

Vignettes of Jesus, the Son of Man

By: E.A. Sitz

[Essay delivered to the Pacific Northwest District at Tacoma, June 29-30, 1965.]

The title of this paper has been chosen deliberately. It does not bind one to a complete and grand portrait of the Son of man. That would be to paint after the manner of an Edersheim. Instead it permits touching upon various scenes, aspects, teachings, and characteristics of the most principled, versatile, learned yet simple, humble yet dignified man the world has ever seen, revolutionary and radical, living the supreme faith, possessing the Holy Spirit, and anguished in the agony of suffering, yet triumphant in resurrection, ascension, and eternal glory, the Man Jesus of Nazareth.

Our source of information we find in Scripture, a true account in every word. It shines in lively narrative. So simple it is, that a child finds pleasure in reading it, yet so comprehensive and deep that the most learned will never probe it to its depths, for it is the Word and wisdom of God. But it will be read the more profitably if one approach it with a controlled imagination. For Jesus speaks in picture language. Some knowledge of His times also makes for better understanding. For Scripture is not only a fountain of doctrine, but also a book of life. As Christ also says, "This is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him Whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ."

In dwelling on Jesus as the Son of man in this paper we refuse to detour His being the eternal Son of God. For a vast number of preachers imagine they honor Jesus by declaring Him a good man, wise, the most perfect the world has ever seen, yet just a man, the son of Mary and Joseph. In our times, dominated by the theology of the 'scholars', an increasing number aver that Jesus was so perfect a man that God was well-nigh forced to exalt Him into divine sonship, so to speak by adoption. Seemingly honoring the man Jesus, it thoroughly degrades Him from His eternal Godhead.

In order to put Jesus as the Son of man in right perspective, we wish to emphasize that Scripture speaks throughout of Him also as the Son of God by nature. Permit a few citations to be adduced. John's Gospel opens with the statement, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that hath been made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." Again, we have in the first chapter of Hebrews the testimony concerning Jesus in the pointed words, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." And again, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thy hands." And the Father commands, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." Or we read in Colossians, of Jesus, "Who is the Image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in Him were all things created in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers: all things have been created through Him and unto Him; and He is before all things and in Him all things consist." Add to this the forthright statement found in Romans 9:5: "Christ is over all, God blessed forever. Amen."

Let us add to the above the testimony of Jesus Himself to His divine Sonship. When Jesus asserted, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work.", those that heard Him rightly understood that in calling God His own Father, He made Himself equal with God. He emphasizes His equality with the Father in adding, "He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father that sent Him." When Jesus declared, "Before Abraham was, I am," the Jews who heard Him also sensed that with this "I AM" Jesus was identifying Himself with the God Jehovah that appeared to Moses in the bush.

No doubt the supreme testimony to Himself as the Son of God came when Jesus was put under oath by the High Priest Caiaphas and Jesus accepted the oath. The high priest said to Jesus, "I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou art the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus saith unto him, "Thou hast said." (You said it.) And then He very significantly adds, "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven." Significantly, I say, because in one breath, and that under oath, the Lord Jesus speaks of Himself as the Son of God and also the Son of man.

Permit a few items of interesting statistics. They pertain to the use of the terms Son of man and Son of God in the Gospels.

Matthew: 27 and 8;
Mark: 14 and 3;
Luke: 23 and 13;
John: 13 and 29.

It will be noted that the Synoptics give a heavy preponderance to the Son of man; John nigh as heavy a one to the Son of God.

Note also in this connection that Jesus did not accept the reiterated testimony of the devils to His being the Son of God. On one hand, since Satan is a liar and the father of lies, Jesus would reject it because He wishes testimony only that is in all respects reliable. He had this from the Father, "Thou art My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." He also had the testimony of His mother by the angel Gabriel. He had the assurance of the Old Testament Scriptures, of which He knew and stated, "The Scripture cannot be broken." He had the sure voucher of the Holy Spirit. Which leads us to an aside: If our message identifies itself with Scripture, then because it is the truth absolute, we must assert it confidently. Prof. Pieper used to say, "*Meine Herren, Ihr muesst behaupten.*" Which agrees with that which St. Paul asserted of his own message, Gal. 1:8 and 9.

But now we come to the Son of man and His being and life as such. It would take a volume to consider the Old Testament passages that so minutely describe Him as the Son of man. These tell of His virgin birth, birthplace, time of birth, His teachings, His sufferings and death, His resurrection and exaltation. We are all acquainted with Moses' prophecies, with Isaiah and Daniel, Zechariah and Micah.

You will permit a diversion here in view of the fact that the authorship of the Pentateuch by Moses is being questioned, yes, disputed and rejected in Lutheran circles not only in Northern Europe, but right here in America; even at Concordia Seminary at St. Louis. But Jesus declares, "Moses wrote of Me." More directly He asserts, "If ye believe not His writings" - and at the time of Jesus that meant nothing other than the five Books of Moses, as every one who is not blinded by his conceited scholarship should know - "how shall ye believe My words?" So Jesus testifies not only to the fact that Moses' writings pointed to Him, but that Moses' Pentateuch is intimately related to Christ's own words; indeed, lies on the same plane as His words, both being God's Word.

We cite the Psalms 13, 17, 22, 35, 40, 41, 45, 55, 61, 69, 72, 78, 91, 110, just to name some of them that speak of the Son of Man. Let it be noted that in several of these the Messiah identifies Himself so closely with us sinners, that He calls our sins His sins. (Pss. 41 and 69.) Some one has counted up 243 major prophecies of the Christ in the Old Testament, not to mention the many more that are minor in character. It is estimated that even the fabulous computers of our day would be hard put to record the almost infinite number necessary to give us the probability of just the major prophecies converging upon and finding fulfillment in the one man, Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus Himself favored calling Himself the Son of man. While Scripture again and again terms Him the Son of God and God in Person, yet Jesus seldom did so. But when He did, He spoke emphatically, as we have already seen. Scripture does not leave us without a clear definition of the term, both in word, as also in the narrative of the life of Jesus.

Scripture in calling Jesus the Son of God and Lord publishes Him here on earth as the representative in Person of the Godhead. By the same token as the Son of man, i.e., Son of mankind or of humanity, He represents all mankind. Thus runs the inner significance of the repeated use by Scripture of the term "Mediator." In plain words (I Tim. 2:5), God and man meet in the Person of one, Jesus Christ. Only so could reconciliation take place between God and sinners, God and the world. Is not this why Jesus in His boundless love for us employed the term "Son of man" so generally in order to encourage us with the thought that He gloried in being a man? That trend is also found in His calling His people brethren and friends.

Probably because the Holy Spirit foresaw how that even within the confines of the Church the virgin birth of Jesus would be viciously attacked, He saw to it that a minute description of both conception and birth of Jesus should be recorded in the Bible. How proud the archangel Gabriel was of the honor given him to announce the birth of Jesus, the Messiah. When Zacharias doubted his word about the birth of John, he declared with dignity: "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak unto thee." This same Gabriel is sent unto the Virgin Mary. When in faith, unlike doubting Zacharias, she inquires how this thing might be concerning her son, to be named Jesus, Gabriel goes into minute detail concerning the conception and the birth. Luke 1:34-37. What will those conceited clergy say when in the Last Judgment they are asked why they did not pay heed to what was recorded concerning the virgin birth in St. Luke? Like the arrogant fellow in the parable of the king's son's wedding they will be speechless, speechless until the sight of the majesty of Him Whom they contradicted will make them conform to the word that says, "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess to God." And there will be no fifth amendment to hide behind. They must give account of their smart disbelief.

