

House

Postilla

Sermons

*M. Sophia Hill
Belle Fourche 10 ave.*

LARS LEVI LAESTADIUS'

HOUSE POSTILLA

SERMONS

Which He Has Preached on Special Occasions, at
Reading Examinations and to the Sick

First Translated Edition

FOREWORD

These sermons of the now famous Provost L. L. Laestadius, are herewith given out for publication, which he has preached at house gatherings, at reading examinations and at communions, written in his own hand writing. After his decease, they were left as an inheritance to the widow, Mrs. Laestadius, who treasured them as her own precious possession and remembrance of her beloved, deceased husband; and did not give them out for public use. After the decease of Mrs. Laestadius, they were left to her daughter Elizabeth, who sent them to her sister's daughter, Selma, and her husband Albert Nelson, into America, with the request and wish, that they be printed and given out to public use. This is now given out and published at the behest of the above named Selma and Albert Nelson.

The labor and effect of Provost L. L. Laestadius, in the Lord's vineyard, is already known to the vast public, through his church postilla and the biography it contains, etc., making it unnecessary to narrate same further here.

Written at the publishers' request, in Cokato, Minn.

March 5th, 1894.

Kaleb A. Wuollet.

INTRODUCTION

The eminent Provost Lars Levi Laestadius, rector of the state church of Pajala, in Swedish Lapland, was born in a destitute home on the 10th day of January, in the year 1800, in Arjeplog parish in Swedish Lapland, and died on the 21st day of February in 1861. His special sermons are herewith given out, translated into the English language and published for the first time, to better acquaint the American people with his work; more particularly since mention is made of him in various public school text books, which has made him still more widely known.

To the adherents of the doctrine preached by Laestadius, he was the angel who began to cry at the dawn of the opening of the sixth seal. This thesis is supported by an earthquake having taken place at the moment when a slave of sin was released, by the power and merits of the Savior: or when the keys of the kingdom of heaven were again put into right practice. Rev. 6:12. Math. 16:19.

Laestadius, with thousands who have followed Jesus' doctrine, of which he was a powerful proponent, have joyfully gone to their reward, fully assured of having received God's forgiveness for their sins and wrongdoings, which had been administered to them by God's mediums, after the order and command given of God in the Holy Bible.

These concise sermons, or really storehouses of intelligent instruction on what God in His word demands of man, before He admits him into His good graces, express his excellent gift to sift down and to clarify the way of salvation, to make it so clear that all who desire may understand.

Wishing godspeed to the work which God, through Laestadius, has begun, which has prospered wonderfully by his untiring labors and that of the many other faithful laborers whom God has chosen throughout the times, and may God grant His blessings to this translated work also.

Dated his 15th day of January in the year 1939, with, for, and in behalf of the translators.

Arthur Niska
Route 8
Minneapolis, Minn.

1. COMMUNION SERMON.

To a Sick Believer, Who Is Ready to Die.

JESUS said to His disciples: I AM THE TRUE VINE AND MY FATHER IS THE HUSBANDMAN. EVERY BRANCH IN ME THAT BEARETH NOT FRUIT HE TAKETH AWAY: AND EVERY BRANCH THAT BEARETH FRUIT, HE PURGETH IT, THAT IT MAY BRING FORTH MORE FRUIT. John 15: 1, 2.

We hear from these words of the Savior, that the Master of the vineyard receives and cleanses the branches that bear fruit. We understand that the fruitful branches are the true disciples of Jesus, who draw moisture from the true vine: that is, such people, who have, not only awakened, but have also come into grace, and have remained steadfast in that most precious faith. Such branches the Lord has promised to cleanse, that they may bear more fruit. Trial of faith is understood to be represented by this cleansing. HE THAT IS WASHED NEEDETH NOT SAVE TO WASH HIS FEET, BUT IS CLEAN EVERY WHIT: The cleansing of which Jesus speaks here, comes in trial of faith. Where is a Christian's faith better proven, than in death? According to the experience of all Christians, he, whose faith stands in death, is blessed, in time and in eternity. Unless the dying one has so calloused conscience, that he knows nothing of sin, and so firm a dead faith, that even death cannot break it.

When Jesus now says to His disciples: I am the true vine, Ye are the branches, every branch in me that beareth fruit, He cleanseth it, that it may bring forth more fruit, He implied such a soul condition, in which the heavenly Husbandman, through His Holy Spirit, has, already affected true contrition and repentance. That is, a person who has awakened, has come to know his sins and wickedness, and by living faith, has also become grafted to the living vine, the Christ, in which faith he bears fruit, namely such fruit, as belogs to true Christianity. Such a one is truly a fruitful branch in the true vine.

The trying of the faith comes now, since He says: "every branch in ME, that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." This trying of faith comes through adversities, through persecution and suffering, but particularly through death, when the angel of death comes to gather the clusters of the vine; then is a Christian's faith tried, then comes the final purging. The angel of death has come to gather the clusters of the vine. Now the Master of the vineyard has come to seek fruit from the clusters in the vine. Now has come the final purging. "Every branch in Me, that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

Believe not wee branch, that having once become grafted into the true and living vine, you no longer need cleansing. It is not so. You do need purging and cleansing, for the ravens and crows

have soiled you. You have often been unwatchful and slothful.

Often has the enemy wanted to lull you to sleep, oftentimes world's love tried to force itself into your heart. All this rubbish and error must now be put away and corrected; the final purging has come. If you have before been in the world, you will now become loosed by the bloody struggle. In this way He purges the branches that bear fruit, that they may bring forth more fruit. Grow, you branches of the vine, ripen quickly, you crimson grapes. Soon the angel of death will come to gather the clusters of the vine. Soon the guests from heaven will come to see, the vines. The dresser of the vineyard has interceded for you, you unfruitful fig tree! Through his intercession you have been let live until the day, in which the great dresser of the vineyard has dug about you and has dunged your roots, has repaired you, and in that way has caused you to bear fruit, you unfruitful fig tree. He now comes to see the fig tree, whether there be any fruit thereon, since He is hungry. Be ready now to give Him fruit, because no grapes have grown in this vineyard before, only sour fruit, which the devil has eaten. But now the Master of the vineyard awaits better fruit from this vineyard, for which He has gone into so much trouble and labor. He has built a fence around it, has dug ditches, has grafted branches of wild vines into that true and living vine: in this vineyard the Lord has also built a little winepress, where the crimson grapes are pressed, in order that the sweet wine, which is in them, might begin to overflow! And our hope is that the great builder of the vineyard may quench his thirst from the wine that shall be made from these grapes, when they are put into the winepress and pressed. Grow, you fruitful branches of the vine! Ripen, you crimson grapes, for the summer is short in the Northland! Soon the angel of death will come to gather the clusters of the vine, so that when the guests from heaven come, He might place the grapes on the table and say: Taste, guests, of the grapes that have grown in the northland.— And you, dying one, you are a cluster in the vine, which the Angel of death has come to gather. If you have not bid farewell to the world before, bid you farewell now, dismiss all silly thoughts, and now turn to God and pray from all your heart, that the great cross bearer and thorn crowned King, would let you leave this world in one blessed hour, and that you might see Him soon on the mount Sion amid the elect. Do not turn your eyes away from Jesus any more; but cling firmly and closely to Him. When for the last time you partake of the Lord's holy communion here in time of grace, pray the Lord Jesus to forgive you, through His innocent suffering and death; where you have transgressed against Him with thoughts, lusts and desires, and be faithful unto death, you will then receive the crown of life. The eyes of all Christians are fixed upon this traveler, they want to see how he will cross the bridgeless river; and our wish is that you will soon get to sit with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. Amen.

2. COMMUNION SERMON

To a sick person, who has become a Christian, but has fallen away from grace and committed wilful sins, but has reawakened on the sickbed, and has begun to make repentance anew, but cannot believe God will admit him into His graces.

The Savior has given us an edifying example, when He speaks of the spendthrift, who had received a precious possession from his Father, but wasted and squandered it away, since he did not stay at home with the Parent, but went into a far country and wasted his goods with harlots. When a great famine came into the land, in which the prodigal son was living, he went to a certain citizen. The citizen sent him to herd swine, and the prodigal son would feign have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat, but no one gave unto him. This narrative of the prodigal son pertains to those particularly, who have wasted the precious goods and property which they have received from their Father. They are verily in an unfortunate condition, when, at last, they realize that they have wasted the precious goods. But where from shall they recover the wasted goods? If the prodigal son had stayed at home, in the parent's house, he would be in a better condition now. He was not content to stay in the Father's house, and to serve the Father, but went far into a strange land, and there squandered his goods with harlots. Whence will you recover the wasted goods now, prodigal son? Did the harlots return what you spent with them? I think the harlots will not have you. They do not pity you. Instead they will deride you all the more, since you have become poor and sickly. Whence will the prodigal son now resort? The Father is still living, but He is far away. You ran away from your Father's house, you have strayed so far that the eye no longer sees, and the ear no longer hears, where you are; and it's a shame to come to the Father's house in rags. You will sooner go to that greedy citizen, who sends you out to herd swine; but this citizen is so greedy, that he will give you no food.

Think now, you dying one, how the poorest servants in the Father's house have it better than you. You are the prodigal son, who has before this time, received a portion of the Father's goods. You have received a portion of the incorruptible goods, which the heavenly Father gave you, but you have wasted the precious goods and possession. You have gone into the world and strayed so far, that the eye does not see nor does the ear hear, where you are. You have now become poor and needy, and no one pities you; no one will have you any more. Could the greedy citizen, into whose service you have gone, be your best friend? Does he give you food, when you herd his swine? I think he will give you nothing. Death will probably come to the prodigal son now, and an unfortunate eternity stands before him.

Woe!—unto you—you unfortunate wretch! You have wasted that precious portion and possession which the Father gave you. You have left the Father's house! You have gone far into a strange land, where no one pities you. You have gone into the world, where no one has compassion for you. You have finally become a herder of swine, and no one will give you food. Death will now soon come; which will take you into that vast, unfortunate eternity, in which there is no bottom. O!—prodigal son! Remember the former time now, when you besought your Father, saying: FATHER GIVE ME THE PORTION OF GOODS, and the Father could not refuse then, since you entreated him. But now you have wasted all with harlots, now you are so far from the Father's house that the eye does not see nor does the ear hear. What do you think? Is the Father still living? Does he still remember you? He has not heard tidings of you for a long time, but He is sorrowful because of you. He has neither peace nor rest, since one of His children has become lost in the woods. The Father has great sorrow because of you. He is now thinking; who knows but the wretch is now starving to death? Who knows but he is freezing, the poor naked wretch? The Father seeks you, you lost sheep. He walks the heavy and difficult steps because of you and bloody sweat drips from His holy body because of you. He calls you on Mount Sinai, at the shore of the Red sea and at the river Jordan. You, however, have not taken heed of Him. You have not sent Him a single sigh or prayer, or a messenger, that the Father could have heard in what a miserable condition you are.

Think now, prodigal son, how many servants in the Father's house have it better than you. Let this great and blessed thought come to mind: I WILL ARISE AND GO TO THE FATHER AND WILL SAY UNTO HIM, "FATHER, I HAVE SINNED AGAINST HEAVEN AND BEFORE THEE AND AM NO MORE WORTHY TO BE CALLED THY SON: MAKE ME AS ONE OF THY HIRED SERVANTS." Do not delay arising and going to the Father, for even now there is a little and inestimably precious time left! But soon this short time of grace will end. Soon will come death and soon will come the end! Therefore go to the Father; if He will receive you, you will be saved. I think He will receive you as you are. You have no refuge elsewhere, and when you come to the Father ragged, the Father will receive you; with joy will prepare a wedding for you and will give you holiday raiment and will put a ring on your hand. Then they will make merry in the Father's house, for the angels in heaven will have joy over one sinner, who will turn himself and repent. Now He bids you to the great supper. Cast away all rags, ragged one and put on a wedding garment. Let the citizen herd the swine himself, but you make haste and go to the Father and say: "I, a wretched sinful man."

3. COMMUNION SERMON

To a sick christian, who has fallen from the state of grace but in the sick-bed is distressed, how he might become saved.

AND WHEN I PASSED BY THEE AND SAW THEE POLLUTED IN THINE OWN BLOOD, I SAID UNTO THEE WHEN THOU WAST IN THY BLOOD, LIVE.

In this wise said the Lord to the daughter of Zion, and this word has been spoken to the daughter of Zion as a reminder of how well the Lord did when He picked her up when this poor thing lay in her blood and was so mean and contemptible that no one would deign to look upon her. Then the Lord said to her: LIVE. This comparison is made from natural birth, although it pertains to the spiritual. Even after birth the daughter of Zion is very mean and contemptible. She lies in her blood, that is: scarlet colored sins have flowed with her from the womb of the old mother, and the daughter of Zion lies in that blood until the Lord has compassion on her and says: LIVE!

The Lord also shows why the daughter of Zion is so mean and contemptible after birth. He says in the 4th verse namely: AND AS FOR THY NATIVITY, IN THE DAY THOU WAST BORN THE NAVEL WAS NOT CUT. How then could she become separated from the old mother since the navel was not cut? The kinsmen have been negligent, who have not understood to cut the navel after birth. The Lord says further: THOU WAST NOT WASHED IN WATER TO CLEANSE THEE. Here may lie the real reason why the daughter of Zion has not become entirely clean of filth that has adhered to her even from the mothers womb. It may also be the fault of the kinsmen, that water has not been prepared for the daughter of Zion's bath after her birth. The Lord also says to the daughter of Zion: THOU WAST NOT SALTED AT ALL, NOR SWADDLED AT ALL. It is bad that the daughter of Zion was not salted, and still worse, that she was not swaddled. In the land of Canaan it is customary to rub the new-born with salt. We do not have that custom here in our country. It might nevertheless be beneficial to the new-born to be rubbed with salt, although it would smart since the skin of the new-born is so thin. Since the daughter of Zion was not swaddled, she scratched herself with her sharp finger-nails and then screamed. We should try everything that would promote the safety of the newly-born, that spiritual death would not come to them a few weeks after birth, for we see that spiritual death is wont to come to those who are not washed with the water of life, or are not swaddled immediately after birth. It may now be too late to begin to wash the old children and to swaddle them, when it has not been done immediately after birth. All the worse since spiritual death has killed so many children at the present time, it is to no avail to say to the daughter of Zion: "You have not been born." For as this

matter is set forth in the 16th chapter in Ezekiel, there is no question of whether this daughter of Zion has been born or not, but what the daughter of Zion became like after birth is the question. It is written of her in the scripture that she began to trust in her own beauty, as is heard from the words in Ezek. 16:15; BUT THOU DIDST TRUST IN THINE OWN BEAUTY AND PLAYEDST THE HARLOT. The daughter of Zion began to admire herself since the Lord had made her beautiful. She no longer remembered what pitiful condition she was in when the Lord found her, lying in her blood. She did not remember long what good the Lord had done her, when He took her out of her blood, washed her clean, clothed her with brodered clothing, put a ring on her hand, a chain on her neck, ear rings in the ears and a crown of glory on her head, as it is written in the 16th chapter in Ezekiel: all of these ornaments the Lord had given the daughter of Zion. Finally the Lord says in the 15th verse: BUT THOU DIDST TRUST IN THINE OWN BEAUTY. From these words is heard what the greatest fault was with the daughter of Zion. In her are, namely; selfishness and selfrighteousness, which effect her in such a way, that without knowing or realizing it, she lost self-consciousness. These enemies induced her to forget her frailty and to trust in her own beauty. Self-love brought thoughts such as these into her mind: with this beauty I can win any kind of a man.

But do you remember who gave you the beauty? Your kinsmen have not cut your navel when you were born, for no one pitied you, to have compassion on you, but you were cast out into the field. So contemptible was your soul when you were born. AND WHEN I PASSED BY THEE AND SAW THEE POLLUTED IN THINE OWN BLOOD, I SAID UNTO THEE, LIVE! NOW WHEN I PASSED BY THEE AND LOOKED UPON THEE, BEHOLD, THY TIME WAS THE TIME OF LOVE; AND I SPREAD MY SKIRT OVER THEE AND COVERED THY NAKEDNESS; YEA, I SWARE UNTO THEE AND ENTERED INTO A COVENANT WITH THEE AND THOU BECAMEST MINE. Daughter of Zion, do you now hear why the Lord has had compassion on you and has cleansed you when you lay polluted in your own blood? He has had compassion on you for the reason that you must be His, that you must enter the covenant of marriage with Him. But you began to trust in your own beauty and took pride in the ornaments that I had given you and of them made images of men for yourself and committed whoredom with them. One part of the grace of God you gave to selfrighteousness and you became denuded thereby. Since you have become stripped of all the former ornaments, so that your shame has been exposed not only before God, but before the eyes of men also, the devil's harlots were given an opportunity to mock and say; "a comely bride fell into mire." The Savior has become loathsome and now lies naked, sick and polluted on the dunghill.

You unfortunate wretch, you now lie in filth and mire and have not been able to conceal your wickedness from the eyes of the

world even, take thought in this day, thy day, what would become your peace. The time of grace is drawing to an end; you are standing at the brink of the grave and all christians pity you. Even if you should say to them: give me of your oil, for my lamp is going out; they would answer: indeed not, lest there be not enough for us and you, but go ye rather to them that sell. And what would the wise virgins have to give, since they lie together with the foolish? To what will you now resort, that your lamp is going out and the bridegroom with the bride is at the door? Hasty departure from the world will come when the cry comes: BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH, GO YE OUT TO MEET HIM. Have you a single friend in heaven or on earth who can help you?—Neither on earth nor under the earth is there a single true friend, but there is one true friend, there is one in heaven, Whom you unfaithful bride have despised, since you did not remain in wedlock with Him, but gave your heart to the world and to satan. There is one in heaven, Who has sat in the blood-bath in your stead, Who has trodden many heavy and difficult steps and has borne a heavy burden for your sake, that your soul might be saved. The great crossbearer and thorn crowned King, Whose feet the sinful woman wet with tears of remorse in the house of Simon the leper, and into Whose grave Mary Magdalene has peered, He is that blessed seed of woman, Who has bruised the serpent's head. He is the heavenly bridegroom Who receives the devil's harlots when they cry from all their heart: JESUS, THOU SON OF DAVID, HAVE MERCY ON US! Turn yourself to Him and cry, as mean as you are, namely naked, scabby and filthy; perhaps He will hear your sighs, your prayers and your moanings: He has said to the daughter of Zion: THOU HAST COMMITTED WHOREDOME WITH IDOLS, BUT NEVERTHELESS COME AGAIN, SAITH THE LORD. When for the last time on earth, you are about to come to the great supper, come whole heartedly to the table of Jesus, and leave vain thoughts into the world, and behold Him Who justifies sinners! Give up your heart, Jesus stands at the door and knocks; death also is watching you, and the enemy is watching to win you. Our hope however is that the great war Hero has won. Now take Jesus as your advocate before the Father and knock so loudly that the doorkeeper will hear. Make your confession of sin in the following manner: I, a poor wretched sinner, etc.

