; "revealed," cp. Matt. 13:11, 17; 1 Cor. 2:5-10; Eph. 3:4-5. "Bar-Jona," the human paternity of Peter is emphasized over against the divinity of Christ. — The addition "in heaven" emphasizes the spiritual and divine nature of this revelation and the faith founded upon the same. Only the Christian religion comes from heaven and leads into heaven. Cp. John 1:18; 3:11-13. — V. 18. The difference between *Petros* and *petra* should be simply explained, to make clear that they are not identical. *Petra*, the confession just made by Peter in behalf of the Twelve; hence, the truth as it is in Christ Jesus; hence Christ Himself. Jesus as the Son of the living God, as the Christ of God, is the Rock on which His enduring Church is built. Psalm 118:22; Is. 28:16; 1 Pet. 2:4-8; 1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20. — V. 18 c. "Gates of hell," a figurative term borrowed from ancient type of warfare, the picked forces or all the power of hell. — V. 19. "Thee," singular; yet Jesus addresses him as representative of the Twelve, in whose behalf Peter had spoken in reply to Christ's question: "Whom do ye say . . .?" — "Bind—loose," same terms used in Matt. 18:18, same meaning as "remit and retain" in John 20:23. The power conferred upon Peter is no more and no less than that conferred on all the disciples.

Preaching Pitfalls and Emphases. — Avoid generalities about the

Papacy and the Lutheran Reformation. Other Reformation Day texts are available for exposing other doctrinal errors and unscriptural practices of Rome, for setting forth manifold blessings of the Reformation, for challenging the spirit of Protestantism, etc. This text specifically calls for a clear answer to the question: On whom or on what is the Church built?

Problem and Goal.—In this passage Christ uses two figures of speech, "rock" and "keys." It would appear advisable to build the sermon around either the one or the other, in order to give clear and full treatment.—In the outline submitted the intended goal is to give to the believer the divine assurance of the solidity and the stability of the Church's foundation; and to fill the hearts of the hearers with holy joy over Christ's assured victory and the believers' participation in the same.

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

Outline:

THE CHURCH IS BUILT ON CHRIST

- I. He is the Rock, or Foundation
 - A. Foretold by Prophets.
Also O. T. believers were built on Him.—Is. 26:16; Ps. 118:22 (quoted Matt. 21:42; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:7).
 - B. So declared by Christ Himself.—He is the Rock
 1. in His person, as Son of God
 2. in His office, as the Christ of God
 3. in His redemptive work
 - C. Hence, no other foundation
 1. not Peter, nor any other Apostle,
 2. not the wisdom of men (v. 17, flesh and blood)
 3. not human virtue (v. 19, forgiveness needed)
- II. Therefore Christ's Church will prevail
 - A. There will be opposition from hell.
 1. Christ foretold it.
 2. The Apostles experienced it.
 3. Nineteen centuries of the Christian Church tell of this conflict.

B. *But* Christ's Church will endure.

1. Christ's assurance, v. 18.
2. Christ's defeat of the Tempter, His casting out of devils, His resurrection triumph, foretell His ultimate victory.
3. The history of 19 centuries supports Christ's promise that His Church will endure.

Conclusion.— Rejoice! Thank God for Christ's Church. Appreciate sound Scriptural preaching.— Assist in building on the Church's One Foundation.

MARTIN WALKER