We know that Mary went through the regular term of gestation of nine months from conception by the operation of the Holy Spirit to delivery. When Joseph and Mary undertook the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem Scripture tells us that she was "great with child." And the birth at Bethlehem was a natural one, and the Babe was laid in a manger, because there was no room in the inn.

From the time of His birth till His showing forth as the Messiah in His public ministry at thirty we have but little recorded. We find Him in the temple at six weeks to fulfill the law of Moses concerning His presentation after that as an eight-days-old babe He had been circumcised, and named "Jesus" in obedience to the repeated command of God. The Babe that was laid in a manger went through the process every normal Jewish male child followed. When he was not yet two years old, as Herod had exactly inquired of the wise men, Joseph - as it was characteristic of this faithful foster father of our Lord - immediately obeyed the Lord's command and took the Child "by night" and fled into Egypt. On His return from Egypt we learn that He was brought up in Nazareth.

We are told, "The Child grew, and waxed strong, becoming filled with wisdom (the original Greek) (Luther: "*nahm zu*"), and the grace of God was upon Him." Luke 2:40. The statement is cited because of the questioning assertion of one of our pastors that this could not be true: Jesus possessed all wisdom, and need not have acquired it.

We know that as a twelve-year-old the boy Jesus appeared in the temple for what we might term His confirmation, the bar-mitzvah of today among the Jews. We are told that, boy-like, "He was sitting among the teachers, both hearing them and asking them questions: and all that heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers." Here it is that we have the further statement, "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

From 12 to thirty we have but the knowledge that Jesus, like His foster father Joseph, followed the calling of a carpenter. He found Himself quite naturally in the economy of the time: family, occupational, educational, and religious. How silly the attempt to fill in these years with legends about making clay birds with His little friends, clapping His hands and sending his birds away in live flight. Or that when Joseph cut a board too short, Jesus stretched it!

To return to Scripture's own definition of the term 'Son of man.' It calls Him the "firstborn among many brethren." He is therefore portrayed as of supreme ranking among the children of God, the believers. True, His divinity cannot be here excluded, seeing He is by nature God; and this also has to do with the church triumphant. But the firstborn includes Jesus as Son of man, the Man that leads all those elect and saved as brethren into glory. Holy Writ also speaks of Jesus in a peculiar manner. It contrasts Him to the first Adam as being the Last Adam. If Adam is portrayed as the beginning of humanity, Jesus is called the closing member. One might think of humanity in the form of a football whose top point is Adam, the bottom point Jesus. And as sin sickened (sic) down through all humankind from Adam, so justification, forgiveness and righteousness permeated all mankind from the bottom up. See Rom. 5:12-21. Note particularly I Cor. 15:45-49.

We come to the entrance of Jesus into His 3 years of public ministry. It begins at the river Jordan when John the Baptist baptizes Jesus. We have here a most remarkable scene. John leads Jesus down into the river Jordan. He baptizes Him. Jesus prays and the heaven is opened and the Holy Spirit descends upon Him in bodily form, as a dove, and the voice of the Father comes out of heaven, "Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased." And here we have not only the manifestation of the Blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but the gift to Jesus of the Holy Spirit entire and the testimony of the Father to Jesus as His Son. We have indeed but three instances recorded in the Bible of the Father speaking directly to Jesus. The first is chronicled at His baptism, the second on the Mt. of Transfiguration, where the Father bore witness of Him to the three disciples in the words, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased: here ye Him." The third occurred on the Sunday preceding His crucifixion, Palm Sunday. A deep dread had befallen Him in prospect of His suffering and crucifixion. His soul is so troubled He cries, "What shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour!" But like us He also has second thoughts. He says, "But for this cause came I to this hour." That's what I'm here for. He prays, "Father, glorify Thy name." And the Father answers audibly, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." The Father did indeed glorify His own name in the suffering and death of Jesus, in His resurrection and ascension, in His present reign on the throne above, and will glorify it in His second coming, His conduct of the final judgment, and in the eternal reign and majesty of the man, Jesus Christ, ruling from the throne of God in His natural right as Son of God, but also in the right that His Father bestowed upon Him as a man when Jesus declares, "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth."

We have just noted Jesus' baptism, the gift of the Holy Spirit entire, and the testimony of the Father. Again it is written Acts 10:38 of "Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power: Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him." For Him Whom God hath sent, to Him God giveth not the Spirit by measure. John 3:34. Again it is said that "Jesus was anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows." It is important for us to make note of this fact, for it has a profound weight in understanding the life and words of Jesus in various situations. We rightly believe that the Holy Spirit inspired the writers of Scripture so that they wrote without error. II Pet. 1:19-21. I Thess. 2:13. We believe the testimony of Jesus to the Old Testament, "The Scripture cannot be broken." Do we recall that Jesus promised His disciples that the Holy Spirit would teach them all things, guide them into all the truth, declare unto them the things that were to come? Do we believe that the Holy Spirit, Whom Jesus had without measure, left the man Jesus uninspired respecting the truth, the future, and the thoughts of men? What a godly and infallible Source of knowledge, wisdom, power, and direction Jesus had in the Holy Spirit. Because of its importance in this matter of the gift of the Holy Spirit to the man Jesus of Nazareth, it will be permitted to adduce Is. 11:2-4. There you will read, "And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of Jehovah. And His delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah; and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither decide after the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth." Etc. When Jesus knew what was in men and their thoughts, the revelation of the Holy Spirit - spoken of above as the spirit of knowledge, wisdom, counsel, and might and understanding - would not be idle. If this very phenomenon was true of the prophets of the Old Testament - see how Elisha says negatively: "Jehovah hath hid it from me, and hath not told me." Or again and again the prophets knew what was afield by direct revelation of God; for example, in the matter of Gehazi's avarice, or in the case of Jeroboam sending His wife to Ahijah, the blind prophet, to whom Jehovah - the Holy Spirit - revealed that she would come and what he was to say to her. If this be true of the OT prophets, how much more and in far higher and perfect degree this would be the case of the Holy Spirit, given entire and without measure to Jesus: This after His baptism by John.

Coupled with this we have the remarkable, yea, radical statement of Phil. 2:7. The King James Version has a shallow and misleading translation here of the original Greek. The KJV says of Christ here, "He made Himself of no reputation." The original says, as the Am. St. Version of 1901 and the new Revised Standard rightly translate: "He emptied Himself." Luther: "*Entaeuserte sich selbst.*" The Greek: "*Ekenosen.*" In His humanity, He laid aside His majesty, the use of His divine power, the glory He had with the Father before the world was. There was reason for this. For when Moses asked God to see God's glory, God told him, "No man

can see My face and live.” Jesus not only could not have gone about in His glory and majesty here on earth, because it would have killed His disciples, but He also wished in every respect to be like us, whence He took upon Himself the form and nature of a servant, that is, a bondservant, a slave. This was no perversion, pretence, or masquerade, but the unvarnished truth. Though as Son of man He possessed the powers, prerogatives, and majesty of God - the *communicatio idiomatum* - He laid them aside in His human capacity, He emptied Himself of their exercise.