4. COMMUNION SERMON

To one dying

AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, WITH DESIRE I HAVE DESIRED TO EAT THIS PASSOVER WITH YOU BEFORE I SUFFER: FOR I SAY UNTO YOU, I WILL NOT DRINK OF THE FRUIT OF THE VINE UNTIL THE KINGDOM OF GOD SHALL COME. Luke 22:15, 16.

Thus spoke our precious Savior to His disciples when he sat down to eat the last repast on earth. He indeed knew it was the

last repast; we do not know which is our last repast, but we do know it will come and it may come very soon. Would that we were ready then to step into eternity and be worthy to sit with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven and to eat the bread of heaven. The thought that this is the last repast on earth should be with all communion guests, when they eat the paschal lamb, and that they will partake of no other food on earth, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of heaven. To many the last repast tends to be far distant when they sit down to eat the paschal lamb, for some are so attached to the world, that they cannot think that this is the last repast on earth. If all communion guests would think that this is the last repast that they are partaking of on earth, they would be better prepared to step into eternity and to sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven and to eat the bread of heaven. But the enemy extends the time of grace to many communion guests and puts into their mind that this Lord's Supper is not the last repast on earth.

Only a few sick, who lie with death before them, feel that this is the last repast on earth; but even then all sick ones are not ready to step into eternity, even though they feel that this Lord's Supper is the last repast that they will partake of in this mortality. The world is so dear to some sick ones that it causes them to hope for recovery into this world, but that hope should be removed from all sick, for it is exceedingly injurious to them. Christians on the sick-bed should not have such a wrong hope, especially when death is at their door. The hope to recover into the next world is with the Christians the hope that they may soon enter the promised land of Canaan to eat the paschal lamb in the new Jerusalem with unleavened bread and to drink of the red wine of the fruit of the living vine in the paradise of God.

To you, mortal man! Death's messenger has come. The angel of death has come to gather the clusters of the vine from the earth. Guests from heaven will soon come to see how beautiful the bride of Jesus is. And this Lord's Supper which you are receiving now, is the last repast on earth. Bid farewell to the world now and be ready to leave soon as the summons comes. We have the hope and trust in God that the Great cross-bearer and thorn-crowned King has prepared you to receive and partake of His Holy body and blood for the edification of the soul and its eternal salvation. Since this is now the last repast on earth, you must eat to your heart's full content, that you will not become hungry and thirsty before you reach the great supper, where the Lamb's wedding is held now and forevermore, Amen! Now make a confession of your sins in the following manner: I, a poor wretched sinner, etc.

5. COMMUNION SERMON

To a sick one, who has never awakened; but now awakens to consciousness of sin through fear of death; desiring to be saved, but cannot believe because he has put off repentance until it is too late.

**DELAY NOT THINE REPENTANCE UNTIL THOU BE ILL, AND
DELAY NOT THINE REPENTANCE UNTIL DEATH.**

Syrach, in former times counseled his son in this manner: Delay not, etc. There are not many who have listened to this fatherly admonition, but as in the time of Syrach, many a sorrowless son and sorrowless daughter postponed repentance until death; so in this time also, many sorrowless sons and daughters put off their repentance until they become ill. Then they have a mind to make repentance when they feel that only a few hours are left. Some do not begin to make repentance until at the brink of the grave, when they feel that kicking against the pricks is to no avail. Syrach says: delay not thine repentance until thou be ill, for the sick one is so fully taken up with the sickness itself and his thoughts go to the painful place, that there is not much time left to consider how and in what way one might become saved. Many a sick one then realizes that it is futile to attempt it now, since there is no strength, in soul or in body, no strength to pray, no strength to knock upon the door of heaven, no strength to lift the thoughts up into the heights; but death presses downward. Bearing down upon the heart, causing distress. It then seems as if the heart had already hardened, as if the door of grace were closed, as if the heart had become so unyielding, that the word of God can no longer affect it. Is this then a wrong conviction, when the dying one judges himself into hell, has he a wrong conviction? I think that it would indeed be a wrong conviction if the sick one said to his children and those surviving: If you will live as I have lived, you shall be saved. Some servants of selfrighteousness can indeed preach to their children: if you live as meekly and honorably as I have lived, you will then get along with God. If the sick should have such a conviction, that would be deceiving him, that indeed would be a wrong conviction.

Since it is so hard for many to make repentance on the sick bed, that is why Syrach says: delay not thine repentance until thou be ill, but repent when thou art yet able to commit sin. Many are so blind and hardened nevertheless that while they are well, they do not believe these and other scriptural passages which speak of repentance; but put off their repentance until they become ill, then they will come to know that what Syrach said is true, that no soul could be foolish as to put off repentance until he becomes ill. So long as a sorrowless person has a little hope of recovering into this world, he will put off repentance from day to day and from year to year, until death comes to squeeze the unbelieving heart with its cold hand; then this proud and mighty lion's heart becomes frightened, and says: it's too late now. Some of the sorrowless confirm this judgment and say: "it is too late for him who has put off repentance until death." Is this a wrong conviction which preaches thus? I do not believe it is a wrong conviction, even though the sorrowless themselves do not believe that a belated penitance will

overtake them. Experience often verifies, that the person who has put off his repentance to the time when death begins to show its teeth, cannot believe any more that he will be saved; for in that condition the devil of selfrighteousness comes as an accuser and says: since you have not repented before, let it not be done now; since you have not sighed before, do not sigh now, and since you have not knocked on the door of heaven before, do not knock now; God will not hear your sighing any more, as you are so far from Him. Think also, you mortal man, how hard it is for you to make repentance in this condition, since in your youth and while well, you have not procured eye-salve. You, too, have often been bidden to the wedding, but you did not wish to come, you have often sat deaf and mute in the house of the Lord, where you have been called to repentance, but you have heard nothing. God's word has been preached to the deaf and the mute. You also have often bent your knees at the altar of the Lord Jesus and have made those precious promises of repentance there, with your mouth at least, but the promises were left there. Even if you should have wept in the house of the Lord at times, the tears have affected nothing, but have been left there and have dried.

Take thought, you mortal man, how much of the blessed seed has gone to waste, that the Lord of the seed has sown upon this cursed earth and stony ground. God's words and the Savior's tears have fallen like hail stones on hard ground. Take thought, how you have lived the time of your youth; in sorrowlessness, disobedience, world's vanities, finery, drunkenness, cursings, strifes, fightings, thefts, greediness, lasciviousness, despising of God's word, breaking of the Sabbath, and as an enemy of the cross of Christ. Oh! how pleasant it would be to die now, if all these abominations had been left undone!

You now stand at the brink of the grave, you now see how this short and precious time of grace has been spent in world's vanity. The former foul and abominable life has been portrayed before your eyes and that the endless eternity, together with death will come upon you soon. Death will soon come to cut the life-string. You would now gladly take back those precious moments of grace, that you have spent in world's vanities and would make better use of them than before, if it were within your power, but those precious moments of grace will never return. Now only this weighty question confronts you, how will you fare henceforth, since you will be departing soon? To what will the traveler resort, who has not made provision for the long journey?

This is a weighty hour, you dying man, you traveler to eternity. Who would hear your sighs, if you should begin to sigh? Who would hear your lamenting, if you should begin to lament? Not one can be found on the earth or underneath the earth, who would hear, or who would help you from the chains of death. But there still is

one in heaven, Who could help you, if you wished to come to Him, after you have blasphemed and despised Him so much. There still is one unknown friend in heaven, Whose wounds you have torn and rended, Whose tears you have mocked, Whose blood you have trampled, and Whose heart you have wounded. The great high priest and thorn-crowned King, whom you have crucified with the world's throng, He is still living, though He has died because of your disobedience, and because of your obstinacy. If you could still cry with so loud a voice, that the sound would be heard in heaven, perhaps He would still be moved to pity and compassion and would look upon you, as He in times past looked upon the penitent thief. You are indeed lost, unless you flee to Him with tears and sighs; you have no refuge elsewhere now, there is your only place of refuge. Therefore, bow your heart and mind to Him and pray with a humble, penitent and contrite heart, that the merciful Lord Jesus would turn Himself to you, would have compassion on you and would forgive you those foul and abominable deeds, with which you have wounded His heart and have caused Him to suffer the agony of hell. Cry now, you blind wretch, before Jesus passes by and say: I, a wretched sinner, etc.

6. COMMUNION SERMON

To a sick one who awakens on the sick-bed, and there through fear of death, has begun to have sorrow over his soul.

WHAT GOOD THING SHALL I DO, THAT I MAY HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, MATT. 19;16.

This is a question which each one should ask of Jesus, but this weighty question of salvation does not enter the mind, while man sorrowlessly walks toward eternity, and so long as one, in the prime of manhood meddles with the world, for a sorrowless person, while well does not remember death, judgment or eternity. In his state of indifference, he is not aware that death stalks his footsteps; nor does he realize that each step with which he treads this sinful earth is another step nearer the grave. The great sin, that one must be so negligent while he is in the prime of manhood, as not to have anxiety over the soul, but lives like a creature, who sees a knife in the killer's hand, not knowing to fear he is to be killed with that knife. If death at times frightens him when it knocks on the door of his heart reminding him of the coming reckoning, he still does not take heed of the precious time of grace, but runs headlong into destruction. Does not your conscience now accuse you, you dying man, when you look back at your past life, how vain and how useless it has been? You have spent the precious time of grace in world's vanities, lasciviousness and pleasures, also in drunkenness, cursing, strife, contention, fighting, theft, envying and finery; you have tried to gain world's honor and accumulate its goods,

having been an enemy of Christ's cross; have sat in the house of the Lord deaf and mute, have despised God's word; have gone to the Lord's Supper like a creature; many a time you have made promises of repentance, but you have been the same kind of a heathen on returning from the Lord's table as you were when you went there. Why did not you then ask Jesus Christ and travelers to eternity: "What must I do that I may inherit eternal life?" This weighty question of salvation did not enter the mind at that time; but now, since death has begun to press your breast so severely, you have become aware that you also have an immortal soul. Now say I, when you see death before your eyes, you have now just begun to fear, that it may not be easy to step into eternity after so vain and useless life, with a gnawing conscience and an unbelieving heart. You now see, you poor sinner, that your past life has not been suitable to God; now you realize that the thing that should have been done first, has been left to the last. You have just now become aware that the door of grace is not open to all bucks and goats; you now see that the gate is narrow and straight is the way which leads to life.

It would indeed be a great grace of God, even now if you would make haste to seek and yearn for the narrow way, when death is at the door and the time of grace is ebbing out. If even now you would make haste to ask, where the way leads to heaven. If even now you would open up your heart to God's reaching grace. God has laid hold of you in the course of sin; Jesus stands at the door of your heart, knocking, if you could now believe that God will receive you, when you come to Him with a humble, penitent and contrite heart. Knock now, you poor one, upon the door of grace so loudly that the doorkeeper will hear. Cry out so loudly, you poor one, that your voice will be heard in heaven, who knows but He will still hear your prayers, just as He had compassion on the penitent thief on the cross, who in the pangs of death besought the Crucified: REMEMBER ME WHEN THOU COMEST INTO THY KINGDOM. The Lord Jesus is gone into His kingdom now, whence He calls by His holy word, and also by the mouth of Christians; repent you sinners; but the sorrowless do not hearken, but say to the crier: you are not the forgiver, and let each see to himself. Then only, when the time of grace is ending, when they no longer have refuge into heaven, nor into the world, then they will ask for the Christians, whom the sorrowless have formerly despised, ridiculed and hated. All dying ones at this time, try to have Christians come to them, desiring them. Oh! you dying man! If you had faith as much as a mustard seed, you would know that Jesus is still living. The great crossbearer, Whom you have formerly despised, Whose tears you have mocked and trodden His blood under foot. The thorn-crowned King, Whom you have crucified by your ungodly life, He is the only friend in heaven and on earth, to whom you must now flee, if you would be saved. Saint Paul has given a correct reply to this question: WHAT MUST I DO, THAT I MAY GAIN ETERNAL LIFE? Paul has answered: BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,

AND THOU SHALT BE SAVED, AND THY HOUSE. Bow your heart and mind to the Lord Jesus now, and pray that He, who can soften the hard breasts, would make your penitence sincere, your repentance earnest, your sighs heavy and your heart fervent, that He would forgive you the weighty and abominable sins, with which you have transgressed against Him and wounded His heart, that He forgive you your disobedience and obstinacy, for the sake of His innocent suffering and death, for the sake of His wounds and sweating of blood, for the sake of all the agony and torment, which you by your sins have brought upon Him. Prepare your lamp now, if there is oil in it. Strip yourself naked and take the wedding garment upon yourself. You will indeed sink into the unfortunate eternity if you will not grab a hold on Jesus. He has promised to receive sinners when they come to Him with a humble and contrite heart. Take Jesus as your advocate before the Father now, and when for the last time on earth, you step forth to the Lord's table, even then, pray to the King of heaven that he increase your faith, that you might become partaker of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus, for your soul's edification and strengthening of your faith, that you might be worthy to sit with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven and to eat the bread of heaven. Hear Thou merciful Samaritan the sigh of the traveler, wounded by the thieves: I, a wretched sinner, etc.

7. COMMUNION SERMON

To a sick one, having a false trust in God's grace, who has so firm dead faith, that death is not able to dispossess him of it.

AND SAY NOT, HIS MERCY IS GREAT; HE WILL BE PACIFIED FOR THE MULTITUDE OF MY SINS. Eccl. 5:6.

In this passage, Syrach has interpreted the thoughts of the sorrowless and confessors of dead faith. Such a thief of grace thinks that God is so merciful that He will not cast anyone into hell. Syrach however, warns his son that he should not assume, that God is exceedingly merciful. "Say not," says Syrach, "Say not: that God is exceeding merciful, He will not punish me, I shall commit as much sin as I will." These blasphemers of God indeed think in this wise, that God is exceeding merciful. He is not angered no matter what is done against Him. If there were many thieves of grace in Syrach's time, who did not understand to fear God's wrath; there are such thieves of grace even now, who assume that God is exceeding merciful, that He will not cast anyone into hell. Upon this grace they commit sin, for Syrach has revealed their thoughts; that already in Syrach's time they have said; "God's mercy is great, He will not punish, I shall commit as much sin as I will."

How do you know, you thief of grace, that God is exceeding merciful, He will not punish you? Do you suppose that God is like a parent, who is himself a thief? Such a thief upholds the children's thefts by saying: it is not so serious. Or do you suppose that God is

like an old harlot? Who does not worry over the whoredoms of her children. Such an old harlot defends the whoredoms of her children by saying: "they have done it in the folly of youth." Such parents, who themselves steal and whore are indeed so merciful, that they do not reprove their children of stealing and whoring, but forgive all sins to their children without contrition, without repentance, without confession and without asking for forgiveness. The children of such thieves and whores can indeed suppose as Syrach writes: "the parent is too merciful; he will not punish me; I shall commit as much sin as I will."

But this false trust in God's grace is very detrimental; because many by this erroneous belief become more bold to commit sin; as the children, whose parents are harlots and thieves, are bold at whoring and stealing. Indeed such children do not fear, that the parents will become angry and will reprove them of sin. The children of such harlots and thieves need have no fear of their parents driving them away from home, or of being disinherited because of whoring and stealing. Do you then, make the heavenly Parent, the parent of such harlots and thieves? O! you old thief of grace! "Say not, His mercy is great" think rather that God will not allow His children to be brought up without chastisement, for Paul has written to the christians in this wise: FOR WHOM THE LORD LOVETH HE CHASTENETH, and that the child, whom the parent chasteneth not, is a bastard; in the scripture, all thieves of grace and all dead faith hawks are called bastards, who trust in God's grace, although a true penitence and repentance have never occurred. You thief of grace! you have never known the wrath of God and the curse of the law; you have never been in such remorse as the disciples were after Jesus' death; from whom all faith and all hope were gone. Neither have you been in such remorse as Luther, who was conscious of God being stern and severe; that God can be wroth as well as merciful. You lack that consciousness, you old thief of grace, for you suppose God is so merciful, that He will not cast anyone into hell. Do not assume that God is so exceeding merciful He will not punish me; think rather, that God is a jealous and just God, and severe in punishing those who trust in His grace with an impenitent heart. Perhaps you may say as the Jews did, who did not believe on Jesus, they said: WE ARE NOT BASTARDS, and WE HAVE A FATHER, EVEN GOD. All thieves of grace believe indeed, that God is their Father; but Jesus said to the thieves of grace: YOU ARE OF YOUR FATHER THE DEVIL. Many such impenitent, unconverted, uncircumcised at heart and unregenerated believed on Jesus; as the evangelist and apostle John testifies in 8:30, 31 in the gospel, he testifies, that they believed on Jesus, as you also believe; but what kind of believing was it, since they began to gainsay and to oppose Jesus, just as you old thief of grace have always opposed the Christians, when they have told you the truth. Pray now, you blind wretch, that the Lord would open the eyes of the blind wretch to see where the right way leads to heaven.