Many years ago there was an excellent article on this point in the *Quartalschrift* from the pen of Pastor Schuetze, the father of our Prof. Schuetze at the Seminary. Jesus could rightly say that He depended upon God, that He, like all men and the angels, did not know the day nor the hour of the Last Judgment. Matt. 24:36. Let it therefore be clear that the exinanition is very real. This in no wise blasts away the fact that the man Jesus possessed the powers of the Godhead. This proves a great mystery.

Having said this, let us return to the baptism of Jesus and what followed. Jesus had just been told, as far as we know from the record of Scripture, for the first time directly by the Father, “Thou art My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.” This same Jesus was made like unto His brethren in all things. As the children are sharers in flesh and blood, so He also Himself in like manner partook of the same. As a man He also was moved emotionally. Emotion when hurtling toward the periphery of control can be dangerous. Anger can lead to violence, even murder. Sorrow may gender melancholy and despair, even suicide. Joy may develop into ecstasy, in which one may forget propriety and abandon dignity, dancing a caper, exuberantly embracing some other man’s wife, departing from principle, in spiritual things indulging in some conceited deviation from sober-minded truth and integrity.

Now Jesus, like any human being, as Scripture amply demonstrates, was emotionally constituted like us. For He who hungered, thirsted, slept, tired, walked and talked, also became indignant, even angry, was sorrowful, on occasion even unto death, was filled with joy. On the occasion of His baptism He was filled with so high a joy that it probably became ecstasy. Two things point to this conclusion: the fact that He ate nothing for forty days; the significant pointer of St. Mark subsequent to Jesus’ baptism and the Father’s witness directly to Jesus as His beloved Son: “And straightway the Spirit driveth Him forth into the wilderness.” The indication is plain that Jesus needed to return to the profound spiritual virtue of sober-mindedness. See Titus.

It was now the devil tempted Him. Satan always attacks when we are weakest, when some peripheral emotion exposes us with our guards down. Jesus had just come down at the end of forty days out of the clouds of ecstasy. Nature asserted itself in a ravenous hunger. (Bill Beitz.) Satan was right on the job to seduce Jesus from His faith. “If Thou art the Son of God, command that these stones may become bread.” Prove to yourself that you are really God’s Son! How deeply significant and full of faith is the reply of Jesus. He says, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” Jesus not only quotes Scripture against Satan (Deut. 8:3), but most tellingly and emphatically refers to the word of the Father of forty days previous, “Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Here is the specific word that must sustain Him; for faith says that God will not abandon Him Whom He has identified as His beloved Son. And indeed the faith of Jesus in God’s pronouncement was vindicated shortly, for angels came and ministered unto Him after he had triumphed over Satan.

It was the Spirit’s purpose and intention that Jesus should undergo temptation. For Matthew reports that Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. So now Satan has the power to “take” Him to the Holy City and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, a point so high above the floor of the canyon of the Kidron that Josephus writes that it made one dizzy to look down into its ‘immeasurable’ depths. Again Satan attacks the faith of Jesus and challenges Him to prove to Himself and to the multitudes at Jerusalem that He was the Messiah. “If Thou art the Son of God, cast Thyself down: for it is written, “He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and, on their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest haply Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.” The ‘if’ is a missile shot at Jesus’ faith, and the advice reads to take a short-cut to the allegiance of the multitudes, by-passing the cross; and Satan buttresses his temptation with a misquotation of Scripture, leaving out the fundamental words “In all Thy ways,” that is the ways laid down by the will of God and that led for Jesus through cross and grave to death and resurrection. Once more Jesus refers back to the

word of the Father 40 days previous when He says, "Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord Thy God." He who told me that I am his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased, I believe him and am determined to do his will. He loves me; I love him: we are One.

As a final major temptation Satan takes Jesus to an exceeding high mountain and shows Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory in an instant. Those who depose that this is impossible should ponder two things: the compass man has made of the earth with radio and television; the fact that we have dealings here with the powerful, though fallen archangel, Lucifer, who still possesses his great power, a power so great that Jude informs us that the archangel Michael, while contending with the devil over the body of Moses, durst not bring against Him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke thee." That is, Michael did not measure his strength against Satan, but appealed to the Lord Himself. What power the angels wield is manifest when we recall that in one night the angel of the Lord smote 185,000 of Sennacherib's army. So Satan on a spiritual circuit showed Jesus the kingdoms of the earth. Why undergo the cross and death when You can take a short-cut and possess the whole world and its glory? But Jesus remembers the word of His Father at Jordan that He is the Son of God, in Whom God is well pleased, and cries, "Get thee behind me, Satan; for it is written, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve.'" Here we have direct recognition of the devil on the part of Jesus and temporary victory over him. It need not be pointed out that our victory over Satan stems from Jesus; and our shield against his temptation still remains the Word of God.

Which gives us opportunity to say a word on temptation where Jesus, the Son of man, is concerned. We read how Scripture relates that He "was tempted like us, yet without sin." This poses a psychological mystery to us. For when we think of temptation we couple it with the inclination to succumb to it. For, as St. Paul writes in Romans 7, we have sin in us so powerful that the things that we would we do not, and the things we would not we practice. Since temptation in the case of Christ remains a mystery, let us not try to solve it and attempt an explanation as to how He could be really tempted and still not be inclined to succumb. We leave it wholly with the reality that the Word of God asserts, "He was tempted like us, yet without sin."

From Judea we hear that Jesus "returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee." We have already mentioned that the Father bore witness to Peter, James and John, who accompanied Jesus onto the Mount of Transfiguration, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him:" Traditionally this mountain has been thought to be Mt. Tabor, But when Jesus came down from the mountain He entered the city of Caesarea Philippi. Tabor lies more than 50 miles to the southwest of Caesarea Philippi. It rises but 1843 feet above sea-level. Not only that it is far removed from Caesarea Philippi into which Jesus came from the Mount of Transfiguration, but hardly would merit the description the Bible gives it of being "an exceeding high mountain." On the other hand, Mt. Hermon both because Caesarea Philippi lies at its very foot and the mountain itself looms above it to the height of 9233 feet must be the height on which Jesus was transfigured, for He came down from the mountain directly into that city.

On the mountain itself several things should be noted. Moses and Elijah were there in person, so that not only Elijah, who went to heaven bodily in the fiery chariot, but Moses also was resurrected, as Jude reports; for Michael contended for Moses' body. What a joy it must have been for Moses to hear his prophecy concerning the prophet like himself that was to come from among the Israelites, of Whom he had also said, "Unto Him shall ye hearken," to hear God reiterate, "Hear ye Him:" The disciples saw Jesus changed; even his countenance was altered, and they beheld His glory. His face shone with glorious light; His clothing was white as no fuller could whiten them. Indeed, years later Peter wrote that they were eyewitnesses of His majesty, and that Jesus received from God the Father honor and glory. This was a glory above that which John mentions in I, 14: "We beheld His glory, glory as of the only-begotten from the Father" - for it was the subdued glory of fullness of grace and truth. One more remark: Moses and Elijah conversed with Jesus regarding the decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. They must have gone into some detail on this matter, for from then on we hear that Jesus set His face steadfast to go up to Jerusalem, a very human trait - we should say He gritted His teeth, He had to take Himself in hand. Moreover, we also read how He repeatedly spoke to His disciples about what awaited Him at Jerusalem. Though He spoke so plainly of it, we are told they understood it not, they did not perceive it, and it was hid from them. Why? Because they had a road-block in their own minds against it. To

the day of Jesus' arrest they still looked for an earthly throne and kingdom in Jerusalem. Even as many chiliasts have such a road-block to this day. And we too run in danger of having some preconceived ideas hinder our faith and understanding.