You have climbed the wall and have come into the sheepfold through the roof, but not through the door. If your conscience does not awaken soon, before death comes to cut the life-string, it will happen to you as it did to the jews, who believed until the last moment, that the Messiah would come to deliver them from their enemies; that Messiah did not come, for they believed upon the wrong Messiah, because the enemy had inverted their eyes so, that they looked upon Jesus and christians as enemies, wild spirits and false prophets, just as you have also held the christians to be false. Awaken now, you sorrowless thief of grace and do not build upon the stolen grace, but become penitent first and turn your hope into hell, as the disciples of Jesus did, when Jesus had died; they also were left without refuge. All faith and all hope ended; they no longer had refuge into heaven, nor into the world, so they had to turn their hope into hell; before they could become regenerated; and the same order of grace still applies to all men, who would become saved. Since God has laid hold of you and death has begun to show its teeth, "think not" any more, "that God is exceeding merciful" think rather, that God is a severe and just judge, VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN; UNTO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION. Do not abuse the Sacrament now, do not eat and drink to yourself condemnation and damnation, which will inevitably happen if you go to the Lord's Supper to confirm that dead faith, which you have in your skull; pray rather, that it happen to you as it did to the disciples after Jesus' death, who wept and wailed, when God, by the death of Jesus, took away all false foundations of salvation, and awakened a true sorrow in their heart, which was after the mind of God. Think not that God is overly merciful, rather think now, that God is just as wroth as He is merciful. Making a confession of your sins now: I, a wretched sinner, etc.

8. COMMUNION SERMON

To a sick one, who has never awakened, has as he thinks, always lived meekly, having done no wrong to anyone; and self-righteousness is the foundation of his salvation.

ALL THESE THINGS HAVE I KEPT FROM MY YOUTH UP.
Math. 19:16, 26. Mark 10:17, 27. Luke 18:18, 27.

Thus, the rich youth said to Jesus, which youth's mind the devil of meekness has inverted, so that he thought he had kept all of God's commandments from his youth up. The evangelists have written of this youth: THERE CAME ONE RUNNING, AND KNEELED TO JESUS, AND ASKED, GOOD MASTER, WHAT SHALL I DO THAT I MAY INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE? It sounds as if this youth had a true desire to become saved. Jesus however gave this meek man such an answer, that he should have understood, that his meekness was not sufficient, since Jesus said to him: WHY CALLEST THOU ME GOOD? THERE IS NONE GOOD BUT ONE,

THAT IS GOD. Hence it follows, that all others are evil. This meek man did not realize that he was evil, for the devil of meekness had already thrust into his mind, to suppose that he was good and that he had kept all commandments from his youth up.

It has been an old heathenish belief, that the meek become saved; but the christians have never believed that the meek become saved; but the heathens, who have never awakened to the consciousness of sin, always have had the erroneous belief that the meek become saved. Pilate and Nicodemus also had the same belief, as did this youth. It is not to be wondered at so much, that the unbaptized heathens have such a belief, that the meek become saved. Since some even in our time dare say: I have dealt honestly with every man, if God condemns me, He is an unjust Judge. Some say: I have done more good than bad. Here selfrighteousness has risen rather high. Such is the accuser of God's children, who holds himself just and others unjust. Such a one throws the Christians into the kettle and then stands on the cover. Step forth into view now, you meek devil and servant of selfrighteousness who have kept all commandments from youth up. Are you now ready to step into eternity, to make settlement with God, since you are so holy and just, since you have wronged no man, not having transgressed against your neighbor, having done more good than evil? Surely you will now be well rewarded of God since you have done so much good. You say: my conscience does not accuse me of anything. I also believe that a dormant conscience does not accuse, but praises. You say: let the neighbors come now, and say if I have wronged anyone. But wait a little while yet, until you come into eternity. Who knows which neighbors will then come to make your wrongdoings known to you.

It is indeed a lamentable and pitiful circumstance, that meek heathens should be found in the midst of christendom, who know nothing of sin, which at any rate is a principle in this christianity, that one must gain consciousness of sin. In this parish there are still many who do not have sufficient sins to require repentance, who still have that old heathenish belief, that VIRTUE IS ITS OWN REWARD, and becomes further rewarded. It is a wonder indeed, that virtue rewards itself. Who is he, who has now lived virtuously? Pilate surely was one, who washed himself clean in the basin of innocense. Nicodemus was another, who considered it impossible for a grown man to be born again, and this rich youth was the third, who said to Jesus; ALL THESE HAVE I OBSERVED FROM MY YOUTH UP. This youth was so humble, that he kneeled before Jesus, asking Him. He should certainly have received the answer, that he would enter eternal life. However, his virtuousness was not sufficient; one thing is still lacking in you, you virtuous man. This one thing is: you must take the cross upon yourself and follow Christ. This one thing still remains undone with you, you dying man, who have never carried even as much as a chip of Jesus'

cross. Instead, you have at times carried the devil's cross. May the devil of meekness reward you, since you have a good conscience, which does not accuse you of any sin or wrongdoing. Presumably that deceptive good conscience praises you, that you have done more good than evil. In the first place you have dealt honestly with every man, wherefore God will become an unjust judge, if He condemns you. In the second place, you have done more good than evil, for which you shall receive a good reward from God. You have indeed merited much good from God. Now you can say: I thank you God, that I am not like other men, unjust, extortioner, adulterer or even as this publican. Remember though, that the publican smote his breast and sighed. If you should awaken, you too would begin to sigh, like this publican and you would be nearer the kingdom of heaven. Because of this sighing you could go home righteous, rather than the pharisee. Beware now, lest you go to rend Jesus' body, when you go to the Lord's Supper, impenitent. The mediums of grace will be given you, since Judas was given them also. You certainly are going to the Lord's Supper on your own responsibility, and since you have lived virtuously, like Pilate and Nicodemus, your confession should be thus: "I, a wretched virtuous man, born of virtuous parents, and I have lived virtuously all my life, having kept all these commandments of God from my youth up. I do confess before Thee holy and just God, that I have loved my God from all my heart, and my neighbor as myself. Never have I transgressed Thy holy commandments, and I have not merited eternal damnation." However, I say to you, if your conscience should awaken, you would become the greatest sinner on earth, as did Paul; then you must needs read your confession of sin thus: I, a wretched sinful man, etc.

9. COMMUNION SERMON

To the aged, some of whom are awakened, some are believers and some are sorrowless.

Exo. 12:45.—A FOREIGNER SHALL NOT EAT THEREOF.

When the children of Israel fled from the house of bondage, they ate the paschal lamb, after the order of God, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, as the Lord had commanded through Moses. This paschal lamb had been ordained of God for a sacrament or for a memorial to the children of Israel, of how miraculously God had delivered them from the heathen bondage. When the heathens began to drive the children of Israel out of their houses, then the children of Israel were to eat the paschal lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. This holy repast was ordained for the children of Israel only. That is why the Lord says: "a foreigner shall not eat thereof," and from this Lord's word we hear that the heathens shall not eat of the paschal lamb.

Saint Paul says: FOR EVEN CHRIST OUR PASSOVER IS SACRIFICED FOR US: namely the innocent Lamb of God, who taketh away the world's sins. From these words of Paul it can be seen that the paschal lamb in Moses' time typified the Lamb of God. As foreigners were denied the eating of the paschal lamb in Moses time, so were heathens likewise denied the eating of the Lord's Supper in the time of the first christians; namely in such a way, that the first christians did not admit heathens to the Lord's Supper, neither have the latter desired to become partakers of the Lord's Supper; as some heathens even now, do not wish to come to the Lord's Supper with the Christians. Some heathens do become worthy communion guests, when some heathen parson comes to administer the Lord's Supper to them. Some again, do not come to the Lord's Supper at all, for they realize it is not fitting for them to go to the Lord's Supper, after having lived in such an ungodly manner. They fear the conscience will become troubled, in case they should make promises of repentance there. They love their idols so much that they cannot part from them, and therefore say, it is their unworthiness. Why did God deny the paschal lamb from strangers? God denied it, because it is a holy repast, which the children of Israel alone partake of worthily; namely those children of Israel, who in truth start out to serve the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For heathens do not know the true God of Israel, since some have their oxen for a god, others have horses for their best god, others have some female devil for a god, as for instance the Diana of the Ephesians, others have a dragon for a god, as for example in Babel in Daniël's time. It was the harlot of Babel, who had the dragon for a god. But the best god, which some heathens worship, is the whiskey god, wherein the picture of drunkenness is painted, namely a man straddling a whiskey barrel, a whiskey glass in his hand. Some heathens have the business god, who is pictured as a man, with a rake in his hand, with two serpents wound around the rake. These are the gods, which the heathens worship.

The children of Israel however, worshipped the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. When under the leadership of Moses, the children of Israel departed from the house of bondage, they had to eat the paschal lamb with bitter herbs, which signifies that they start out with a sad mind, not only, because their own sins become heavy on their conscience, but also because the heathens hate them and drive them out of their houses, since a great punishment has come to the heathens, because of the children of Israel. First, a great darkness has come upon the heathens, that they hardly see the space of two fingers ahead, to see where they are going. To the children of Israel, the sun of grace shines brightly. This miserable darkness is indeed a great punishment in itself, to the heathens; but they still do not make repentance, but the more God punishes them, the greater the hardening becomes. One punishment is this, that the bright water of life is turned into blood, so that the heathens cannot drink it. That signifies, that the heathens have trampled

Christ's blood under foot, and have shed christian's blood, even from the blood of the righteous Abel. They have sucked the sweat and labor of the children of Israel. For that reason for them, the water of life is turned into blood, for they cannot drink it; and that water shall burn their conscience everlastingly. Heathens cannot enjoy Christ's blood, therefore they stay away from the Lord's Supper.

One plague to the heathens, is the frogs, which represent spiritual laziness and slowness of heart. They presume that they are going to get into the kingdom of heaven with a jump. One plague is the swarms of lice, although the heathens are fine, lice nevertheless creep upon their clothing, and these lice suck the heathen's blood, because of their filthiness, being that they are too lazy to clean themselves. And the locusts, eat their crops from the earth, so that their labors bring no return. For all that the devil of covetousness accumulates, the devil of honor squanders. Hail falls from heaven and smites all their fields; for the heathens tears fall as hailstones on frozen ground. Those tears are no other than the tears of serpents; they are not tears of contrition, that fall upon the feet of Jesus. Heathens tears ruin the spiritual field. All these plagues come upon the heathens as a punishment; but the greater the suffering becomes, the more calloused they become. The last tribulation so enraged the heathens, that they drove the children of Israel out of their houses, pursuing them to the Red sea. But it is strange, that the heathens dared to walk into the Red sea. The Red sea represents Christ's blood, by which the children of Israel become delivered. The heathens also believe that they will get to heaven by Christ's blood. That is the most foolish thing the heathens did; they should have stopped at the Red sea and said: we cannot cross the Red sea, even though the children of Israel can. However, the devil made the heathens so foolish, that they dared to walk into the Red sea, where they drowned. Seven souls are now swimming there in the billows of the Red sea. It is exactly this dead faith in the heathens, that they, as well as the penitent and believing ones, will be saved by Christ's blood, which belief will be death to the heathens. Do not believe, you sorrowless and unconverted heathens, that you will be saved, although the children of Israel will be saved by Christ's blood, for you will drown in the billows of the Red sea.

Walk into the Red sea boldly, you children of Israel, you will get across with dry feet. You can soon sing the hymn of victory, to the Lord on the other side of the Red sea, having seen how the enemy was drowned in the waves of the Red sea, by which waves you were saved from death.

The children of Israel have indeed crossed the Red sea in a miraculous way, and have then sung a hymn of victory to the Lord; they would indeed have been happy and blessed, had they reached

the promised land, where milk and honey flow. But they became impatient, as they were obliged to walk in this world's wilderness, where so many temptations met them, water at times was not sufficiently abundant, at times the flesh pots of Egypt came to mind, at times the serpents bit them so that they began to swell up. The majority of the young people became implicated in fornication, because of which sin twenty-four thousand were destroyed. Because of this impatience, the majority of the children of Israel died in the wilderness, and only a few elect, who continued in their faith until the end, reached the promised land. So it has happened even now: for all, who have in truth started out to serve the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, could have died happily, had they come into grace by the blood of Christ. But impatience often troubled them, since they had become wearied on the way, and died in the wilderness, when the lust of the flesh became enkindled in the young people. So violent did the lust of the flesh become in the children of Israel. The lust of the flesh likewise at this time becomes violent, and then comes the desire to turn back. And as the children of Israel began to commit adultery with the heathens, so have the people begun to commit adultery here also; therefore only a few, are able to strive to the end. The few souls, who are still able to strive, must now behold those wretches, with pity and pain of mind, who have fallen away from Christianity and have gone into spiritual death.

You few souls, who are still striving in your most precious faith, it will be no excuse for you to cease, even if all others were to cease striving. Watch that you also would not die on the way, as so many of your fellow travelers have become weary and have died. Struggle and strive, cry and knock upon the pillar, which is Christ, and if you are bitten by a serpent, then look upon that serpent of brass, which Moses raised up in the wilderness, and pray the great cross bearer, that He lift up the hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees, that you may see the promised land of Canaan, where wine and milk flow. Here Thou, great Shepherd of Israel, the sighs of the weary travelers! Amen.

10. COMMUNION SERMON

To the aged, among whom are, some sorrowless, some awakened and some believing ones.

AND THUS SHALL YE EAT IT: WITH YOUR LOINS GIRDED, YOUR SHOES ON YOUR FEET AND YOUR STAFF IN YOUR HAND; AND YE SHALL EAT IT IN HASTE: IT IS THE LORD'S PASSOVER. Exo. 12:11.

At the time when God through Moses delivered the children of Israel from the Pagan servitude, He set the paschal lamb as a remembrance of the great grace, that the Lord had delivered them

from the pagan servitude, and began to lead them to the promised land, where milk and honey flow. The Lord commanded them to be ready for the journey, when they were about to eat the paschal lamb. Likewise must a communion guest, who partakes of the paschal lamb, which has been sacrificed for us, namely, the Lamb of God, which takes away the sins of the world, which the first paschal lamb typified. So must a communion guest, I say, be ready to depart from this house of bondage, in which heathens have forced him into servitude, and have in many ways burdened, mocked and despised him. A communion guest must be ready to depart from this world. And as the paschal lamb was the last repast for the children of Israel in the heathen land, so likewise must the spiritual paschal lamb or the Lord's Supper be the last repast, in this house of servitude, or in this perishable world. A man must be prepared to go into the promised land, where milk and honey flow. He must bid farewell to the world and turn his hope into the promised land.

The young and the old should consider themselves travelers to eternity, when they eat the paschal lamb. But God help us, even all the old are not ready to depart from this world, when they go to the Lord's Holy Supper. Some old are so attached to the world, that they do not even think that this is the last repast on earth. The devil likely promises them extension of the time of grace, since they have not determined to prepare themselves for the long journey. They must have pleasure in the world, since they travel toward their death unprepared, on the wide way in the world. Some old men even dare to say to Moses, who, according to the command of the Lord, urges them to walk in fear of the Lord: **YE TAKE TOO MUCH UPON YOU, SEEING ALL THE CONGREGATION ARE HOLY**, although the majority of the congregation are dancing around the golden calf, provoking God to wrath, until He determines to destroy the whole people. Still, some say: **ALL THE CONGREGATION ARE HOLY**, all are Christians; Moses is no better than the others. But do not say, old heathens, that all the congregation are holy. For had you been on Mount Sinai, listening, when God said to Moses, that such a people should be destroyed, you would not be so apt to say that all the congregation are holy. Beware, you opponents of Moses, that you might not be dropped into hell alive soon, when this cursed earth cleaves asunder under your feet. Even such proud spirits eat of the paschal lamb and blaspheme God with their ungodly life. Remember, that in Moses' time, the destroyer came to kill the first-born in all the heathens houses, in which the door posts were not stricken with the paschal lamb's reconciling blood. The destroyer did not dare enter the houses, where he saw reconciling blood on the outside of the door. God had allowed, the destroyer to kill the heathens, but the destroyer fears the lamb's blood, he does not dare enter those houses, in which the door posts of the heart are sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb of God. You children of Israel, who are assembled in this house today, to eat the paschal lamb or the Lord's Supper, are you girded about the loins and ready to depart

on the long journey, to worship the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and to seek the promised land, where milk and honey flow? Are you now ready to depart from this heathen servitude and from this vale and sorrow? Where the heathens force you into servitude, burden you unmercifully, and at last drive you out of your houses; mock, hate and persecute you because of your belief, that you go to worship the God of your fathers? Consider this the last repast in this land of mortality, and consider how you would now be prepared to enter into the kingdom of heaven and to sit at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and to eat the bread of heaven and to drink of the fruit of the living vine. You will soon set on your journey, you who are aliens in this world, separated from worldly joy and pleasure, are as strangers, and cast out of your houses. Be ready to depart when the summons comes, and remember how the sun shone upon you, when darkness was on the heathens; remember how God had already led you through the Red sea with dry feet. He shall still lead you into the promised land, where milk and honey flow, if you are able to strive until the end. Hear, Thou God of Israel. Amen.

11. COMMUNION SERMON

To the aged, of whom some are lukewarm or sleeping christians; or the wise virgins, who lie together with the foolish; some are foolish, and have no oil in their lamps; or thieves of grace, who have once awakened and felt signs of grace, but have sunk back into dead faith again.

THEN (namely before the last time) SHALL THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN BE LIKENED UNTO TEN VIRGINS? WHICH TOOK THEIR LAMPS, AND WENT FORTH TO MEET THE BRIDEGROOM, AND FIVE OF THEM WERE WISE, AND FIVE WERE FOOLISH, THEY THAT WERE FOOLISH TOOK THEIR LAMPS AND TOOK NO OIL WITH THEM; Math. 25:1, 2, 3.

When our Savior spoke of the signs of the last times to His disciples, He set forth this remarkable parable of the ten virgins. This parable indicates what the christianity will be like, prior to the last time. We know from church history, that the first christianity has been living. The christians then were truly devout, they sought their salvation with fear and trembling, and they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking of bread. There was no strife between the christians then. But after the apostles decease, some began to strive about doctrine, and these divisions and heresies scattered the christians into many factions and heresies. Nevertheless, this inward variance always ended when persecution came on, when they joyfully gave their lives and blood for Christ; but when persecutions subsided, they all slumbered and slept. There were still a few souls, who awakened from the sleep of sin, as soon as the cry was made, or word was received, that persecution was being renewed. For the first christians always

waited for the early coming of the Son of God to judge the world, to avenge their blood on earth, and to deliver the believers from worldly tribulations. They would have gladly received the Bridegroom; for although in time of peace, they slept with the foolish, their lamps of faith began to burn soon as the cry was made, or the messenger of death came. The foolish also awakened, when the cry was made, but the foolish had no oil in their lamps, they were not able to believe, that is why they began to ask the wise for oil, saying: GIVE US OF YOUR OIL; FOR OUR LAMPS ARE GOING OUT. BUT THE WISE ANSWERED SAYING: NOT SO; LEST THERE BE NOT ENOUGH FOR US AND YOU.

This parable does not pertain to the first christians alone, but at all times and in all places, where the living christianity has appeared, great devotion has always been found in the first awakening, with an eager desire to be saved; but the first love soon subsides. The christians gradually sink into indifference and heedlessness; then thieves of grace may be found among them who have once awakened and felt signs of grace, but have gone to sleep again, founding their hope of salvation on the first signs of grace. They are not regenerated however, but have mistaken God's preceding grace, for the grace of regeneration, thereby assuming their having been born anew, although the conscience has not awakened sufficiently, so that worldly honor would have received a death wound. Such thieves of grace, have not confessed their shameful deeds, nor have they been reconciled to their neighbor. They have been caught behind honor and the hedge, which they have not torn down, nor have they cleansed their conscience; but their faith is as solid as ledge-rock, although they do not fit in with the christians.

Distress always comes to such thieves of grace, when the cry comes, or when death begins to squeeze their unbelieving hearts; then they look to the christians, invite christians to come to them, and say; give us of your oil, for our lamps are going out. What does it avail, to look up to the christians then, for the wise virgins have no more, than scarcely enough oil to start their own lamps burning, when the cry is made. They have nothing to give, who lie together with the foolish. this passage is not in praise of the wise; it is for reproach and criticism of them. Now appears to be the time, when both wise and foolish are sleeping. The wise are not truly watching, since the foolish are permitted to sleep undisturbed. Outwardly there is not so much difference between the slumbering christian and the slumbering thief of grace. Although this outward difference were no more than a hairs-breadth, nevertheless this difference between a thief of grace and a christian is like the great gulf between Abraham and the rich man. This difference is distinguished by the wise having oil in their lamps, while the foolish have not. Behold, how it will happen to you, you thieves of grace, when the cry is made. Your lamps will be going out, when death comes. When firm faith is most needed, it then fails. Then you will indeed look up to the christians and ask advice, saying: have

you no oil to give? They will have nothing to give, since the wise sleep together with the foolish. They have hardly enough oil to start their lamps burning, when the cry is made. And what do you, wise virgins suppose, who have trimmed your lamps to go out to meet the Bridegroom? Have you any oil in your lamps now, or have you slept so soundly, that all the oil has run out on the ground? I believe you have had oil, when you have trimmed your lamps; but if you have slept too long with the foolish, it may have so happened, that the oil has run out. Do not sleep with the foolish any longer, but arise, to see if there is any oil in your lamp, for soon the cry will be made, soon the time will come, that you must arise; you have all seen the signs of the last times, the end will come soon, guests from heaven will come soon to see, what condition the bride of Jesus is in. The bridesmaids; who then are ready to receive the Bridegroom, will go with Him into the wedding of the Lamb. There they will dance upon the golden floor, happy in seeing the Groom and the Bride; but the foolish will be left to stand on the outside; there behind the door they will be crying: LORD, LORD OPEN TO US, but He shall say: DEPART, I KNOW YOU NOT. Let the few souls bow their hearts down before the mercy seat, and pray, that He, the heavenly Bridegroom, would forgive them their sleepiness, and would give them strength, that they might be able to watch more closely henceforth, so that they might have oil in their lamps, when the cry is made. Hear the sighs of the penitent, Thou Heavenly Groom of the poor bride: I, a wretched sinful man, etc. Amen.

12. COMMUNION SERMON

To the aged who have knowledge of God's grace.

AND ACCOUNT THAT THE LONGSUFFERING OF OUR LORD IS SALVATION. 2 Pet. 3:15.

In this passage Peter writes to the christians, to account that the longsuffering of our Lord Jesus Christ is salvation, since He has not punished them according to merit. Not only, when they were still heathens, has Christ been so longsuffering, that He has awaited their repentance; but afterwards also, when they became christians and children of God, the gracious Savior has been so longsuffering, that He has let them live, although they have been fickle in so many instances. The christians have felt this longsuffering, and according to Peter's writing, should account it salvation, when they see and feel how longsuffering He is, that He has not punished them according to merit.

Namely, if the Lord judged christians according to merit, not one would be saved. All christians who are watching, are conscious of this. They know how much sin and wickedness is in them; they know that they would have perished long ago, had not the gracious

Savior awaited their repentance. But because of the longsuffering of our Lord Jesus Christ, they have been let live until the day, in which they have come to know how sweet the Lord is. They have come to know what sin is and also what grace is. If they were able so to strive and watch in their most precious faith, that the world, the devil and their own flesh, would not rob them of their faith and force them away from Christ! As some have already fallen into unbelief and doubt, whereby the enemy has caused them to turn back into the world and through the world, into destruction. Self-righteousness has tired out many and forced them away from Christ, although it can now be seen, that all, who return into the world perish, because of worldly sorrow, and must eventually condemn themselves and say: they have not even hope of better life.

The old, especially, should make haste to turn back out of the world, but there are many here, who stand at the brink of the grave, who have not yet looked into the grave; they look into the world and presume that the Lord is so longsuffering that He will let them live many decades yet although they have already become so helpless physically, that they can no longer enjoy the pleasures of this world. Such aged ones, have become so attached to the world, that they cannot release themselves from it, neither in this world, nor in the world to come. They account God's longsuffering their salvation, although they account it wrongly, for God will not be mocked. Verily God awaits their repentance; but christians have no hope that such will be bettered, since they have not known the time of their visitation. Of those it has been written in the Bible: HE THAT IS UNJUST, LET HIM BE UNJUST STILL, and he who will not become better, will become worse. To such aged ones, the Lord has spoken in the 14th chapter in Ezekiel, saying, EVERY MAN OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL THAT SETTETH UP HIS IDOLS IN HIS HEART, AND PUTTETH THE STUMBLING BLOCK OF HIS INIQUITY BEFORE HIS FACE, AND COMETH TO THE PROPHET; I THE LORD WILL ANSWER HIM THAT COMETH ACCORDING TO THE MULTITUDE OF HIS IDOLS: If the young do depend upon their youth and cling to the world and wish to enjoy this world's good, because in their sorrowless state, they do not know to seek better enjoyment, there is still no reason why the aged should love the world. It is known to them, that death is right near them, for one foot is already in the grave and they have no chance to flee. They must soon sink into that dark grave, whence no one has ever returned. Such sorrowless aged ones, steal grace from God, and think God will not cast them into hell. But such belief is making mockery of God and an end will come to them with horror.

Those few souls, who feel how great the grace is, that God has been so longsuffering and patient with them, having awaited their repentance until, the day began to dawn from the Father of light on high, so they could see where the way leads to heaven. They may account the longsuffering of our Lord Jesus Christ for their

salvation; for if this light had not come into the world, we would all have been lost. Account the longsuffering of our Lord Jesus Christ your salvation; since He has been so patient with you, having awaited your repentance until the day, in which this light came into the world; by which many have come to know their miserable and unfortunate condition, and by this enlightenment, many have noticed where the way leads to heaven. Many have been forced to begin crying from the depths into the heights, so loudly, that their voice has been heard in heaven. Many a penitent one has had the reply, as did the penitent thief on the cross, in death's hour with great strength of faith and great freedom of faith, have departed from this world. This has taken place with those, who account the longsuffering of our Lord Jesus Christ their salvation, since He has been so merciful and longsuffering, that He has spared us wretches until the light has dawned from on high, and has not let all die in their blindness, but has let some notice where they were. Just this, has been that longsuffering of our Lord Jesus Christ, which Peter has told the Christians to account as their salvation. If the former drunkards would now consider how unfortunate they would have been, if God had permitted them to go into destruction headlong. If the former harlots and thieves would now consider, what their fate would have been, if God had not awakened them out of sleep of sin and laid hold of them in the course of sin! They would indeed have cause to account the longsuffering of our Lord Jesus Christ as salvation, since He has been so patient and longsuffering with them, that He has not cast them into hell in their blindness. If they would behold how longsuffering God has been, to spare them until, the eyes of the blind wretch have been opened, there would indeed be cause to account the longsuffering of our Lord Jesus Christ salvation. It is to be understood in this way; since God has spared the ungodly until the day, when He could stop them in the race of sin and to turn them back from the way of destruction, that longsuffering has worked salvation to them, namely those who have accepted the grace. But to those who have despised the riches of the longsuffering of God, God's longsuffering has worked destruction.

Therefore account this longsuffering of God as salvation and remember how unfortunately it would have happened to you, had God, according to your merit, cast you into hell, when you were still His enemy. But do not draw this God's grace into lasciviousness, but fight against the devil with all your might. Be prepared with all the armor of righteousness, which is; the shield of faith, the sword of the spirit and the helmet of salvation; for now is such a time, that if it were possible, even the very elect would be deceived. There are not many souls anymore, who have strength to believe that the Son of God will soon come to get His own out of this vale of sorrow. And as this Lord's Supper, which is held today, is to many the last time and the last spiritual repast on earth, therefore pray the great cross bearer, Who has not spared a single

drop of blood, which He has not let flow out for the redemption of the penitent and the believing ones, and still wars in behalf of those, who are hated in this world and are persecuted for Christ's name sake, pray that they might be able to carry His cross to mount Golgotha and to follow His wounds on the mount Sion, and to enjoy His gaze forevermore. Amen! Hear Thou, longsuffering and patient one the sigh of the penitent, when, bending their knees before the mercy seat, they confess their sins and ask for forgiveness, saying: I, a wretched sinful man, etc. Amen.

13. COMMUNION SERMON

To the aged, of whom some are awakened and some have come into grace.

THEN COME CERTAIN OF THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL UNTO ME, AND SAT BEFORE ME, AND THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME UNTO ME, SAYING, SON OF MAN, THESE MEN HAVE SET UP THEIR IDOLS IN THEIR HEART, AND PUT THE STUMBLING BLOCK OF THEIR INIQUITY BEFORE THEIR FACE: SHOULD I BE ENQUIRED OF AT ALL BY THEM? THEREFORE SPEAK UNTO THEM, AND SAY UNTO THEM, THUS SAITH THE LORD GOD; EVERY MAN OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL THAT SETTETH UP HIS IDOLS IN HIS HEART, AND PUTTETH THE STUMBLING BLOCK OF HIS INIQUITY BEFORE HIS FACE, AND COMETH TO THE PROPHET; I THE LORD WILL ANSWER HIM THAT COMETH ACCORDING TO THE MULTITUDE OF HIS IDOLS. Ezek. 14:1.

The Lord gave so hard an answer to those elders, who came to the prophet, desiring to know the will of the Lord through him. The Lord said, since such elders cling at heart to the evil of their offences, the Lord threatens to give them an answer, such as they deserve. As the elders in Israel came to the prophet, to inquire the will of God, so the elders of this congregation come to ask the pastor, if the pastor will admit them to communion. They do not feel such need, to come to the pastor, to ask him, how they might be saved, but they only ask, if they will be admitted to communion. Since these elders cling at heart to the evil of their offences, I want to answer: as they have merited. I want to answer in God's behalf, that God will not receive such elders, who cling at heart to the evil of their offences. That the young cling at heart to the evil of offences, may perhaps come because they have much to do in the world. They suppose, they still have a long time in this time of grace, but the elders should have no such supposition, that they still have a long time, in this time of grace, for they feel how the strength of body dwindles day by day, the eyes darken, the feet stiffen, the hands weaken and the entire structure of the body declines: there is no longer manhood in any member. They should have no reason for loving the world, yet some elders are so attached to this world, that they have greater worry of the worldly tasks than do the young. From that it can be seen that they are so

attached to the world, that even death cannot pry them loose from the world. The elders of this period have, in their youth served the devil faithfully, in thought, word and deed. They have tried all the devil's tricks, whatever are practiced in the world. In their youth they have committed adultery, have licked up dragons poison, have been in brawls and fights, have cursed, have stolen a little and defrauded people; some have built stately homes, some have gone in silks and serges! all have worshipped idols, have despised God's word; and in these last times, they have begun to persecute the church of God. Although they are already leaning toward the grave, they still cling at heart to these idols and evils of offence. If, because of age, they can no longer whore, or carry finery, the other devils are, indeed, still powerful, and dominating in their flesh. The devil of covetousness is stronger in the old flesh, than it is in the younger; the devil of honor is the same as before, and the devil of anger is in the same vigor as before. One devil alone can indeed carry an old devil's slave into hell, how much more seven devils, who carry their slave into destruction as it were a bag of feathers. Although it should be easier for the aged to part from the world, than it is for the young, the aged however, seem to be more attached to the world than the young. The devil does not release the aged from the world before the life-string is severed, and in the end will torment them everlastingly. Do you not wish to part from the world yet, you old slave of the world, who has already served mammon many decades? Is it still pleasure for you to serve the devil and to enjoy the reward, which the devil will give you? Have you young children, whom you must care for and bring up? Have you finery, dances or music, which keeps you in the world?

I surmise that you have one devil, which is even homlier and blacker than the devil of adultery or finery. That is the devil of covetousness, which holds you by the tail and belly; This black devil keeps the old slaves of the world from repentance and contrition. The devil of adultery has become old; and the devil of finery has also become old, so that they no longer care to carry finery. World's pleasures and dances have become old, so they cannot jump around with you any more; but the devil of covetousness has not become old, the devil of honor has not become old, the devil of envy is in the same vigor as heretofore, the devil of wrath is still in the gall and some of the aged even take some dragons poison into their mouths.

How do you expect to get rid of these devil's seeds now, since you have not begun to battle against them? You have been taught in the Lutheran faith, and Luther's belief is, that he is freed from satan's power. The sorrowless probably do not believe, that they have been freed and released from satan's power. If perchance satan has not already blinded some of the older people to think that they have nothing to do with satan. So think the aged whose eyes the devil has inverted, they think there is neither devil nor

hell. Satan has taken away memory from some, that they no longer remember how abominable their former life was. What will betide you at last, since you have put off your repentance until you are old? Now death will soon come to cut your life-string and will take your soul into the place, where you shall everlastingly remain. The majority of those who are hardened, even despise the mediums of grace, and others, who at times do come to the Lord's Supper, come on their own responsibility and depart as did Judas, into the world. Who knows, perhaps satan will yet go into them after the dipped sop. The devil surely will answer for their souls, when the time of visitation comes.

But those few souls, whom the heavenly Father has so severely scourged, that they are no longer able to kick against the pricks; Who will answer for you, when the accuser comes to accuse you, of being harlots and thieves, and insists on justice and demands that the Supreme Judge condemn according to law? Who will answer for you, you sorrowful and penitent ones, against whom the whole world cries: "CRUCIFY." Without a doubt you are guilty of all the sins, of which the accuser accuses you, and if the Supreme Judge judged you according to merit, you would be unfortunate in time and in eternity. If the merciful Samaritan does not have compassion on you and answer for you in the great court; if you have not taken Him for your advocate, ask now, beg and pray, that He would take up your case and would answer for you in the great court, when the accuser of God's children begins to accuse you, of being harlots, thieves, murderers, enemies of God and man, false prophets and wild spirits. If you have not already besought Jesus for an advocate, when the world's sheriff comes upon you like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; ask, beg and pray, that the Lord Jesus take your case upon Himself and would answer for you, before the everlasting and immutable sentence is passed. For who knows, this Lord's Supper may be your last repast on earth; who knows, this may be the last time on earth, that you partake of the Lord's body and blood; who knows what your last resort will be at the last day. If you have not taken the great cross-bearer and thorn-crowned King for your advocate before the Father, Him, Who is able to close the accuser's mouth, and says: "what do you accuser of God's children, still require in behalf of hell's crown? Have you not already received your portion of the fine, you accuser of God's children? Since you have licked My blood, you bloodhound, and rended My heart, you prince of hell; then the advocate of the penitent and believing ones says to the judge: "write upon my cross Jesus of Nazareth, King of the penitent." Bending your knees at the foot of the bloody cross, confess your slowness and unwatchfulness: I, a wretched sinful man, etc. Amen.

14. COMMUNION SERMON

To the aged and the sick, who would willingly depart from this world.

FOR WE KNOW THAT IF OUR EARTHLY HOUSE OF THIS TABERNACLE WERE DISSOLVED, WE HAVE A BUILDING OF GOD, AN HOUSE NOT MADE WITH HANDS, ETERNAL IN THE HEAVENS. FOR IN THIS WE GROAN, EARNESTLY DESIRING TO BE CLOTHED UPON WITH OUR HOUSE WHICH IS FROM HEAVEN: IF SO BE THAT BEING CLOTHED WE SHALL NOT BE FOUND NAKED. 2 Cor. 5:1, 3.