If it be so that Jesus' emptying of Himself were just partial, that at any time Jesus might act in the fullness of divine power; if it were so that He did shut it on and off as circumstances seemed to call for it, why then did Jesus resort to prayer? Prayer is not only talking to God, as some would have it, but its chief occupation is petitioning God for necessities, as the Lord's Prayer amply shows. Praise and thanksgiving are also elements of prayer, as Matth. 7: 7ff.; Ps. 50:15, and a number of sayings of Jesus in John 14, 15 and 16 amply show. We know that Jesus often employed prayer both privately and publicly. He always returned thanks at meals. Mark 6:46f. tells us how He spent a whole evening and well-nigh the whole night in prayer, overtaking His disciples in the boat in the fourth watch, that is, between 3:00 and 6:00 in the morning. We know that prior to choosing the Twelve Jesus prayed all night long. This was true prayer, not senseless repetition. If Jesus felt the need of prayer, how much more should we unworthy sinners feel its necessity and practice it with joyful vigor? As you may be sure that Jesus did not pray in routine or set fashion, so we might also speak to Christ and to God as we would man to man. (Ex. of the YMCA Secretary in the Bowery.)

On several occasions the Lord Jesus declared that the Father always heard Him. And so important does prayer seem to Him in the life of His people that in His Last Will and Testament Jesus bequeaths us that privilege with the promise of being heard no fewer than five times. Check for yourself in the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of St. John. And God still answers prayers, as George Mueller of Bristol amply proves. He was a great man of prayer and recorded both his prayers and their answer in his diary. At his death he had a record of no fewer than 50,000 specific petitions that had been granted.

We find Jesus both in joy in prayer, but also in the very depths of sorrow. He rejoices in the Holy Spirit and thanks the Father that He did hide these things from the wise and prudent, i.e., the conceited and the smart, yet did reveal them unto babes. On the other hand, we hear Him say, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." In the Garden of Gethsemane we are told that He not only knelt in prayer, but that He also cast Himself prone upon the ground in an agony of prayer. So deep was His anguish that His sweat was great drops of blood falling upon the ground. Incidentally, we see Jesus here in two attitudes of prayer: He kneels; He lies prone. In the synagogue, which it was the custom of Jesus to attend, He stood in prayer. I mention this because in certain sections of the Lutheran Church there rises great danger that kneeling may be imposed as being the only proper attitude in prayer.

Jesus was asked by His disciples to teach them to pray. On a number of occasions He taught them the model prayer, the Lord's Prayer. Matt. 6:9. Luke 11:4. Those who make it a point to find fault with the Bible, cry up the different wording of the Lord's Prayer as proof that some writer erred. They fail to take note of the difference in time indicated, as well as that they are ignorant of the manner in which instruction was given in the time of Christ, namely by lecture and repetition afoot. The great university of Athens had never a building; but the professors wheeled up and back on the Agora accompanied by a bevy of walking students, whence they were called '*peripatetickoi*.' Since no notes could be taken, the professor repeated part of his lecture next day, yet not always with the same words. Jesus was a child of His times and employed the same manner of teaching as He walked with His disciples from town to town and city to city. Hence the change of wording, a change even found at the institution of the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Prayer, as we all know, covers every need, spiritual and material.

How rich are we in the recording of Christ's farewell prayer, often called His high-priestly prayer, in John 17. Children of God ought to read it well-nigh daily, in order that they might the more love Him Who prayed it on their behalf and poured out His love in it. How Jesus pleads for His disciples: He asks for them sanctification in the Word, life eternal, protection against the wiles of this world, and keeping them out of the clutches of the evil one. But how we should rejoice that Jesus also remembered us in this prayer, for He said, "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in us." How deep should be our joy and how fervent our thanks when we hear Him pray, "Father, I desire that they also whom Thou hast given Me

be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world.” And let us know that this petition is the chariot that carries us heavenward, -out of which none can snatch us. Who would be so foolish, so down-right wicked, as to step out of it? There have been many great preachers in the world. But they all fade away in comparison to Jesus of Nazareth. “How exquisitely and freshly simple is the actual language of Christ compared with all other teaching that has ever gained the ear of the world! Straight as an arrow to the mark His precepts pierce to the very depths of the soul and spirit. All is short, clear, precise, full of holiness, full of the common images of daily life (Farrar).” He preached in picture language: fields and flowers, trees and tares, red sky and sirocco, sunrise and sunset; of wind and rain, night and storm, clouds and lightning; stream and river, sand and rock; stars and lamps and bushel and bed; of salt and honey; of rent garments and bursting wine-skins; eggs, serpents, scorpions, fish; of pearls and pieces of money, husks and swine; of wine and wheat, corn and oil, stewards and plowing, laborers and harvest; threshing and sickles, kings and shepherds, bride and bridegroom - who can catalog them all; and all familiar to his audiences.

We have many sermonettes of our Lord. No doubt also that longer sermons have been condensed by the Evangelists. But there are several of greater length, the most prominent of which are the Sermon on the Mount and His last discourse to His disciples, found in the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of St. John. Were you to take a poll on which is the greatest of the sermons of Jesus there can be no doubt that the Sermon on the Mount would carry the day. That is because it is legal in character and all the world understands law. But far and away more important is the sermon in John 14 through 16. In it Jesus informs His people what He has gained for them as Savior. I look upon it as His Last Will and Testament. What a multitude of bequests He makes in it to us. Never in the world’s history have such rich legacies been bestowed upon their recipients. Four times Jesus mentions the gift of the Holy Spirit, Whose Person and work He describes. Remarkable that He twice says the Father will send Him in Christ’s name, twice He says “I will send Him unto you from the Father.” These are the ground upon which we confess in the Nicene Creed: “Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son.” The Holy Spirit, without Whom there is no recognition of Christ, I Cor. 12:3, no faith and no salvation, is the supreme gift of Christ, Who gained Him for us. “It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go away, I will send Him unto you.” And the going away? It is by the cross and death.

Five times Jesus leaves us the privilege of prayer in His last will. Coupled with it comes the promise of prayer in His name being heard. Prayer in Christ’s name shuts out asking amiss. Asking in His name puts all requests into God’s good and gracious will for us, into His wisdom, which makes no mistakes. Putting forward His name is an exercise of faith, so that the promise may be fulfilled, “And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” And how this oft-repeated bequest ought to fire us up to use the privilege we have to appear before God on His throne with the many necessities we have personally, in the Church, and in the present pass of the world.

While these are the two chief items in Christ’s last will, they are accompanied by a host of others. It must suffice to catalog them. There is peace, that peace that passeth all understanding; joy in knowing a loving Savior and benevolent Father, expressed in the words, “Be of good cheer, My son: thy sins be forgiven thee;” mansions in the Father’s house; the truth absolute in the Word of God; oceans of love; life as branches in the Vine to bring forth much fruit; elevation to the plane of being friends, infinitely higher than the honor held highest in the Roman Empire, namely, to be Caesar’s friend. Add to this sanctification and intimate knowledge and acquaintance with the Father, for Christ is the image of the invisible God. He bequeaths life to us, and says, “Because I live, ye shall live also.”