In this wise Paul writes to those Christians, who some years previous had awakened from the sleep in sin and had turned from heathenism into Christianity through Paul's doctrine. Paul often had a desire to depart from the world, not only because of the difficulties the Christians have in the world, where they are hated and persecuted, mocked and despised, but also because of a divine desire for salvation for he was assured that a better tabernacle was made for him in heaven than this bodily tabernacle, which will soon dissolve. According to this writing of Paul, all Christians should have a hearty desire to depart from the world and to be with Christ, which would be much better. I believe also, that all Christians have such a desire, especially the aged, who, by reason of their age, stand at the brink of the grave, if so be that they are clothed with Christ's righteousness, that it would not be as Paul writes: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. All those wretches are naked, who are not clothed with Christ's garment of righteousness. During sleep covers at times are unperceptible, so that the sleeping ones do not know or are not conscious of having kicked away their covers in sleep. The watchful see it and pull the covers over the naked ones, but if all sleep, there may be many who have kicked away their covers in sleep; they will be found naked, when the Son of God comes. That is why Paul writes: "if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked." As Noah's own sons jeered at him, when in his sleep he had kicked off the covers, likewise all naked wretches will be jeered at by the devil's angels, if someone is not present, to pull covers over them.

Them the devil's angels ridicule also, who carry the garment of Christ's righteousness; but this ridicule does not effect those who, in truth do have Christ's righteousness. But, if they be found naked, and are jeered at because of their nakedness, then they may say as does David: REPROACH HATH BROKEN MY HEART. The best counsel for the young and the old now would be, that they take Christ's garment of righteousness upon themselves, that they be not found naked when the Son of God comes, that they might say with Paul: FOR WE KNOW THAT IF OUR EARTHLY HOUSE OF THIS TABERNACLE WERE DISSOLVED, WE HAVE A BUILDING OF GOD, AN HOUSE NOT MADE WITH HANDS, ETERNAL IN THE HEAVENS: FOR IN THIS WE GROAN, EARNESTLY DESIRING TO BE CLOTHED UPON WITH OUR HOUSE WHICH IS FROM HEAVEN: Paul wrote these words to the Christians, when he felt that this earthly tabernacle was soon to be dissolved. I think, that all aged, who because of age, stand at the brink of the grave,

should have the same kind of feeling, even in the body itself, that their tabernacle will soon be dissolved. If they do not have the assurance of being moved into heavenly dwellings, when this earthly tabernacle is dissolved, they will then be left under the open sky. Paul writes to the Christians in the following passage, also (2 Cor. 5:4) FOR WE THAT ARE IN THIS TABERNACLE DO GROAN, BEING BURDENED, as all Christians groan when they feel burdened in this corruptible tabernacle; as Solomon also writes: "the mortal body burdens the soul," this burden is especially noticeable to the aged, whose bodily structure is leaning towards the grave. They especially should groan and pray, that they might soon move into the everlasting dwellings, since it is known that this earthly tabernacle is already decaying and will therefore soon be dissolved. These words of Paul pertain to the Christians only, for Paul writes in the same chapter: NOW HE THAT HATH WROUGHT US FOR THE SELFSAME THING IS GOD, WHO ALSO HATH GIVEN UNTO US THE EARNEST OF THE SPIRIT. From these words it is plainly heard, that the preceding words pertain to those only, to whom God has given His Holy Spirit as a pledge. There is nothing in this passage for the sorrowless to claim, who have never received the Holy Spirit, nor do they have either part nor lot, who have lost the Holy Spirit. The dwelling of those sorrowless, impenitent ones, is made in hell, there is the place where they must remain everlastingly. Since Paul writes to the Christians; WHILST WE ARE AT HOME IN THE BODY, WE ARE ABSENT FROM THE LORD: FOR WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT, it is evident, that these Paul's experiences fit all Christians, especially at the time, when self-righteousness attempts to drive the Christians far from Christ. They then feel that they are far from the Lord. They nevertheless have a hearty desire to become saved, although they feel as if they were far from the Lord, since the sun of grace is hidden behind a cloud of unbelief. Even, otherwise, the Christians can feel, that they are far, though they walk by faith, not by sight. WE ARE CONFIDENT, I SAY, AND WILLING RATHER TO BE ABSENT FROM THE BODY, AND TO BE PRESENT WITH THE LORD.

Have you such a desire, you aged and sick travelers to eternity, you, whose bodily tabernacle will soon be dissolved, whose love is leaning toward the grave? Have you such a conviction as Paul, that when this decayed tabernacle is dissolved, a better house is made for you in heaven, which is eternal and incorruptible? As the old and decayed body fatigues your soul, have you an earnest desire to be absent from the body and present with the Lord? Have you the belief, that you will soon get into the new Jerusalem to behold the Lord, as He is, face to face? I believe that true Christians have the same conviction and assurance as Paul, and as this Lord's Supper is the last repast to many on earth, pray, that the Lord would prepare you, travelers to eternity, that you may be found clothed with Christ's righteousness; with the garment of righteousness, which covers your nakedness. Now

is the Son of God transfigured in His bloody form! Now the sorrowful Disciples stand at the place of the cross! Now the blood flows in a stream from the wounds of the crucified and thorn-crowned King! Now satan's crowd mocks Him. Some here, have a rusty iron spike in their heart. The enemies of Jesus' cross, who mock the tears of the penitent and believers, suppose they can go to hell in peace now, since, the disturber of the people dies. There are eleven still living though, who shall see the Lord, even if at times they are in sorrow and doubt, because Jesus died. Bow down your hearts and pray to Him, since you saw the Son of Man ascend into heaven, whence He will soon come again. Confess your sins, because of which, Jesus was crucified, and say, I, a wretched sinful man, etc. Amen.

15. COMMUNION SERMON

To a sick one, who is mammon's slave, has lived sorrowless, and has not awakened even on the sick-bed.

O! DEATH, HOW BITTER IS THE REMEMBRANCE OF THEE TO A MAN THAT LIVETH AT REST IN HIS POSSESSIONS, UNTO THE MAN THAT HATH NOTHING TO VEX HIM AND THAT HATH PROSPERITY IN ALL THINGS. Eccl. 41:1.

Syrach spoke in this way to such as live carefree, love this world's goods, and are not mindful of death until it comes. Death is bitter to such, partly because they would not wish to leave their goods into the world and partly, because they do not know what will confront them in the next world. If they could take their goods with them into the next world, death would be a little easier; but when they know that they must leave all that is dear and precious to them in this world and leave for the next world without substance, that is why death is so bitter to them. Even though they die, they cannot part with their treasures, for the Savior has said: WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE WILL YOUR HEART BE ALSO. Even after death they cling to the perishing things, which they have loved here and considered their most precious treasure. It is a pitiable and lamentable circumstance, that the world's slave must leave his treasure, his joy and his pleasures, his finery and his honor into the world, and even then cannot become free of them so as to forget all that which he had held dear here; even there his heart still cleaves to those vain and perishing things; even there he still yearns them; but he can no longer enjoy any of the things, that were so dear and so precious to him in the world. This vain longing is in itself a great torment, even though there should be no other torment; especially as he has no hope of ever recovering the precious treasures. Therefore some heathens have supposed, that the rich in hell cry: woe, woe, my treasure! The pretty and beautiful cry: woe, woe, my finery and my beauty! And they who have been held in high esteem in the world cry in hell: woe, woe, my honor! The harlots cry, woe, woe, my pleasure! The gentiles who

supposed the rich, the pretty, the lovers of beauty, the harlots and lovers of honor, cry thus in hell, have verily in their own opinion despised world's vanity, have eaten greens only and walked in rags, lived in caves and have mocked the rich and the fine. However, since such despisers of treasures, finery, honor and pleasures of life have known nothing about the Savior and the merits of Christ, we have been given no information concerning their salvation. Some heathens have surmised concerning the future life, that no others will have peace in the next world except the ones who have no recollection of having been in this world. Such heathens surmise that in the kingdom of death is a river of forgetfulness, from which all, whom memories of this earthly existence annoy, may drink the water of forgetfulness, whereby all recollection is lost, so they no longer remember of having been in the world; and then only do they have peace.

Hear now, all you baptized heathens, what the unbaptized heathens have surmised of the future life. You are even worse, you who give hardly any thought to the life to come, but live carefree, and sorrowless and walk blindly into eternity, as if a kerchief were tied over your eyes. You do not take thought, as to what manner of life will follow, after death; you take no heed of the coming life, just as if there were none. The unbaptized heathens have surmised many things about the life to come, although they have lacked God's word and understanding; but you have God's word within reach at every house., though you despise God's word as if it did not pertain to you, just as if it were some old fable. That is why death becomes so bitter, so objectionable and so terrifying to many; because they have not thought of it before. Do not think, O, dying man, that you will be released from the world, even though you die. It is not so. If you have not already become released from the world in this time of grace, you surely will not become released from the world after death, but in hell you will have to cry: woe to my treasures! woe to my finery! woe to my pleasures! woe to my honor! The rag devils will moreover ridicule you saying: that's it! return into the world now to get your treasures and fine apparel! But he who has gathered the treasures, which moth does not corrupt, nor thieves dig up and steal, may enjoy his treasure everlastingly! Have you? O, dying man, gathered those treasures, which moth doth not corrupt, nor thieves dig up and steal. Or have you gathered treasures, that will be left into this world, and yet will follow into the next world, in such a way, that when they have once become attached to the heart you will not get rid of them, no matter how you try to forget them? I think the world's treasures will become a great affliction to you in eternity, if you have not separated yourself from them here in the time of grace; and how may you become released from them, if you have not through true contrition and repentance sought reconciliation with God, Who alone can separate and set you free from the perishing things, which you have loved and sought with hearty desire here? O, how vain

all people are, who live thus sorrowless! they accumulate and do not know who will receive it. Death becomes bitter to them, who have gathered and loved the perishing things, all their lives.

You travelers to eternity, take a look into the grave, to see if the bottom can be seen. The time of grace is not long for you anymore, who even because of age, stand at the brink of the grave; death shadows your steps and every step, with which you tread this sinful earth, is one step nearer the grave. You see that one after another goes into the dark grave, but the surviving ones do not set that upon their conscience. Only the few souls, who have been buried with Christ unto death, whose old man has been crucified, can receive the angel of death with gladness and joy, He will carry them into Abraham's bosom, where they can sit with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of heaven and eat the bread of heaven. Amen.

1. READING EXAMINATION SERMON

THEY HATE HIM THAT REBUKETH IN THE GATE, AND THEY ABHOR HIM THAT SPEAKETH UPRIGHTLY. Amos 5:10.

This writing of the prophet Amos, fits the present day sorrowless well, who hate him who rebukes them openly and abhor him, who speaks uprightly. The present day Jews are the same by nature, as were the former Jews, who hated the prophets. Namely, when the prophet Amos rebuked the sorrowless of his day of their ungodly life, they began to hate him. It happens likewise even now when some christians would rebuke the sorrowless of sin, they begin to hate him, who rebukes them openly and abhor him who teaches uprightly. Our Savior sets forth a trait of the sorrowless, by which they are well known, namely such a trait, that they hate and persecute Jesus' Disciples and scourge them in their synagogues, as the sorrowless of this time also, do to the Christians. Some drag Christians out of the house of prayer, for the evil spirit which works in them, cannot stand the effects of the spirit of God. If the Holy Spirit rebukes the world because of sin, righteousness and judgement, the devil becomes angered and affects wrath in the hearts of the sorrowless. Their wickedness makes them so blind, that they do not know that they have wrath at heart. Repentance has now been preached to the sorrowless for many years, but the more it is preached, the more they harden just as the Jews became hardened through the preaching of John and of Christ. John said to the hardened ones: AND NOW ALSO THE AXE IS LAID UNTO THE ROOT OF THE TREES: THEREFORE EVERY TREE WHICH BRINGETH NOT FORTH GOOD FRUIT IS HEWN DOWN, AND CAST INTO THE FIRE. They despised such threats and said, John had a devil. They also despised the judgement of the Savior and said: THOU ARE A SAMARITAN AND HAST A DEVIL. At last one sign of the last times appeared in the heavens; one sword-like comet stood over the city for an entire year, but the sorrowless explained the sign in their own way. They did not believe that it was a sign of

the last times for them, who had resisted the Holy Ghost for so long. A sign of the last times has been set in the heavens for us also, which all have seen. But fear and distress have not come to the heathens, although our Savior says: AND UPON THE EARTH DISTRESS OF NATIONS WITH PERPLEXITY; LOOKING AFTER THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE COMING ON THE EARTH: The heathens of this time heed not the signs of the heavens, although a time of shortage and famine has come after the sign and will become more acute henceforth, if people do not improve their outward earthly life also. No fear of distress is as yet heard among the sorrowless. They do not believe that such signs in the heavens are signs of the last times; nor do they believe that the vials of God's wrath will be poured upon the earth. The Christians however believe, that God by these signs reminds the people on earth of the coming judgment. The Christians gather from the signs of the times that the last times are coming, therefore they must labor with fear and trembling, that they might be saved. Have you taken heed of the signs of the last times, you travelers to eternity? Have you seen how God, by these signs desires to warn you from world's love and from the pleasures of life? God desires to have you make haste, to flee out of Babel, lest you be destroyed with the harlot of Babel. When the signs of the last times indicate that the end of the world is nearing, then says Jesus to His disciples: THEN LOOK AND LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, you disciples of Jesus and behold for your redemption draweth nigh, iniquity and ungodly life become more abominable from day to day. Behold how the world hardens in its wickedness and becomes enraged in its ungodliness. These are the signs of the last times, of which Jesus speaks. But when these signs of the last times begin to be accomplished then Jesus says: lift up your heads, FOR YOUR REDEMPTION DRAWETH NIGH. For in the world you have distress, but be of good cheer, Jesus has overcome the world. Lift up your heads therefore, you brothers and sisters of Jesus, and do not hold your heads downward, even as they who have no hope. Lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh; Behold those stars in the heavens, which rise up from the dawn of day. There is the day-star, which is given those who overcome. There in the East, the Savior's star has first appeared, and we travel in the direction of the sun-rise; from that direction we await redemption and deliverance. Amen.

2. READING EXAMINATION SERMON

To the sorrowless and the christians.

God said to the prophet Ezekiel: ALSO, THOU SON OF MAN, THE CHILDREN OF THY PEOPLE STILL ARE TALKING AGAINST THEE BY THE WALLS AND IN THE DOORS OF THE HOUSES, AND SPEAK ONE TO ANOTHER, EVERY ONE TO HIS BROTHER, SAYING, COME, I PRAY, YOU, AND HEAR WHAT IS THE WORD THAT COMETH FORTH FROM THE LORD. AND THEY COME UNTO

THEE AS THE PEOPLE COMETH AND THEY SIT BEFORE THEE AS MY PEOPLE, AND THEY HEAR THY WORDS, BUT THEY WILL NOT DO THEM: AND LO THOU ART UNTO THEM AS A PLEASANT VOICE, AND CAN PLAY ON AN INSTRUMENT: Ezek. 33:30, 31, 32.

In this Bible passage, namely Ezek. 33:30th, and subsequent verses, God has made known to the prophet how the sorrowless do with him: they talk against him here and there, by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, come and hear what is the word of the Lord. Some sorrowless cannot refrain from listening, although they talk against; they listen to the preaching, but think otherwise. Though they hear God's words, they will not do them. Here the likeness of the sorrowless multitude is well portrayed before our eyes, exactly as if this had taken place today. They speak against what is preached, but still come to hear at times, though they do not do accordingly. We hear that the sorrowless of the old testament have had the same nature as these of the new testament. They talk against everything that the teacher preaches; they talk by the walls, I do not know whether they talk by the church walls, or the walls of chambers. They talk in the doors as it is customary for the sorrowless; I do not know whether they talk in the door of the church or that of the chamber, and again they say one to another; come and hear what is now preached. They indeed hear but do not do accordingly. The whole world would indeed be converted, if the sorrowless began to do according to what is preached to them. They do not come to hear with the intention to do accordingly, but they come with the intention, to get something to talk about, in the door, to ridicule and laugh as is their custom. That they sit before the prophet as God's people, signifies, that they sit quietly and listen, as do the other old Christians, although the devil does not give peace to all to listen. Some cannot refrain from laughing in church, others whisper, some peer around like owls, some walk in and out during the sermon, and some do their tricks, while the sermon is being read, since the devil stands as doorkeeper at the door of the heart and guards the heart, that not so much as one word should touch the heart; For the sorrowless of this period go into hell boldly, they do not wish to become hypocrites, to give the devil occasion to accuse them of being hypocrites and to say: you hypocrite, sit here among these wild spirits and listen to what that false prophet and disturber of people preaches. Who knows you may also become infected with that preaching sickness, as these awakened ones have; then you will become exceedingly hypocritical, you will begin to groan like a creature and howl like these awakened ones howl. Go hence, with your groaning, hypocrite, that you are, and keep away from this madhouse, with your life. Go to the saloonkeeper to heal your heart. That man knows best, where the way leads to heaven. Behold, this is the way the devil preaches to the sorrowless of this time, who serve him faithfully with thought, word and deed.

All do not dare go to hell with such boldness. In the prophet Ezekiel's period, some came to hear the prophet's preaching as God's people, just as old Christians would, but they did not do accordingly. There are, without a doubt, some hypocrites at this time also, who sit before the prophet as God's people; they hear God's word willingly, but it goes in at one ear and out the other, but never toward the heart. Such thieves of grace pretend to have worry over their soul's salvation, but they are careful of their heart, that the word of truth could not touch it, so that they might understand the truth, and that truth might make them free. Of these, it has also been said in the foregoing passage: they hear thy words, but they will not do them. And further, the Lord says: Lo, thou art unto them as a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument. Is this word a lie? Does not this God's word still come true in these times? A prophet or teacher must be a pleasant voice to the mockers, which song they willingly sing and play. The revilers and tricksters make shameful songs, of him, which they sing by way of mockery; then the revilers in their own estimation are wise, when they mock the prophet. Such is the portrayal of the sorrowless people in Ezekiel 33:32. There is the mirror to the mockers, wherein their likeness has been painted.

Let us now behold what the prophet Jeremiah speaks to the awakened in 10:23, 24: O, LORD, I KNOW THAT THE WAY OF MAN IS NOT IN HIMSELF: IT IS NOT IN MAN THAT WALKETH TO DIRECT HIS STEPS. O, LORD, CORRECT ME, BUT WITH JUDGMENT: NOT IN THINE ANGER, LEST THOU BRING ME TO NOTHING. From this, the awakened souls hear, that even the prophet did not feel that he had the power in himself to walk the way of life; as this way of life is not within man's own directing. Although men are as mediums in God's hand, that they, whose eyes God opened, are able to guide the straying travelers on to the right way, to lead the weary and to lift up the fallen. Some awakened would, that the Lord should scourge them hard with pain and torment of conscience, it sounds as if the prophet Jeremiah would also have had a like desire, that the Lord chastise him because of his slowness. So, did David also pray, that the Lord should try him when he said: SEARCH ME, O GOD, AND KNOW MY HEART AND SEE IF THERE BE ANY WICKED WAY IN ME. We hear that even in the old testament, the awakened have had this doubt concerning themselves, when they have felt their contrition has been so slow. They have then begun to pray that the Lord chastise them with pain and torment of conscience. However, we do not know whether God has chastised them, in the way that they have directed God, for they may have been ignorant of what selfrighteousness has affected in them. Selfrighteousness moves some penitent ones to earn grace, by greater pain and torment of conscience, although the order of grace points out, that no one can repay his sins by his own torment. If a penitent soul begins to wish greater pain and torment of conscience for himself, that indicates that selfrighteousness is there with him, moving the penitent to earn grace with his

self-made repentance or with greater pain and torment of conscience; for self-righteousness would earn everything by his own sufferings, would be rewarded according to merit and not take anything by grace. Therefore when the prophet Jeremiah prays; "correct me, but with judgment, lest thou bring me to nothing"; it sounds as if a child would say to the parent: "whip me, but do not beat me too hard." Will the parent begin to punish the child? I believe the heart of a parent to be such, that he will not punish after such a foolish request, but he will punish, when he deems it necessary. Let this word be for the setting aright of the penitent, who say: "O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; lest thou bring me to nothing."

The prophet has also preached to those who have fallen away, in this manner: THE LORD CALLED THY NAME A GREEN OLIVE TREE, FAIR AND OF GOODLY FRUIT: WITH THE NOISE OF A GREAT TUMULT HE HATH KINDLED FIRE UPON IT, AND THE BRANCHES OF IT ARE BROKEN. FOR THE LORD OF HOSTS, THAT PLANTED THEE, HATH PRONOUNCED EVIL AGAINST THEE. Hear, you dried up olive tree, how the Lord will kindle a fire upon you, that all your branches must be burned. The Lord called thy name a green olive tree, fair and of goodly fruit, but now with the noise of a great tumult He hath kindled fire upon it. Now all the beautiful branches in you will burn, all the blossoms will fall away from you, all the leaves in you will wither, nothing but the trunk will be left, since you did not remain green and fruitful, when the Lord planted you into His vineyard, and expected to get good fruit and crimson grapes from you, but you began to bear bitter and unripe fruit only. The Lord speaks these words through the prophet Jeremiah in 2:2. I REMEMBER THEE, THE KINDNESS OF THY YOUTH, THE LOVE OF THINE ESPOUSALS, WHEN THOU WENTEST AFTER ME IN THE WILDERNESS, IN A LAND THAT WAS NOT SOWN. ISRAEL WAS HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD, AND THE FIRST FRUITS OF HIS INCREASE: WHAT INIQUITY HAVE YOUR FATHERS FOUND IN ME, THAT THEY ARE GONE FAR FROM ME, HAVE GONE AFTER VANITY AND ARE BECOME VAIN? NEITHER SAID THEY, WHERE IS THE LORD THAT BROUGHT US UP OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT, THAT LED US THROUGH THE WILDERNESS, THROUGH A LAND OF DESERTS AND OF PITS, THROUGH A LAND OF DROUGHT, AND OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH. What iniquity have you found in me says the Lord to the deserter children who did not keep their covenant, but went after the world's vanity and into the enemy's kingdom, where they are taught all iniquity and trained in all wickedness. How many times, must the parent pull you out of of the enemy's house, by the hair? How many times must he cry before he becomes tired of running after you? Return nevertheless, you deserter and disobedient child! Arise still, you prodigal son, who have wasted the precious goods, you received from the Father, with harlots. Return once more, even though you have wasted the

beautiful goods of grace, that you received from the Father. Arise, arise, you miserable prodigal son and be no longer a herder of swine, in the world's strange land, far from the Father's home. The Father will still perhaps receive you and make a wedding for His son.

The prophet Jeremiah also speaks to graced souls in this wise; 17:7, 8, BLESSED IS THE MAN THAT TRUSTETH IN THE LORD, AND WHOSE HOPE THE LORD IS, FOR HE SHALL BE AS A TREE PLANTED BY THE WATERS, AND THAT SPREADETH OUT HER ROOTS BY THE RIVER, AND SHALL NOT SEE WHEN HEAT COMETH, BUT HER LEAF SHALL BE GREEN: AND SHALL NOT BE CAREFUL IN THE YEAR OF DROUGHT, NEITHER SHALL CEASE FROM YIELDING FRUIT. Is your fruit now ripened, you fruitful tree? Is your fruit ripened, so you would be acceptable to the Lord? Are there as many berries on you as there were blossoms in mid-summer? If the Lord will give moisture from heaven and will let His graceful sun shine on your fruit, that is on you, they shall become crimson grapes in August, and it shall come to pass that the dresser of the vineyard, who has dug ditches around you and dunged your roots, will place some of the crimson fruit on his table, when the guests from heaven come. When the angel of death comes to cut the branches of the vine from the earth; then all the crimson grapes will be put into the winepress and pressed, so that the sweet wine which is in them will begin to overflow, that the great dresser of the vineyard may enjoy the fruits of his labors. Our hope is that the Lord will receive a few grapes from this vineyard, in which he has labored so much. Amen.

3. READING EXAMINATION SERMON

To the Christians

AND HEREBY WE KNOW THAT WE ARE OF THE TRUTH, AND SHALL ASSURE OUR HEARTS BEFORE HIM, FOR IF OUR HEART CONDEMN US, GOD IS GREATER THAN OUR HEART, AND KNOWETH ALL THINGS. BELOVED IF OUR HEART CONDEMN US NOT, THEN HAVE WE CONFIDENCE TOWARD GOD. 1 John 3:19, 21.

In this place the Apostle John publishes a Christian's experiences, which are very remarkable for the reason that matters of the heart are very dim to many. First he says: If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and by these words he makes known that the Christian's heart can condemn him at times. When an alert Christian has terrible temptations, which the devil affects in his flesh, and shoots fiery darts from the flesh into the heart, then evil lusts and desires are felt, and finally self-righteousness arises like an austere and just accuser of God's children, condemning God's children in this way: How can you be a Christian, since you have so much sin? Being a Christian you are like a devil. When self-righteousness thus preaces in the intellect, it seems in the mind of

a Christian, as if his heart condemned him. Although the heart itself cannot condemn, but it is the devil of selfrighteousness that condemns God's children. It is this devil, which comes under the shadow of truth, for he changes himself into an angel of light. In that way many a penitent one becomes deceived, since he cannot comprehend that it is the devil, who condemns the penitent. Now the apostle John says: if our heart condemn us, God is greater. With these words he shows that no Christian should believe his own heart even if it does condemn; he must rather believe God's gracious promises, which indicate that Christ has come to save sinners, not the just. A Christian must always flee as a sinner to the great cross-bearer with all his sins and believe that he is saved by grace and not by merit. If a Christian were judged according to merit, he would be totally lost; but by grace he is saved, if he believes on Him, Who is greater than selfrighteousness, which preaches condemnation through the heart. That is why Luther also says that he fears his own heart more than the Sultan of Turkey, for every Christian, whose conscience is awake, feels indeed, that his heart is evil, despicable and filthy, namely, the fleshly heart, that is in the old man, which Paul calls the outward man; but the soul or the spiritual heart, which Paul names the inward man, is cleansed by Christ's blood. This depends alone on how a Christian can distinguish them, so that the enemy could not confuse the effects of the outward and the inward man, or the effects of the old and the new man, in his perception. Paul says: FOR I DELIGHT IN THE LAW OF GOD AFTER THE INWARD MAN BUT I SEE ANOTHER LAW IN MY MEMBERS WARRING AGAINST THE LAW OF MY MIND, AND BRINGING ME INTO CAPTIVITY TO THE LAW OF SIN. Here he must be sinful in flesh, though holy in spirit. The intellect cannot comprehend how the sinner can be holy, the filthy be clean and how the unjust can be just. But when we believe that sins are forgiven, we must believe also that the sinner is holy, the filthy is clean and that the unjust is just. Concerning the flesh a Christian is indeed sinful, filthy and unjust, like the devil himself, but through grace he is holy and just, although selfrighteousness preaches through the intellect: you are not holy and just, but you are sinful, unjust, filthy, lewd and loathsome. Now when selfrighteousness comes to accuse and condemn, this judgement is pronounced through the intellect. Although it seems as if this judgment roared in the conscience and in the heart, just as if it came from the heart, then John says: if our heart condemn us, God is greater than selfrighteousness, and if selfrighteousness condemn, God will free us from that condemnation. God has forgiven the sins of the penitent. The Son of God has paid their wrong-doings. Therefore He has made them holy and just. Believe now you penitent ones, that by God's grace you are holy and just, although selfrighteousness condemns you, for God is greater than our heart.

This is harder to understand when John says: If our heart condemn us not, then we have confidence toward God. This word in

itself is true, if we but understood it correctly. But thieves of grace through wrong understanding, can gather defense for themselves from these words. Because his heart never condemns him, the thief of grace may think he has confidence toward God, but his confidence is a false reliance in God's grace. Indeed selfrighteousness does not accuse him, as it accuses the penitent and the believing ones. For if selfrighteousness should begin to accuse the thief of grace that he is lewd and filthy, such a fear would surely befall the thief of grace, that he would have to fall into doubt and go to hell.

Since his heart does not condemn him, he has such a belief concerning God, that God will not condemn him either. That is why the thief of grace often says: God does not condemn me for this or the other sin. Whence would the thief of grace know which are his mortal and predominating sins? How could a blind one know them? A thief of grace has so poor a memory that he does not remember at night, what sins he has committed throughout each day. A thief of grace does not even remember wilful sins, let alone the sins of thought. John's testimony is nevertheless fitting to the Christians for the reason that their heart does not always condemn them, when they have peace with God and a clean conscience. Then they, indeed, have confidence toward God. This is the way we have understood the witness of John about the heart's condemning, that it is selfrighteousness, which condemns the penitent and the believing ones, for he is the accuser of God's children, accusing them night and day; but God is greater than selfrighteousness. Paul also witnesses, that we have an advocate before the Father. When that cunning accuser begins to accuse God's children night and day, they must then flee to the great advocate, who has taken the matters of all the penitent, the sorrowful and the downcast ones upon Himself, and has promised to answer for them in the great court. The accuser of God's children is indeed terrible in demanding justice from Christians. He says to the Judge: these hypocrites, who consider themselves Christians, are harlots and thieves, they are murderers. How can the judge defend such? Then the advocate of the penitent sinners steps forth and says to the Judge! Who is the true Father of the believing and penitent ones: "I," says the advocate, "have paid the fine for these poor wretches. I have given my life for them; I have sweat blood for them; I have paid the full price of redemption for them; what do you still demand in behalf of the crown, you hell's tax hound?" And the advocate exposes his Breast and shows His wounds to the Father and says: behold, dear Father, these wounds have I received because of my love for these poor wretches, and that accuser of God's children has caused me these wounds. Then the heart of the Father is moved and He says to the advocate: Thou art My Son. This day have I begotten Thee. I will give Thee the gentiles for an inheritance. Thou must rule the gentiles with a rod of iron. Then He will say to the accuser: Get thee behind me Satan,

you have urged me to torment Job without cause. You have no right to these redeemed souls, for whom Christ has paid the full price of redemption.

So be of good cheer, you precious redeemed souls, for the accuser of God's children has been cast down from heaven to the earth. He no longer has any authority in heaven; he has no authority over those who have taken the great cross-bearer and thorn-crowned King for an advocate before the Father. The great Michael has overcome and John heard a loud voice in heaven say: NOW IS COME SALVATION, AND STRENGTH, AND THE KINGDOM, AND MIGHT OF OUR GOD, AND THE POWER OF HIS CHRIST: FOR THE ACCUSER OF OUR BRETHREN IS CAST DOWN, WHICH ACCUSED THEM BEFORE OUR GOD DAY AND NIGHT, AND THEY OVERCAME HIM BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB, AND BY THE WORD OF THEIR TESTIMONY: AND THEY LOVED NOT THEIR LIVES UNTO DEATH, THEREFORE REJOICE, YE HEAVENS, AND YE THAT DWELL IN THEM. WOE TO THE INHABITERS OF THE EARTH AND OF THE SEA! FOR THE DEVIL IS COME DOWN UNTO YOU, HAVING GREAT WRATH, BECAUSE HE KNOWETH THAT HE HATH BUT A SHORT TIME. Rejoice therefore you, precious redeemed souls, for your accuser has been cast down from heaven. He has no more power to accuse you, since you have an advocate before the Father, Who intercedes in your behalf. Rejoice and make merry, you children of God, cry aloud, that you have overcome by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of His testimony. If you will strive in your most precious faith until death, you also will soon get to sing the hymn of victory together with the angels and all redeemed souls. You will soon get to sing the hymn of victory on Mount Zion and to say: "now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom, and might of our God, and the power of His Christ for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night, and they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." Amen.

4. READING EXAMINATION SERMON

The disciples once asked Jesus: ARE THERE FEW THAT BE SAVED? Jesus answered and said unto them, STRIVE TO ENTER IN AT THE STRAIT GATE: FOR MANY, IS SAY UNTO YOU, WILL SEEK TO ENTER AND SHALL NOT BE ABLE. Luke 13:23, 24.

In this place our precious Savior points out that they, who would be saved, must enter in at the strait gate, but we hear also that not many, even of them who strive, are able. At this time there are not many who strive, for some are so blind that they cannot see where the strait gate is. In that blind crowd are included all, who drink, curse, steal and commit adultery. Of that same crowd are Nicodemus' brothers in faith, who live meekly, but do not believe that the old man must be born again. All who hate,

deride and despise the Christians and watch their faults, are so blind that they do not see where the strait gate is. The devil has inverted their eyes, so they see hell in heaven, and heaven in hell. That is why we say with good reason, that there are not many at this time, who strive to enter in at the strait gate. But who are they, who strive and are not able? I presume they are such men, who are penitent and in their own imagination make repentance, but do not get so far as to confess their sins and repair their wrongdoings. Such men will not submit themselves to the guidance of Christians. They have so much to do in the world, that they have no time to come in to the place, where God's word is preached and expounded. In that manner this precious time of grace is wasted by them in the world's din until death comes upon them. Then they will stand behind the strait gate; have not strength enough left to knock so hard that it would open, they cannot knock loud enough for the doorkeeper to hear. If some high priest's friend were to speak to the doorkeeper, asking that Peter, who is standing at the gate, be admitted to behold what the world's lords are now doing to Jesus, then this Peter, wavering and fickle in faith, would deny Jesus. Because of worldly honor and fear of men he lies, although he presumes to know Jesus as to outward form, but he is ashamed and hardly dares confess that he is a disciple of that wild spirit, because of world's honor and because of world's love. You must yet go out to weep bitterly, you must yet fall into doubt, that you may perceive, that Jesus has died because of your sins and because of your unbelief. You must yet weep and wail before you can enter in at the strait gate. You must yet fall into doubt and lose all faith and all hope, before you can perceive that Jesus is still living. All faith and hope must cease before you will feel joy over Jesus' resurrection. This is the way, that all sorrowful disciples have walked and have experienced, before they have entered in at the strait gate. All others must walk in this same way, if they would become saved. Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, will seek, but shall not be able. So long as the rags of selfrighteousness keep them at the gate posts, not many even seek to enter in at the strait gate in due time; and of those who do seek, many will have to turn back and hear the words: I HAVE NO PLEASURE IN YOU. There are many at this time, who do not remain in the kingdom of heaven because they keep peeking through cracks in the door, to see what the world is like. In that peeking they begin to notice the beauty of the world and to love it. The enemy shows them all the riches and glory of this world, by the charm of which they are bewitched and begin to serve the devil.

Do not look into the world through the cracks in the door, you penitent and believing ones, for the enemy will soon cause you to fancy the world. This female devil displays her attractiveness, shows her finery, bares her breasts, arousing lust, so that many a penitent one is bewitched by her, begins to marry and to commit

adultery with the harlot of Babel. Do not turn your back to the kingdom of God, turn your back to the world instead; turn your face to mount Sion, where the crucified and thorn-crowned King stands in scarlet apparel; He, Who bears the crown of glory, and all holy angels with Him await the coming of the travelers, who come by way of the bridgeless river to the beautiful shore of eternity, making beautiful crowns for the waiting and the arriving brothers and sisters in faith, who bear Christ's cross in the world and must suffer ridicule and reproach for Jesus' name sake. Rejoice and make merry you bridesmaids, whose lamps begin to burn, when the cry is made. You will soon get to see the great cross-bearer, Who comes from Edom in dyed garments, carrying the crown of glory. Soon the thorn-crowned King will come for His poor bride who is despised by the world. Soon guests from heaven will come to behold the beauty and comeliness of the bride. Soon the bridesmaids may dance on the golden floor and keep the wedding of the Lamb everlastingly, but the dogs and sorcerers are left without. Amen.

5. READING EXAMINATION SERMON

To the sorrowless, the awakened and the believing.

God said to the prophet Ezekiel: ALSO, THOU SON OF MAN, THE CHILDREN OF THY PEOPLE STILL ARE TALKING AGAINST THEE BY THE WALLS AND IN THE DOORS OF THE HOUSES, AND SPEAK ONE TO ANOTHER, EVERY ONE TO HIS BROTHER, SAYING, COME, I PRAY YOU, AND HEAR WHAT IS THE WORD THAT COMETH FORTH FROM THE LORD, AND THEY COME UNTO THEE AS THE PEOPLE COMETH AND THEY SIT BEFORE THEE AS MY PEOPLE, AND THEY HEAR THY WORDS, BUT THEY WILL NOT DO THEM: AND LO THOU ART UNTO THEM AS A VERY LOVELY SONG OF ONE THAT HATH A PLEASANT VOICE, AND CAN PLAY WELL ON AN INSTRUMENT. Ezek. 33:30, 31, 32.