We touch upon the Sermon on the Mount. In it Jesus gives us a deep and inner spiritual exposition of the moral law. He chisels out the Ten Commandments in eternal granite, for He says that they are more solid and durable than heaven and earth and will remain jot and tittle, and that contrary to existentialism, custom, and tradition, Jesus brings home that real virtue breeds in the heart, as all evil also has its roots in the heart. Who can look into this broad and polished mirror and still fail to see the clear reflection of a sinner? On the other hand,

looking at the Sermon on the Mount from a positive angle, we see the portrait of the ideal Christian. Sad to say, only one ever lived up to it: and that is Christ Jesus.

Marvelously simple, yet eloquent and striking, rolled out the preaching of Jesus. He set forth truth in parables that intrigued, indeed tantalized in their simplicity, at once a mystery to the disdainful and hardened of heart, and a bearer of great instruction to the child of God. Jesus was also the master psychologist, aided in this by the omniscience of the Holy Spirit He possessed. He also possessed knowledge in nature that topped that of His contemporaries. For instance, He knew that in speaking from a boat His voice would carry better by reason of concentration of the sound waves bouncing off the water. (Ex. Little Pine.) What a telling impression made on His listeners: all were astonished at His speaking with authority.

Quite generally preachers leave one under the impression that Jesus was always under a pall of deep sorrow, so to speak, a gloomy Gus. This is a hang-over from medieval asceticism. Jesus disclosed a broad sense of humor. Will a father give to his son who asks for a loaf a stone; for an egg drop a scorpion into his son's hand; for a fish a serpent? Do we light a lamp and put it under a bushel, or down cellar, or under a bed? He asks whether figs are gathered from thorns, grapes from a bramble bush? Have you ever thought of the almost facetious wit in the contrast of the mote and the beam, a tiny splinter in your neighbor's eye, and a twelve by twelve beam 20 foot long in your own? Human in this respect also, this man Jesus.

Incomparable one finds the alert, acute and conclusive manner in which He resolves apparently unanswerable disputation. The Pharisees and Herodians seem to have Him pinned between the horns of a dilemma: "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or no?" If he says, "yes," He rouses the hatred of the people; if He says, "No," He will be reported to the governor. How quickly He turns the table on these hypocrites with the command, "Show Me the tribute money." All come up with the denarius from their own pockets. From image and superscription He establishes that in using the money they had tacitly agreed to Caesar's right to tax. He lays down the principle, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's," and adds the far higher principle, "And unto God the things that are God's." They marveled and went their way.

Now come the conceited Sadducees who say there is no resurrection - of whom we have more than a few in our days. In sneering superciliousness they bring in the casuistry of the woman who had seven brothers to husband, with the question, "In the resurrection therefore whose wife shall she be of the seven?" Jesus thrusts through to the core, namely the denial of the resurrection, and cuts them down to their miserable size, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God." For there is no marriage in heaven, for the resurrected are as the angels. But the clincher comes when He cites to them what God said to Moses in the only portion of the Old Testament the Sadducees fully acknowledged, the Pentateuch: "Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?' God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Ye do greatly err." That finished them off.

In connection with these episodes there is heard a bright note. A scribe who had taken in both replies of Jesus was fascinated by what he had heard. This lawyer asked Him, trying Him (the KJV "tempting Him" must not be understood in modern meaning, but early 17th century, when it meant, "trying Him." Note also the "damnation" and "judgment" in I Cor. 11.) St. Mark tells us the lawyer had seen that Jesus had answered them well. He was interested in finding out what Jesus' answer would be to the question that was constantly and heatedly being debated among the Jews as to which was the greatest of the commandments of the law. When Jesus gave the summation of the law in the commandments to love God above all and the neighbor as one's self, the scribe was pleased and made the profound remark for his type and time, "Of a truth, Master, Thou hast well said that God is one, and there is none other but He: and to love Him with all the heart, and all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is much more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices." And how we must love Jesus for His reply. When He saw that he answered discreetly, He said unto Him, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." And we may be sure that that very word of Christ propelled the scribe into that kingdom and we shall see him standing at the right hand of Christ on that great Day.

The touchstone and chief criterion applied to a Jew of Christ's time was his observance of the sabbath. The question came up time and again in the public ministry of Jesus. First of all, it has not been generally

observed that all the commandments have been repeated in the New Testament with the exception of the 3rd concerning the sabbath day. Jesus seems almost to have made it a point to put the question of the sabbath into the forefront. Note the plucking of ears of grain on the sabbath, the healing of the shriveled hand, the unloosing of the woman bent double, the case of the man with the dropsy, and the command to the invalid at Bethesda to take up his bed and go home. (The incident of the Adventist lecturer.)

In the case of the plucking of the ears in the grainfield no objection was raised to the taking of the grain, but to shelling it out. That was work on the sabbath day. Observe, however, how the Lord Jesus places the sabbath day into the same category as the shew bread and the service of the temple, both ceremonial in character. Matth. 12:1ff. Again, Jesus places Himself above the sabbath commandment, though Scripture definitely places Him under the moral law, Galatians 4:4, and declares that He was sinless. "The Son of man is lord even of the sabbath." And how could He be sinless if the sabbath were moral, when Scripture plainly states that the Jews sought to kill Him, "because He not only brake the sabbath, but also called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God." John 5:17f. Luther has found the moral element in the 3rd commandment when he ties it to the hearing and believing the Word of God.

(In connection with the ceremonial law we have a significant but short word in Mark 7:19. Jesus says, not what goes into a man defiles him, going the way of the digestive process, but what comes out of him, that is, out of his heart, that is what defiles him. The remark we refer to reads: "Making all meats clean." That cashiers the Old Testament prohibitions on meat and drink.)

The Lord Jesus does not boast when He makes the forthright statement in His teaching that He is greater than Jonah and than Solomon. It is the solemn truth. Nineveh and Sheba will condemn that generation, for they paid heed to Jonah and Solomon, yet these disdain the Greater. Luke 11:29-32. Indeed, no man born of woman is greater than John the Baptist, yet he that is but little in the kingdom, namely Jesus, is greater than he. In saying these things Jesus again falls back upon Old Testament Scripture, on the witness of the Holy Spirit, and on the word of His Father at His baptism, "Thou art My beloved Son."

No man at any time in the history of the world made such ultimate claims for Himself as did Jesus of Nazareth. Not only that He called Himself the Son of God and Son of man, as we have seen, but he said, "I am the Bread of life." He called Himself the Water of life and the Light of the world. Again He declared, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." So we hear Him claim that he is the exclusive way to heaven, a claim the world denounces as arrogant. Some Lutheran theologians are taking issue with the Lord Jesus and are trying to pry open the gates of heaven for heathen, Mohammedan, Buddhist, and atheistic Communist, just so they be in earnest. And so the attempt is made to by-pass Jesus Christ. But they will run into the stone wall of His Word, "Except ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." And, "Except a man be born of the water and the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God." If ye abide in My Word, then are ye truly My disciples, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Which leads us to some severe language that Jesus employed against Pharisee and scribe. Whoever knows Christ knows it was used in love. True, with the majority - read Matthew 23 - His language but whetted their hate and drove them on to plot the death of Jesus. But with some few, you may be sure, it had the salutary effect, then or later, that naked truth, because it is truth, sometimes has. In short, we learn that some of them, scribes, Pharisees, and priests believed on Him, but secretly for fear of the Jews.

We have but few examples of the miracles of Jesus, specifically of the healings and casting out of devils. These must have tallied in the thousands. When John the Baptist sent from his dungeon to ask if Jesus were He that cometh, or look we for another, Jesus told John's disciples to tell John what they heard and saw: "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear and the dead are raised up." Matth. 11:4. "They brought unto Him all that were sick. . .and as many as touched His garment were healed." Matth. 14:35. "And there came unto Him great multitudes having with them the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others; and He healed them." Matth. 15:30. "And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple and He healed them." Matth. 19:1. "He came into the borders of Judea and great multitudes followed Him and He healed them." And other places in Matth. also: 9:35; 4:23; 21:14.

The question is posed how Jesus did His miracles and cures. In one place we are told that the “power of the Lord was with Him to heal.” In another Jesus says that He casts out demons “by the finger of God,” laying hold of it by faith.

True, in the case of His first miracle at the wedding at Cana it is said that He manifested His glory. Many of our Fathers simply assert that Jesus acted then in his nature as the Son of God. As a general thing, they imply, He lived as the Son of man; but in His miracles the Son of God was disclosed. The Son of God acted. St. Peter in his Second Epistle describes what he and his two companions saw on the Mount of Transfiguration in the words: “He received from God the Father honor and glory, when we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.” It were well to note that it is not said that Jesus displayed or disclosed His glory as the Son of God, but that “He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there was borne such a voice to Him by the Majestic Glory, ‘This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.’” It is one thing for Jesus to have manifested His own divine glory, another to be clothed from the Father with honor and glory. It was shown in that the fashion of His countenance was altered and His garments became white and glistening. This was a passing demonstration that paled beside the power, glory, and brilliant radiance of majesty in which Jesus will appear on the Last Day. In that glory and majesty Jesus now sits at the right hand of God on His throne, not only in His nature as the Son of God but also in that of His human nature. And we remember what Jehovah said to Moses when he learned that God was pleased with him and begged, “Let me see Thy glory.” God said, “No man can see My face and live.” So brilliant, holy, and terribly sacrosanct would be the glory of God as to consume in an instant any sinner seeing it. Only with sin blotted out and robed in the righteousness of God will men be able on the Last Day to behold that glory.

And now that raises the question of how Jesus did His miracles here on earth. Far and away more powerful on earth than the wind that breaks rocks in pieces, than earthquake and searing fire is the still small voice of faith. Faith is the mightiest power on earth among men. Read the paean on faith singing in Hebrews 11: Christ ascribes to faith healing, salvation, cleansing from leprosy. Of faith Jesus declares, “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence unto yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you.” (Mt. Hermon, 9242 feet.) And again, “If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, and ye would say unto this sycamore tree, Be thou rooted up, and be thou planted in the sea, it would obey you.” And again, “If ye have faith and doubt not. . .even if ye shall say to this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea, it shall be done.” Behold the power Jesus ascribes unto faith: Matth. 17:20; 21:21; Luke 17:6.

Now who is he that will credit Jesus Christ with a faith beneath the size of a mustard seed? His was the perfect faith. Not a shadow of doubt. Always there was present with Him the word of the Father, “Thou art My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.” Without fail the Holy Spirit, Whom He had without measure, assured and supported His faith. In Him dwelt the Godhead bodily. Col. 2:9. Clear both in His mind and heart was the testimony of the prophets and the Psalms to His Person and to His calling as the Savior of the world. When therefore in fulfilling of the great law to “love thy neighbor as thyself” the needs, the illnesses, leprosy, blindness and the like came to His attention, and was often forced upon Him, in faith Jesus, sans hesitation or doubt, drew by faith on the fact that His Father had called Him His beloved Son, and as Son of man He performed His miracles, honoring thereby the declaration of His Father.

Ought we not therefore confidently affirm that Jesus did His miracles by faith, nothing doubting the declaration of the Father to His eternal sonship, the testimony of the Holy Spirit to the same fact, and the illumination of the Old Testament Scriptures? Note the confidence with which He reads the prophecy of Isaiah to the synagog at Nazareth and declares, “Today is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.” Indeed, He came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill and to accomplish.

Do we pass by with blind eyes and unseeing the expression of the supreme act of faith on the part of Jesus of Nazareth? How on the cross from the depths of hell He cries, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?” Though thrust on the cross to the bottom-most pit of hell, He still clings to God as His God in faith. God reacted in complete satisfaction to this supreme plea of faith. Justice had been met, the absolute justice of God. Luther expresses this very thought on Christ’s victory by faith on the cross in his hymn, *Der*

grosse Glaube. He sings, “*Durch den Glauben am Kreuz gestorben, Und vom Tod wieder auferstanden durch Gott.*” We remark that no translation of that hymn has grasped that thought of Luther.

In passing we wish to meet the question, “How could one man, Jesus, atone for the sins of the whole world?” We agree to the legal principle that one man can step in for another in the matter of, say, paying a debt. Substitution of one man for another in prison and even in execution of a death sentence has been acknowledged. But one man standing in for the whole world: where is the balance? That question overlooks the fact that the one man is at once also the Creator, as we learned in the introduction to this paper. Now everyone agrees that the Creator is greater than His creation. Place all humanity into the shell on one side of the balance scale and Jesus Christ into the other, and His side infinitely outweighs the other.

To return to the thought that Jesus laid hold of divine power by faith to heal: When in the case of the epileptic boy possessed of a devil at Caesarea Philippi the disciples asked why they were unable to cast the demon out, Jesus ascribes their failure to “little faith.” He chides them with the sharp words, “faithless and perverse generation.” Again in that very connection He states, “All things are possible to him that believeth.” Shall we not make earnest with this plain and simple statement of Jesus in connection with what is written, Phil. 2:7? Do we believe that as a man Jesus did not know the day of His return? We hear Him also ascribe to faith the power to subdue wind and wave, Mark 4:38-40.

It was faith that also sustained the Lord Jesus in His nameless suffering in Gethsemane and on the cross. In the very shadow of the cross He gave expression to this conviction of faith in O.T. prophecy in foretelling that all His disciples would leave Him, (“Smite the Shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered abroad.”) “Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.” A radical paradox: although God forsook Jesus on the cross, yet Jesus knew and believed that the Father was all for Him and in His very love and Being with Him. Again the pinnacle of faith. Jesus stressed the intimate relationship with the Father. As Son of man He calls Himself One with the Father. So like in every respect are Father and Son, Father and Son of man, that Jesus insists, “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.” Whence Luther writes, “If one wishes to know God, let him learn to know Jesus Christ as He has been revealed in Scripture.” For Jesus reflects the Father’s thinking, His mercy and love, His wisdom and will, the Father’s character in His teaching, works and life. Whence, as Son of man, the Father even God hath sealed Him.