In this Bible passage, namely Ezek. 33:30-32, God has told the prophet, how the sorrowless treat him; they talk against thee here and there, by the walls, and in the doors of houses, as is the custom of the sorrowless; to stand at the door, while the prophet preaches and there they talk by the walls, but they say among themselves nevertheless: come and hear the word that cometh from the Lord. They cannot refrain from listening even though they talk against, and they come to the prophet in the congregation and sit before him as God's people. They sit in the congregation and hear the preaching, but think about something else. They listen indeed, but do not do accordingly. The likeness of the sorrowless is correctly portrayed before our eyes here, exactly as if the incident had taken place today. They indeed talk against all that the prophet says, but still come to hear. The sorrowless seem to have had the same nature in the old, as they have in the new testament, that they talk against all that the teacher says. They talk by the

walls. I do not know whether they talk by the walls of the church, or by the walls of chambers, but they talk by the walls and in the doors, and say among themselves: come, let us go again, to hear what is being said now. They hear indeed, but do not do accordingly. The whole world indeed would be turning, if they would begin to do accordingly to what is preached to them. They do not come to hear the sermon with the mind, that they would do accordingly, but they come with a mind, to find occasion to deride and gainsay, or to laugh, as is customary with them. They sit before the prophet as God's people, which signifies, that they sit quietly like other old Christians, although maliciousness does not give peace to all, to set quietly during preaching. In the prophet Ezekiel's time the sorrowless have sat like God's people, but at this time the sorrowless do not have peace even during the preaching. For they walk in and out like restless spirits and tell their own yarns among themselves, so as to escape hearing what is preached. When the devil stands guard at the door of the heart, keeping the heart, that not one word might penetrate it, he causes their thoughts to drift around the world, that they do not even hear what is being preached. For the sorrowless of the present time go to hell boldly; they do not wish to go into destruction as hypocrites, lest the devil have occasion to accuse them, saying, you hypocrite, sit here and listen to the preaching. Why listen to this prattle? This is the way the devil preaches to the sorrowless of this period: why sit here and listen to those preachers, through whom people become insane? Then you will surely become a hypocrite indeed, if you do as they do, begin groaning like a creature and howling like a hungry wolf. Flee, says the truthful devil, who does not wish to see such hypocrisy, flee from this madhouse and go to the saloon-keeper, he knows better than these awakened ones do, where the way leads to heaven. Or go play cards or play ball; that is better worship of God than the groaning and sighing of the awakened; or go to the whore-house, they will teach you how to make yourself fine. This is the way the devil preaches to the sorrowless of the present time, who serve him faithfully with thought, word and deed.

All do not dare go to hell so boldly. In the prophet Ezekiel's time they came to hear the sermon and sat as God's people, as old Christians, but they did not do accordingly. Without a doubt there are a few hypocrites at this time, who sit in church like God's people, and listen to God's word; but it goes in at one ear and out the other, never into the heart. Such thieves of grace pretend to have worry over their soul's salvation, but they guard their heart, that the word of truth cannot penetrate it, that they might know the truth, and that the truth would make them free. In the foregoing passage it has been said of them also: they hear thy words, but they will not do them. At greater breadth the Lord says to the prophet: Lo thou art unto them as a very pleasant song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument. This God's word is fulfilled even today. A prophet has to be a lovely

song to the blasphemers. They make shameful songs of him, which they sing, to mock him. Then the blasphemers in their own estimation are wise, when they ridicule, slander and disgrace the prophet. They talk about him by the walls and in the doors, since they are ashamed to talk before his face. Such is the portrayal of the sorrowless multitude in Ezekiel 33:32. There is the mirror for the mockers, wherein their likeness has been painted. Let us hear what the prophet Jeremiah says to the awakened ones: (10:23) O LORD, I KNOW THAT THE WAY OF MAN IS NOT IN HIMSELF: IT IS NOT IN MAN THAT WALKETH TO DIRECT HIS STEPS. O LORD, CORRECT ME, BUT WITH JUDGMENT: NOT IN THINE ANGER, LEST THOU BRING ME TO NOTHING. From this the awakened souls may hear, that even the prophet did not feel that it was within himself to walk the way of life; As this way of life is not in man's own directing, nor is it within the directing of some other person, although men act as mediums in God's hand; that they, whose eyes God has opened, can lead the straying travelers on to the right way, and can guide or lead the weary and lift up the fallen. Like the awakened would, that the Lord severely chastise them with pain and torment of the conscience, it sounds as if the prophet Jeremiah also had the same desire, that the Lord chastise him because of his slowness. David likewise prayed to God, that He would try him, when he said: SEARCH ME, O GOD, AND KNOW MY HEART: TRY ME AND KNOW MY THOUGHTS: AND SEE IF THERE BE ANY WICKED WAY IN ME. We hear, that even in the old testament the Christians have had this kind of perplexity and doubt concerning themselves, since they have felt, that their remorse has been so lax, they have begun to pray that the Lord chastise them with pain and torment of conscience, but we do not know whether God has chastened them according to their request, for they may have been ignorant of what self-righteousness affected in them, how he sets the penitent to earn grace with greater pain and torment of conscience, although God's word shows that no one can atone for his sins by self-affliction. If a penitent soul begins to wish greater pain and torment of conscience for himself, it indicates that self-righteousness is there, moving the penitent to earn grace by self-made repentance, or greater pain and torment of conscience. For self-righteousness would wish to earn all by its own efforts and receive according to merit, but nothing of grace. Therefore when the prophet Jeremiah prayed: O Lord correct me, but with judgment, lest thou bring me to nothing. It sounds as if a child were to say to a parent: punish me because of my naughtiness, but do not beat me so severely, that I die. Will the parent begin to punish his child according to its request? I believe, that the heart of a parent is such, that he will punish his child, when he sees need for it, but not after foolish requests. May this be for correction to the penitent, who pray, that greater pain come to them. The prophet has also preached to the fallen in this manner: THE LORD CALLED THY NAME, A GREEN OLIVE TREE, FAIR, AND OF GOODLY FRUIT: WITH THE NOISE OF A GREAT TUMULT HE

HATH KINDLED FIRE UPON IT, AND THE BRANCHES OF IT ARE BROKEN. FOR THE LORD OF HOSTS, THAT PLANTED THEE, HATH PRONOUNCED EVIL AGAINST THEE. You dry olive tree, in this place you hear, how the Lord will kindle fire around you, that all your branches must burn. The Lord called thy name a green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit, but now He will kindle fire upon it, with the noise of a great tumult. All beautiful branches in you will now burn, all blossoms will fall from you, all leaves in you will fade and turn yellow. Nothing more will be left except the trunk, since you have not remained fruitful, although the Lord planted you into His vineyard and waited for you to bear crimson grapes, but you began to bear sour fruit only.

The lord said through the prophet Jeremiah (2:2): I REMEMBER THEE, THE KINDNESS OF THY YOUTH, THE LOVE OF THINE ESPOUSALS, WHEN THOU WENTEST AFTER ME IN THE WILDERNESS, IN A LAND THAT WAS NOT SOWN. ISRAEL WAS HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD, AND THE FIRSTFRUITS OF HIS INCREASE: THUS SAITH THE LORD, WHAT INIQUITY HAVE YOUR FATHERS FOUND IN ME, THAT THEY ARE GONE FAR FROM ME, AND HAVE WALKED AFTER VANITY, AND ARE BECOME VAIN? NEITHER SAID THEY, WHERE IS THE LORD THAT BROUGHT US UP OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT, THAT LED US THROUGH THE WILDERNESS? THROUGH A LAND OF DESERTS AND OF PITS, THROUGH A LAND OF DROUGHT, AND OF SHADOW OF DEATH. What iniquity have you found in me saith the Lord to those deserter children, who have not remained in their covenant, but have gone into the world's vanity and into the enemy's house, where they are taught all manner of wickedness? How many times must the parent pull you out of the enemy's house by the hair? How many times must he call you and go after you before he will become tired of running after you? Do return still, you fallen and obstinate child. Arise still, you prodigal son, and go to your Father, even though you have wasted all the goods you received from the Father. Arise, arise you wretched prodigal son and be no more a herder of swine in the world's strange land, far from the Father's house. In this manner the prophet Jeremiah writes to those who have come into grace: (17:7) BLESSED IS THE MAN THAT TRUSTETH IN THE LORD, AND WHOSE HOPE THE LORD IS, FOR HE SHALL BE AS A TREE PLANTED BY THE WATERS, AND THAT SPREADETH OUT HER ROOTS BY THE RIVER, AND SHALL NOT BE CAREFUL IN THE YEAR OF DROUGHT, NEITHER SHALL CEASE FROM YIELDING FRUIT. Hear now you fruitful tree, whose leaf does not wither, and who fears not the year of drought, is your fruit ripe now, that you may be acceptable to the Lord? Are there as many berries on you as there were blossoms at St. Johns? We must hope, that while there are not as many berries on you, as there were blossoms in midsummer, yet if the Lord give moisture from heaven and let His gracious sun shine upon the berries that are on you, they shall become crimson by August; it shall

come to pass that the dresser of the vineyard who has dug ditches around you and dinged your roots, may quench his thirst, when he comes to gather the grapes; and when the guests come from heaven, he can set a few crimson grapes on the table. The dresser of the vineyard says to those guests: You, also, taste of the grapes, that have grown in the north land. When the angel of death comes to cut off the clusters of the vine from the earth, then all crimson grapes will be put into the winepress and pressed, that the red and sweet wine which is in them, will begin to overflow, that the great dresser of the vineyard could also taste of the fruit of his labor. Then all laborers in the vineyard together with him may rejoice and make merry forevermore. Amen.

6. READING EXAMINATION SERMON

WOE TO THEM THAT ARE AT EASE IN ZION. Amos 6:1.

Thus said the Lord through the prophet Amos. The prophet Amos is one of the lesser prophets, who have not written as much as have the greater prophets, they nevertheless have preached the truth to the Jews and have warned the sorrowless of the coming disaster. The prophet Amos was zealous in barking at the sorrowless, but when he saw that the sorrowless neither heeded him nor made repentance, he began to cry to them saying: woe to them that are at ease in Zion! Zion represents; first, the mountain upon which the temple of Jerusalem was built and then, it represents the temple and the congregation, which was in that temple. Why does the prophet Amos cry woe to the sorrowless in Zion? For the reason that they were in such a congregation, in which God's word had already been preached for many years. The sorrowless in Zion are not like the unbaptized heathens, who have not heard God's word, but the sorrowless in Zion have heard God's word. They have been taught to read. They therefore have better knowledge than the uncivilized heathens, who have not heard God's word. That is why the sorrowless in Zion have greater responsibility than the uncivilized heathens, who know nothing of God. Because of that great consequence the prophet Amos cries woe and says: woe to them that are at ease in Zion! Must we cry woe to the wretches who are now at ease in Zion? Or should we congratulate them because they do not have so hard a life as do the awakened and the Christians who are often in distress and perplexity? The sorrowless who drink, wear finery and commit adultery have a pleasant life in this world. They truly have pleasure, so long as their joy lasts. But their joy will soon end, soon this joy and life of pleasure will change, soon their joy will be turned into sorrow, when the bowels begin to bark and the children begin to scream; then it will no longer be pleasant for the sorrowless to be in this world. And when death comes, they have no place of refuge: not in heaven or in the world, therefore they must turn their hope into hell. There

all the sorrowless must go, who do not make repentance in the time of grace.

The Lord says to the people through the same prophet Amos: **THE VIRGIN OF ISRAEL IS FALLEN, SHE SHALL NO MORE RISE.** All who have fallen away from grace and gone into sorrowlessness, may now hear: they hear into what a deep pit they have fallen, whence they can rise no more; and where from would such fallen ones receive the strength to rise, since they themselves have not even the desire to do so? It is even worse when the Lord says: **SHE IS FORSAKEN UPON HER LAND; THERE IS NONE TO RAISE HER UP.** Who indeed could lift her, since she has become so stiff and so numb that she does not move any more than a tree or a stump? This virgin probably depends upon what Solomon has written: **FOR A JUST MAN FALLETH SEVEN TIMES AND RISETH UP AGAIN.** Add to this: **IN A DAY,** then rising will take place quickly and without trouble. As the fallen now are not able to arise after the first fall, what, if they were to fall seven times. To those sorrowless and those who have fallen away from grace, the Lord says through the same prophet Amos. **THEY HATE HIM THAT REBUKETH IN THE GATE, AND THEY ABHOR HIM THAT SPEAKETH UPRIGHTLY.** This trait is characteristic in the sorrowless, that they hate him who teaches uprightly, but they do not hate him who teaches them to drunkenness, to curse, to commit adultery and to carry finery. Such the sorrowless love, in preference to their own parents; it is a true saying, that the sorrowless children at this time love harlots and whoremongers in preference to their own parents.

To the slave of unbelief the Lord also says, through the mouth of the prophet Amos: **SEEK YE ME AND YE SHALL LIVE.** Here the Lord makes it dependent upon seeking. For God cannot snatch **the prisoner of unbelief** by violence out of the infernal pit, but He wants man to do something for the advancement of his soul's salvation. Although the sorrowless cannot help himself, yet he empowered by selfrighteousness, can resist, when God through His word and sacrament offers him His grace; as there are many even in this parish, who despise God's word and the medium of grace, although they declare themselves unworthy to go to the Lord's Supper. Is that right unworthiness, which causes some to despise God's word and the Lord's Supper? It is not unworthiness, but it is haughtiness, which keeps them from seeking the Lord. That is why He says: seek ye me, and ye shall live. I believe the Lord will hear the groanings of those who cry and knock on the door of grace, until the doorkeeper hears.

The Lord says to the Christians through the same Amos, in the last chapter: **BEHOLD, THE DAYS COME, SAITH THE LORD, THAT THE PLOWMAN SHALL OVERTAKE THE REAPER, AND**

THE TREADER OF GRAPES HIM THAT SOWETH SEED; AND THE MOUNTAINS SHALL DROP SWEET WINE, AND ALL THE HILLS SHALL MELT. These remarkable words pertain to those, who labor faithfully in the Lord's vineyard; that in the last times so great haste will come to all laborers in the Lord's vineyard; that they will awaken from their sleepiness and come into grace at the same moment; that greater devotion will come. When the angel of death comes to cut off the clusters of the vine from the earth, then the hills shall melt and issue sweet wine, that is, even the hard hearts will melt, and all mountains shall become fruitful; that is, even they, whose hearts have been as hard as a hill, shall then bear fruit. Namely those hearts, who have properly awakened, shall melt before death and bring forth sweet wine. That does not happen to those, who awaken on the deathbed, but it pertains to those, who have properly awakened, have made repentance in sorrow, and have a true desire to be saved. The great grace befalls them that the grapes are treaded and sown at the same time; that plowing and reaping are done at the same time; that the breaking of the heart and living faith come at the same time.

Behold now you few souls, who have set out to follow the bloody footsteps of Christ with a sincere heart, in the blessed hope, that you will soon be released from this wretchedness. Your labor and effort shall not be in vain, if you are still able to make this last quarter-mile. The great dresser of the vineyard will soon come to put the crimson grapes into the winepress, and He will press them, that the sweet wine, which is in them, will begin to overflow. Then even the mountains will begin to issue sweet wine and hills shall become fruitful. Then all guests will rejoice at the wedding of the Lamb, the lame leap as the hart, when the great company of angels and the hundred and forty four thousand sing the new song. Amen. Hallelujah.

7. READING EXAMINATION SERMON

WHEN THE LORD SHALL HAVE WASHED AWAY THE FILTH OF THE DAUGHTERS OF ZION, AND SHALL HAVE PURGED THE BLOOD OF JERUSALEM FROM THE MIDST THEREOF BY THE SPIRIT OF JUDGMENT, AND BY THE SPIRIT OF BURNING. Isa. 4:4.

God through the prophet Isaiah had threatened the children of Israel, that they should die because of their sins and disobedience, but the few souls, who shall be saved, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living. Then shall the Lord have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning, which will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

The prophecy of the prophet became fulfilled, when God sent a judging and a burning spirit. Mention has been made of this in many places in the Bible, as for example in Solomon's book of wisdom, 12:1. The incorruptible spirit is in all, for that reason Thou

dost punish them with a scourge wherever they sin, that they be delivered from their wickedness and believe upon Thee, O Lord. By this spirit of judgment and burning, the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion. He laments already in Gen. 6:3, that men will not submit themselves to the chastisement of the spirit of God, as the words read: MY SPIRIT SHALL NOT ALWAYS STRIVE WITH MAN, FOR HE ALSO IS FLESH. If the spirit of God began to rebuke man very severely, flesh could not stand it. The sorrowless believe that the spirit of God does not rebuke them anymore, since they are flesh. All the hardened ones hope that the spirit of God would no longer rebuke them, because they are flesh; but in opposition to this we will set that which the Savior has spoken to His disciples: WHEN THE HOLY GHOST IS COME, HE WILL REPROVE THE WORLD OF SIN, AND OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND OF JUDGMENT. No matter how the sorrowless and hardened should say: The spirit of God no longer reproves us. Verily the spirit of God has reprovved the people of the former world through the sons of God, who then preached in the name of the Lord, but the ungodly people did not take heed of that preaching of repentance, and that is why God said: My spirit shall not strive with man forever, He still gave them a hundred and twenty years in which to make repentance, and as repentance did not come in that time, God destroyed them by the deluge of sin. It shall be for a sign to the sorrowless, that when God's spirit ceases reprovving the sorrowless, He has then delivered them unto Satan. So long as God's spirit reproves the sorrowless, He is still seeking them and calling them to repentance, but when He ceases reprovving them, He has then decided that it is to no avail. For the spirit of God eventually becomes tired, when the sorrowless will not receive chastisement. For such is the heart of a parent, He reproves and chastises the ungodly children in the hope that they might become men; but when they harden, the parent quits chastising, because all hope of correcting them is gone. The parent finally becomes tired of rebuking and chastising, as God says through the prophet: My spirit shall not always strive with man. Then even love has died in the parent's heart, which is evidence that He has delivered them to Satan who rules them: that is, the devil of haughtiness, the devil of disobedience, the devil of adultery, the devil of wrath, the devil of honor and the devil of drunkenness. What else can the Parent do to such hardened ones? He must deliver them to Satan. So He did with the people of the former world, and so He did with the children of Israel, when He said: I will not strive with you everlastingly. When He warned the Jews through John the Baptist, through the Savior and through the apostles, and these hardened Jews did not make repentance, then He gave them up to the enemies. But the hardened children suppose the Parent has become merciful, when he becomes tired of always rebuking and chastising them. So terribly has the devil deceived them, that they suppose it to be grace, which in reality is an indication of the Parent having abandoned them, since all love in the Parent's heart has died out.