We accompany Jesus as He nears Jerusalem for the last time. Under the stress of the approaching terrible end, minutely described on the Mt. of Transfiguration by Moses and Elijah, He crowds tremendous teaching into the last days. His disciples call Him *didaskalos*, Teacher. The KJV’s translation “Master” reflects the better meaning. For within my memory the village school principal in Minnesota was not only called schoolmaster, but often simply, “The Master.” That meant not only that he was the school’s teacher, but also a proper example and one who kept order and was to be revered. The apostles did revere Jesus as Master. To the rich young ruler the Master puts the question, “Why callest thou Me good? None is good save God only.” If you call Me good, you must also acknowledge Me as God. On the other hand, He had long since refused the attempt of the crowd He had fed to make Him an earthly king; but He did affirm His being King of the Jews and that He was born to be a king on the question of Pilate, “Art Thou a king then?” with His emphatic, “You said it:”

The question will arise, if Jesus emptied Himself in accord with Phil. 2:7, how He knew what people thought, and what was on their minds. First of all He was the master psychologist and needed not, as Scripture says, that any man should tell Him what was in man. Again we point to the omniscient Holy Spirit, Whom Jesus possessed without measure, Who was capable of revealing to Jesus what men thought. Of the Holy Spirit, as we heard, Jesus said He was the Spirit of truth, that He abideth in the disciples, teaching them all things and bringing things to remembrance, also declaring things that are to come. If this was true in the case of sinners, the disciples, how much more would the Holy Spirit carry them through with Jesus? This is vastly more than telepathy. And yet it is a mystery we can but partially comprehend and solve.

We find one of the most telling and cogent arguments concerning the conjunction of God and man in Jesus Christ in John 5:25-29. He speaks of both spiritual resurrection unto life, and the physical resurrection of all the dead unto judgment. “The (spiritual) dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God (in the Gospel), and they that hear (heed) shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself, even so gave He to the Son to have life in

Himself (evidently as Son of man, for as Son of God He naturally possessed this power), and He gave Him authority to execute judgment because He is a son of man." So Jesus as a man grants eternal life to whom He wills to do so; and the judgment of all mankind by the will of God has been placed into the hands of a Man, even Jesus of Nazareth. A close argument indeed. The Lord Jesus Christ had these powers, as Scripture declares, as Son of God. Here they are spoken of as being conferred upon Him as Son of man. This is one of the clearest texts on the doctrine of *communicatio idiomatum*.

To clinch the argument Jesus adduces the general resurrection of the dead on the last day and discloses that all that are in the tombs shall come forth in obedience to His voice, and all men shall know that He spoke truth and that none of his claims was idle talk.

It is to be noted that Jesus underscored that He would come again in the clouds of heaven in glory as the Son of man to judge the world. Matth. 25:31ff. "The Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit on the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all the nations." The whole 25th chapter is devoted to the description of the judgment itself.

When we think of the Last Judgment, we cannot do so without some degree of apprehension. Our Old Adam with his bad conscience pictures God as standing behind the next corner with a big club waiting to knock us down, a punishing God. Jesus paints us a different portrait of God His Father. He points Him up as manifesting what Luther so felicitously calls "the good and gracious will of God." One of the most comforting in all Scripture is the passage John 6:37-40, in which the chief verse reads, "For this is the will of My Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son and believeth on Him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." Friends, let this word sink into your ears.

When Jesus saw His cross rising ever higher on the horizon, He spoke more often and in detail of the Last Judgment and of His coming again. More than once in the last week He broke out into His lament over the destruction of Jerusalem, most poignantly as He came over the brow of the Mount of Olives. For as He caught sight of the city with its temple in the foreground, He burst into loud sobs. Luke 19:41f. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killeth the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee," etc.

And when the disciples, who gloried in the temple, pointed out its marvelous stone-work, Jesus shocked them by remarking, "Here shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." That word was so devastating to them that they kept from asking any question about it until they had crossed the Kidron and were sitting on the Mount of Olives. Not a few have been puzzled by what they look upon as a confusing account Jesus gives in Matthew 24 upon their question. But the key to understanding His answer lies in their question. They put to Him a threefold query and Jesus answers on all three parts. They ask, 1. "When shall these things be?", namely concerning the destruction of the temple; 2. "What shall be the sign of Thy coming?"; 3. What of "the end of the world?" Jesus answers the second question first concerning the signs of His coming; then He goes over to the first question about the destruction of Jerusalem; finally He describes the Last Judgment.

As to the signs: they are all here in fulfillment: 1. The two World Wars and continuing strife; 2. the great famines of 1917; 3. the great earthquakes in divers places; 4. the pestilence of the flu; 5. the falling away from faith; 6. the spread of the Gospel into all the world; and 7. the Jew: "This generation shall not pass away till all things be accomplished; heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Word shall not pass away." The Jews exhibit the most unique phenomenon in history: in that for 2000 years they have remained a race, a nation without temple, high priest, king, country, and yet spread over all the earth. But Jerusalem met its fate in the year 70, forty years after Jesus foretold it. How did He know these things? The facile answer reads, "He was the Son of God and knew all things." But in the face of Phil. 2:7 and Mark 13:32 another answer meets the question more surely. Isaiah, Daniel, Zechariah, Moses and David spoke of the future. We are expressly told by Scripture that they did so by illumination of the Holy Spirit. "The Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David concerning Judas." And again, "Well spake the Holy Spirit through Isaiah the prophet." If through the prophets in the Old Testament, how much more through the man Jesus, Who possessed the Holy Spirit without measure?

We come to the last day of our Lord before His death. He was subjected to six hearings, all of which were marked by gross injustice: Before Annas, who was the real high priest; 2. before Caiaphas and a

committee of the Sanhedrin; 3. the Sanhedrin at daybreak; 4. before Pilate; 5. then Herod Antipas; and finally 6. before Pilate once more. From Lenten studies we are all familiar with the indignities cast upon Him: mocked, slapped, spit upon, scourged, and crowned with thorns. As to injustice: is it not unique to hear a judge pronounce a man innocent no fewer than three times in the course of the trial, only at the end to condemn Him to death on the cross? That is what happens when politics and what is personal comes between a man and the issues at stake. And this should come as a warning to us who are Christians, particularly to ministers of the Gospel, not to let sentiment, one's own person, or one's own interests become determinative.

And so our Lord Jesus goes His way to the cross. On the way he is stilettoed by His close friend, Peter, who climaxes his three-fold denial by swearing that he did not know this man. We digress here to meet the assertion that the accounts differ as to Peter's questioners and accusers. One writer says it was women that accused Peter of being a disciple, another it was men: hence someone is in error. How shallow the objection. When a woman accused him, men standing by also asserted having seen Peter with Jesus. Both reports are correct.

And now they nail Him to His cross and raise it up between those of the malefactors. The evening before Jesus had said, "This which is written must be fulfilled in Me, 'And He was reckoned with the transgressors': for that which concerneth Me hath fulfillment." And when they reached Gethsemane we recall His trembling sorrow unto death, His sweating blood in agony. On the cross He is subjected to the terrific pressure of taunting sneers, tempting Him to come down from the cross. "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." "If Thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross." "He trusted on God; let Him deliver Him now, if He desireth Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'" But He kept silence, as Isaiah had foretold.

Above Him on the cross is seen a superscription. Again the cry, "Some one of the evangelists goofed. For the record on the superscription differs." Let it be recalled that the superscription was written in three languages, Hebrew, Greek and Latin. And nowhere is it written that the three were identical. Of this superscription another observation. When the chief priests objected to the wording, Pilate curtly rejected them, saying: "What I have written, I have written." If he spoke Latin, "*Quod scripsi, scripsi!*"

After six hours on the cross the end comes. For three hours from high noon on the world has been plunged into pitch darkness. Some well-meaning commentators have ascribed the darkness to an eclipse of the sun, a rank impossibility at full moon. Nay, why not pay attention to what the Word of God says? Scripture reports, "The sun's light failed." This is the hand of God. Silence on the cross. But at the end the loud and startling cry, "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*" We have already seen the supreme significance of this cry of faith. Immediately the punishing hand of God is withdrawn. Jesus' humanity and His wants assert themselves. He cries, "I thirst!" And this time He drinks. Then He cries those words that are so immensely important to us, "It is finished!" Our salvation is complete, and nothing to be added to it nor can be. Finally He cries, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." And then He yields up the ghost, that is, Jesus dismissed His spirit. Thus He fulfilled that which He had in the beginning of His public ministry declared, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment received I of My Father." Plain words, no? He plainly states that as a man He lays down His life. He also plainly states that He will be instrumental in taking it again. Even as He had also said, "Destroy this temple and the third day I will raise it up again," speaking of His own body. And whatever God says must come to pass. Hence every word of God and of Christ in its fulfillment takes on the nature of a commandment. A paler example is that of the Queen of England whose invitation to dinner is termed a royal command. So Jesus simply decreed of His spirit, "Now you can depart." And His body becomes a corpse, as Scripture also says. But He also raised the corpse from the dead. A profound mystery, but a fact.

Without touching upon the resurrection we should indeed leave out the chief vignette of Christ. For the resurrection is the keystone in the arch of the Christian religion. Take the resurrection of Jesus Christ away and the whole arch collapses: without the resurrection Christianity isn't worth the effort of casting it into the ash-can. But if there is anything positive in the Bible it is the insistent teaching of the resurrection, not only of

Jesus, but also of all the dead, and of those that are His to eternal life. "For now hath Christ risen from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep."

That is why the Lord Jesus took so great pains after His resurrection not only to appear to His disciples, but particularly to prove to them that He was the same man after His resurrection that He was before: to demonstrate that the post-resurrection Jesus was identical with the pre-resurrection man. The Scripture record seems to indicate numerous appearances to His disciples after His resurrection, for it says that to the apostles whom He had chosen "He also showed Himself alive after His passion by many proofs." Scripture itself, however, chronicles but eleven specific appearances, from the first appearance to Mary Magdalene to the last appearance to the eleven on the Mt. of Olives and to St. Paul, the untimely born. - Another aside: just lately in what were conservative Lutheran circles there has been a senseless allegation that on the Ascension blatant error is apparent as between the account found in St. Luke and in Acts compared to that found in Matthew: namely, that the former lays it on the Mount of Olives, Matthew in Galilee. Now take your Bible and search the last chapter of Matthew with a thousand-power microscope and you will find not an iota about ascension there. Another case of where smart alecs, thinking themselves wise, have become fools.

We shall not enter in on the appearances of the resurrected Jesus further than to point up the identifying pre- and post-resurrection characteristics and incidents. Mary Magdalene does not recognize Jesus at the tomb until He pronounces her name in the old familiar accents, "Mary." It is the old well-remembered voice. The two going to Emmaus, a village about 8 miles to the NW of Jerusalem, have their eyes opened by the custom of Jesus to bless the bread, breaking it and giving it to them. Always in the 32 years they had eaten with Him He had performed it so. To His disciples on that Sunday evening, as to Thomas particularly the next Sunday evening, Jesus exhibited the marks of the nails in His hands and feet and the scar of the wound in His side, to prove He is the same man who hung upon the cross, marks and scar that we shall also see on yon great day. So He proves to them also that He is no ghost, for a ghost, saith He, "hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have." (Another digression: You know that there has been denial of the resurrection of the flesh; yet Jesus avers that very thing here. Where is Lutheranism in America headed for under this banner of 'scholarship'? Are too many of our scholars - we do not disparage scholarship as such - forgetting to take every thought captive to the obedience to Christ and His Word?) So it is a flesh and bone body, just as it was a flesh and bone body before the cross, yet now glorified. He eats a piece of broiled fish and honeycomb before their eyes. The Resurrected is still the Son of man, a man. The immense post-resurrection draught of fishes on the Sea of Galilee couples up with the great draught some of these same disciples made at the beginning of their active fellowship with Jesus. It is at the same place that Jesus gently reminds Peter of His boast that if all should leave Jesus, he would never leave Him: He would go with Him to prison and to death. By His three-fold question, "Lovest thou Me?" Jesus also reminds Him of his three-fold denial, and graciously restores him to his apostleship. Again, the meeting on the mountain in Galilee, an old familiar place, contributed to the same conviction: This is the same, the identical Jesus, Who taught us here before He died. The recurring reminder and repetition of what He had taught them in the 3 years of instruction prior to the cross could not but serve as a convincing proof: This is the Master. (Mention the Holy Spirit's admonition through the episode John 21:21ff. to be careful what we hear and to take care how we read God's Word.)

May we hark back to the cross for a moment to contemplate the prophecies that were fulfilled upon the cross. "They parted my garments among them and on My vesture did they cast lots." "They shall look upon Him Whom they have pierced." "A bone of Him shall not be broken," harking back to all the passover lambs that had been sacrificed throughout the centuries, no bone of which dared be broken. For Jesus was the true Passover Lamb to which all of the innocent passover lambs pointed. "I thirst:" fulfilled Ps. 69:21: "In My thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." "He was numbered with the transgressors." Coupled with these the remarkable grace and mercy of God that upon His death the centurion and his soldiers came to the faith and expressed it in these words, "Truly, this was a righteous man and the Son of God!"

At the end of many a biography the author will give a character resume. Shall we do this with Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of man? It must needs be sketchy, seeing we know Him so little: not only that our sinful sight

is blurred, but we have not seen Him face to face. Then we shall know Him as He is, see Him face to face, knowing Him fully as we are known.

St. Paul in His Epistle to Titus has given us the ideal for the Christian. None ever met these principles better than Jesus, for He met them perfectly. They are: 1. Sound doctrine; 2. Sound faith; 3. Sound speech; and 4. Sober-mindedness. Christ's Word was sound doctrine indeed, for it was the very word of God. We have seen how He had sound faith. And whoever has any criterion for wisdom and logic and language and solid content will agree that sound doctrine founds sound speech. And in every situation, on every issue, in every difficulty and adversity and emergency He showed Himself the master in sober-mindedness.

Jesus lived a life of principle. He hewed to that line throughout. Top principle remained that of love. He loved God with all His heart, with His whole soul, with all His mind and with all His strength. This love proved itself in always doing the will of God, and in being obedient, yea, obedient unto death, yea the death of the cross. But He also loved His neighbor as Himself; in these two points fulfilling all the law. He served His people, never passing by anyone in trouble, sick, blind, leprous, or possessed of the devil. What with His miracles, He taught the people. His activities often brought Him to the point of exhaustion. His disciples cried, "He is beside Himself'."

He was also a balanced man. Cicero's teacher told him, "Balance: it is the law of nature. Beware of the excitable man: he has lost his balance." On occasion Jesus was indignant, even angry. Jesus looked round about on them with anger and was grieved for their hardness of heart. But no alienation of affections was involved. He lived through rare times of joy. On one occasion, as we have seen it after His baptism, he ascended into ecstasy. Yet in it He showed Himself capable of self-control. Even when so great a sorrow billowed over Him as to press out of Him, "I am exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." And that was not just a remark, but fact. Indeed, the Lord Jesus always spoke facts: His Word is fact. But the greatest power in His life, if we limit it to the production of His person, was faith, as we have seen. His faith did the miracles; His faith wrought our salvation; His faith was the victory that overcame the devil, sin, guilt, and death itself. It was the victory that overcame the world and all in it.

And so we conclude this rambling paper, apologizing for the slipshod endeavor. May the good Lord see to it that some good may come of it.