The blind wretches suppose that the Parent has become placated, since He has ceased from scolding, although He says in many passages: whom He loves, him He also chastises, all the same, the hardened children suppose that the Parent has now become very loving, since He does not scold us. The devil makes them so blind, that they consider it love and mercy, when He has delivered them to Satan, and then they may live as they will.

I believe the Holy Spirit has rebuked the sorrowless of this community so much that He has become tired of rebuking, and now the spirit of God has delivered them to Satan, and now let the devil do with them as he will.

We should now speak a few words concerning those, whom the spirit of God has not delivered to Satan yet. There are a few souls, whom the Holy Spirit always reproves of sin, because they do not believe on Christ. Luther has understood that unbelief is the greatest sin a penitent person commits against the Son of God. If we look at the condition of those who do not believe on Christ, we will find, that they commit a great and abominable sin when they let the blood of the Lamb of God flow to waste on the ground. The unbelievers do not understand that they are excluded from participation in the blood of reconciliation, when they let the blood of the Lamb of God flow to waste on the ground. This sin will eventually fall heavily upon those, who have been awakened by the spirit of judgment and of burning, but have not received the chastisement of God with so humble and contrite heart, that distress would have driven them to the Savior. These prisoners of unbelief still stand far from Jesus' cross, battling with selfrighteousness and warring against the devil with their own strength and do not flee to that great Hero, Who has overcome the strong man armed and has taken away his armor. Although they war against the devil with all their might, still they do not become so freed from him, as to be able to believe on Christ. Even though the Father, through the spirit, draws them to Christ. They cannot get so near Him, that a few drops of the precious reconciling blood would drip on them. Do you see now, you unfortunate souls, who stand so far from the cross, that you cannot see his Wounds? Come nearer! Come so near, that you could see, how the blood flows out of His wounds, that sorrow might press your heart, that you must begin to weep and wail with the sorrowful disciples. By this spiritual sorrow, all vain trust in the world ceases, and by this sorrow the heart is prepared to receive joy over the resurrection of Jesus. If you do not make haste to come to the foot of Jesus' cross, dogs will come to lick up Christ's blood. The soldiers will come and trample it, the thieves of grace will come to claim it, and you will be left without. Selfrighteousness finally wearies the prisoners of unbelief, so that they are not able to believe anything. Here all the thieves of grace will lift up their heads and say: we are at the foot of the cross of Jesus every day, we believe God will be merciful to us. But these awakeled

ones do not have faith as much as a grain of mustard seed. They are always under the law, and therefore they would always press us under the law and put us under the curse of the law. We will not depart from our faith. These thieves of grace profess to be so sincere and so in unison with the Bible, that the devil himself will witness that their words are founded on the Bible and in them is the real truth. But we require true contrition of the thieves of grace, first, and the fruit of living faith. So long as these essentials of Christianity are lacking, we must say to the thief of grace: you will go to hell with that dead faith, no matter how firm your faith might be. You will not be saved with the faith, which is empty in your skull. You must show your faith here. For formerly men have also believed and cursed, have believed and committed adultery, have believed and fought, have believed and been drunken, have believed and sold whiskey. All these Lutheran believers have held the Christians as wild spirits, they have hated and scorned the Christians, and even now they still hate them at heart. This hatred comes out through the mouth as often as a Christian speaks to them. The Jews were the same kind of thieves of grace, for they said: WE HAVE A FATHER EVEN GOD: WE ARE NOT BORN BASTARDS. All the same, the heart of the Jews was filled with hatred for Jesus, and the same devil still rules in the hearts of those, who have not entered into the sheepfold at the narrow gate. They are full of serpent's venom, though they claim to lie at the foot of the cross of Jesus. But they lie at the foot of the devil's cross, so long as they have hatred at heart. It would indeed be pleasant for the old Adam, if he were admitted into the kingdom of God with hide and hair, but that is not allowed in God's word. The thieves of grace of the present times have such a belief, that these awakened ones are false prophets and wild spirits. That is why they hunt mice and see many faults in Christian's lives, as the Pharisees found fault in the Savior's life, and for that reason did not believe His doctrine to be true. The thieves of grace now require the fruits of true faith of the Christians, so we also require the fruits of true faith of the thieves of grace. The Christians have never been able to live so as to be approved by the world; for if the devil has so keen eyesight, that he always sees faults in the Christians' lives. For that reason, the best counsel is, that the thieves of grace separate themselves from the Christians; and as the devil accuses the Christians night and day, so also let his servants accuse the Christians, that they are false prophets and wild spirits. Let the owls and forest devils now live on meat and mice until judgment comes. They do not have anything else to eat except the meat of mice, which they eat uncooked, with hide and hair.

We should now behold how the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, by His spirit of judgment and of burning. That it is a judging and burning spirit, by which the Lord washes away the filth of the daughters of Zion, we have seen already in the apostolic period; and the same burning spirit is still

affecting an awakening and true Christianity in some even now. Those daughters of Zion, who have been washed and cleansed from their filth by this judging and burning spirit, must now confess, that it was the spirit which cleansed them. Like the spiritual fire, which Jesus came to kindle on the earth, burns straw and wood and gold is thereby refined, so are your hearts O daughters of Zion, likewise cleansed of filth by this judging and burning spirit. The Holy Spirit has first judged you and then it has burned you, and thereby you have, as the prophet says, been cleansed from your filth. You know, that the filthy and evil spirit dwells in the hearts of heathens; namely, the devil of adultery, the devil of drunkenness, the devil of contention and strife, and the devil of finery, and when this judging and burning spirit first came into the community, then this filthy evil spirit began to show its teeth. All meek harlots became wroth, all honest thieves became angered, all moderate drinkers became terrified; but the judging spirit judged them, and the burning spirit began to burn them. Amen.

ANNEX

Visitation sermon at Karesuanto,

in the year 1852

by L. L. Laestadius

The apostle Paul warns those, who begin in the spirit and are made perfect by the flesh, that their end is death; besides he says: FOR HE THAT SOWETH TO HIS FLESH SHALL OF THE FLESH REAP CORRUPTION.

So I also suppose it will happen, if a Christian who has been a living Christian in the beginning, goes into a dead state and thereafter founds the hope of his salvation on the former state, thinking, that the former living state of soul will suffice him henceforth also, this leaves in him a dead or assumed faith. The servant, who owed his master ten thousand talents, received forgiveness for his sins indeed, when he prayed in distress of soul. But that grace no longer helped him, after he was merciless to his fellow-servant. This servant most certainly had living faith, when his debt of sin was wiped away; but he could not have remained in that living state of soul very long, for when he met his fellow servant, he shows by his works that living faith was already gone.

I fear, that it has so happened with many now also, as with the mentioned servant, that many have begun in the spirit and have ended in the flesh. World's love has stolen the hearts of many, and the Savior must stand on the outside, as He says in the Revelation: I STAND AT THE DOOR, AND KNOCK: IF ANY MAN OPEN THE DOOR, I WILL COME TO HIM, AND WILL SUP WITH HIM. How will the Savior come in, when world's love stands, like a lord in the middle of the heart and preaches exclusively of faith

and love, although he has neither; no faith, since not many will now believe what a living Christian says; no love, since the Christians no more fit into the same house of prayer. I fear, that spiritual death is coming upon this congregation, in which there were living people before. It has come to pass as the Savior has said: THE FIRST HAVE BECOME LAST.

Therefore, I must remind you of your former condition, how you were as children, when I was still with you, but now you have grown up. Now if this strong Christianity indicates, that you have now become men and fathers in the Christianity, I no longer need to admonish you; you have become so wise and understanding, that no one need say to you: KNOW THE LORD. But of this strong Christianity indicates, that the vessel has become warped, that the new wine has leaked out, that the old vessel has been repaired, that the old wine is sweeter than the new, then I am afraid, that the Savior's sufferings will be in vain, and that His tears in your behalf will be shed in vain, and His blood will flow to the ground in vain, and dogs will lick up His blood; but you will derive no benefit from those precious drops of blood. And I, according to the grace given me, have prayed the heavenly Father, that the great cross-bearer and thorn-crowned King, Whose tears you have scorned in your blindness and trampled His blood under foot, would still reveal Himself to you. According to the poor understanding, that has been given me, I have watched in your behalf and have labored thereupon, that you might be led from darkness into light, and from under Satan's rule to God. My conscience bears witness, that the crucified and thorn-crowned King has not spared a single drop of blood, that He has not let flow off His holy body. My conscience also bears witness, that I have not spared time nor trouble in laboring among you to the end, that you be taught and led to the foot of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, into the garden and to Golgotha. Now I fear that the sufferings of the Savior will have been in vain and also that my labor will have been in vain, since you have become so big and fathers in the Christianity, that you will no longer receive any one's admonition, but what your own intellect gathers, that you believe and hold as Godly wisdom.

I speak not of you all in this wise, but that the scripture be fulfilled: HE THAT EATETH BREAD WITH ME HATH LIFTED UP HIS HEEL AGAINST ME: AND YE ARE CLEAN, BUT NOT ALL. I am afraid that, if your Christianity will mature in the direction, in which it has matured the past two years, it may so happen, that you, who beforetimes were like children in simplicity of faith, will become hundred year old hags next year, and will eventually die a spiritual death, and not a single child will weep on your grave. Where is Mary Magdalene now, who weeps upon the grave of the heavenly Parent? Where is John now, who stands at the place of the cross, and beholds how the soldiers drive the spear into the heavenly Parent's heart? They may be at the sepulchre handling the linens; Joseph and Nicodemus are laying His body into the

grave of dead faith, and who knows whether He will rise again, since His children are no longer weeping and wailing; Mary Magdalene is no longer weeping tears of longing at the brink of the grave, Salome and John are not seen coming with sweet smelling spices to anoint Jesus' body. There are no longer any such orphan children, who would weep and wail upon the Parent's grave. Doubtless they have become grown men, and fathers in the Christianity, that they need no longer weep and sigh for the Parent. Indeed, how would the children still weep, since the Parent has died long ago, and they themselves have become men and fathers in the Christianity, so that they no longer need the Parent's care. Alas, Alas! how soon these grown children have forgotten the Parent's love; how soon they have forgotten, with what great suffering and shedding of blood the Parent has borne them and with what anxious care the Parent has fed and brought them up. To be sure, the young of the Martins are able to fly by now; but who knows how long they will fly? I have seen some young martins drop down on the dunghill, when they begin to trust in their own strength too soon, and fly away from their nest before their wings can carry them; and when they drop on to the dunghill, then will come snowstorms, tempests, chill and famine. And as they do not have strength to fly up into the parent's nest, they must die of cold and hunger on the dunghill.

Woe, Woe, unto you! you unfortunate young martin, who began to trust in your own strength too soon; why did you leave the parent's nest before your wings could carry you? The parent now beholds you with pity, as you lie in the snowstorm and tempest on this earth; but he cannot lift you up from the ground, and carry you back into the nest, since you have become so big and so heavy, that he can no longer lift and carry you. Yet you are so helpless and strengthless, that by yourselves, you cannot fly up into the air, and now you unfortunate weaklings may be left to die in this cold weather, while the other young martins, that have stayed in their nests until they became strong, will fly away into a warm climate, which is on the other side of the earth, where the sun shines directly overhead without ever setting, but you will be left to die in this cold climate, where there is neither food nor drink during zero weather. It will happen thus to the young martin, which leave the parent's nest too soon, or before their wings will carry them.

Let those few souls, who are still living, in whose hearts there still is the spirit of life, who have not yet become blind, who still see, where the way leads to heaven, step up to mount Sion and behold the bones of the dead, which lie scattered about. Who will give life to them who lie thus scattered in the world's field? They are the children of the world, who have died in sin under the great firmament, the children to whom the heavenly Parent has once given birth on His knees, in the blood-bath, with much pain and shedding of blood. But the devil has slain them, and great sorrow has come to the Parent over those children, who die so young.

Now He must sit upon the grave of those children, and weep as did Rachel, who would not be comforted. Although it would be more fitting, for the children to sit upon the Parent's grave and weep, longing for His merciful presence. But the Parent must now mourn for the children who have died so young. It is likely that he will no more see the children who have sunk into the grave of dead faith, there they will decay and nothing but the bones will remain.

What should we say about the children who have died so young? That great sorrow comes to the Parent over them, that He longs and still calls their names after their death. O my Son! cried David, after the death of his son. O my son Absalom! but what do the dead children know about it, no matter how much the sorrowful Parent should cry: O my Son! dead children no longer hear the loving Parent's cry, and though the Parent sheds bitter tears upon their grave, they know nothing of them. Being that there are not many children living any more, who call on His name and call Him Father, I pity the children who have died so young and it is pitiful for me to behold what great sorrow has come to the Parent. But I cannot comfort Him, neither can I resurrect those dead ones, but I must say to the few souls, who are still living, that they beware of traveling dangerous paths, where the enemy is watching, screaming and roaring as a bear or a lion, which comes out of its den. Amen.

BIOGRAPHY

Written by L. L. Laestadius

This Christian was the first one to die in the Laestadioean revival movement, dying on the 9th day of May, in the year of 1849.

Our Christian sister, Mary, daughter of Peter Mattila, who has left this perishing world last Wednesday, which was the 9th day of May 1849, has given us a marvelous example of how a Christian who has received the assurance that her sins are forgiven, can die happily and joyfully, while the world's children on the contrary depart with horror, because of doubt. It should be mentioned that this Christian sister, whose glorified spirit now is in a better clime, was like Mary Magdalene, in her youth, overcome by lust and hard in pursuit of the world, at her coming into this congregation she knew of no other good thing than that which is given by the world. This world's goods she sought to gain in many ways, although she was rather unsuccessful in her efforts. For she has later confessed with her own mouth, that the whiskey traffic rather set her back and because of this substance she suffered much sorrow and bitterness of mind. This natural poverty and natural adversity, which is called the world's cross, could not bend her heart to submit to seeking the better substance until in these last years, when God's word began to penetrate her heart, and to cause a spiritual sorrow there, which is after the mind of God, when she began to realize the depth of her depravity and with full sincerity to regret

her sins. She gave up the former whiskey trade, which became abominable to her and began to knock on the door of heaven with groanings and tears, and the merciful Savior, Who turns no one away, who comes to Him with a broken heart, gave her to feel such signs of grace, from which she received the blessed assurance, that she was in grace. She however, could not escape the doubts, that come to many after the signs of grace. Nevertheless there was great devotion in her heart and remarkably firm trust upon the Savior, so that her prayers were heard even into heaven, though she like David would have sighed from the depths of hell. Through this marvelous power of prayer, she was given to feel wonderfully strong emotions of grace, so that the heart leaped with joy, and even under physical weakness, she became strengthened in spirit. The Savior oftentimes made the power and sweetness of the future world known to her by the divers signs of grace, which signs we need not enumerate, because the people of the world will not believe even then, that a Christian in grace sees wonderful occurrences and revelations, through which God strengthens his faith. But the other Christians, to whom such exalted emotions of grace are not given might perhaps begin to doubt, of being on the right way, when such exalted emotions of grace have not been granted them. But we may simply thank the great crossbearer, who gives each according to his ability to bear. Would all be able to bear such powerful emotions of grace, such exalted revelations, such sudden changes of heart, as this Christian sister; whose heart finally became weakened physically, according as she became strengthened spiritually? As does the faith of other Christians become strengthened, the nearer they come to the gate of heaven. The faith of this glorified spirit likewise finally became so much strengthened, that she cared not for the whole world. As many natural parents have sorrow of the little children, who through death of the parent will be left orphans, and defenseless, but this most loftily graced soul however had not the least sorrow over the little children, who have now been left orphans through the parent's death. So firm was her trust in God, that He will take the best care of the children, Who has given them life. Be therefore praised Thou dear Parent! Thou great crossbearer, Who hast let us live until the day, that with our eyes we have been given to see how a Christian dies. Be praised Thou dear Parent, Who hast poured out of Thy grace so generously upon a poor woman, despised by the world, that in her we have been given to see the characteristics of living faith, and you glorified spirit, you have sighed before, now you will spread out your heart of joy. Before, you have crawled in the dust of the earth, now you are able to fly. Before, you have wept, now you are in joy and gladness with your Commiserator, your Redeemer, Who's feet you have embraced in your misery and have wet them with your tears. He has now wiped away your tears. You dear soul, you no longer long for your children or your spouse, whom you have left here to weep and yearn after their mother. O, glorified spirit, in that wide expanse, in the clear climate, where you

now sing thanksgiving, praise and glory to your Savior. But we poor worms and wayfarers, we are still in the atmosphere of sighs and tears, we are still crawling in the earth's dust, we have not as yet heard the benediction of the final struggle. Nevertheless we have the hope and confidence in God, that we will eventually arrive, if we but strive, flee, long, cry, endeavor, sigh and pray, that the god of peace would give us strength to struggle, valiance to suffer, forbearance, devoutness to pray for strength to believe, that we live sheltered by the Parent! Amen.

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