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## A Guide. John Bajus

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moves in Kantian thought patterns. His theological system is cold rationalism and moralism.<sup>46)</sup>

Ritschl's influence was perpetuated in Germany through his disciples Herrmann, Harnack, and Kaftan. Through these men Ritschlianism came to America.<sup>47)</sup> The fatherhood of God, the empirical method, pragmatism, the social gospel of American Modernism, are in a large measure the result of Ritschl's theology.

F. E. MAYER

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## A Guide

### For the Spiritual Care of the Unduly Grieved, of the Melancholy, and of the Mentally Afflicted

*Rubric:* The pastor should determine by a frank and sincere talk with the patient and his loved ones the cause of the deep grief. Since there are various reasons for such cases, we hereby present several formularies which may be followed.

#### 1. Spiritual Care of One Who is Unduly Grieved over the Loss of a Loved One

*Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.*

DEAR FRIEND:

I find you at the present time deeply grieved; your spirit is very depressed, dejected. You may feel as if the Lord had hidden His face from you and had forsaken you. It is not surprising, for you have suffered a great loss. In His unsearchable wisdom the Lord has deprived you of a great treasure, has taken from your heart and bosom a dearly beloved child (devoted wife, faithful husband, mother, father, brother, sister, etc.). This loss has deeply affected your heart, so that you cry out with Job: "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me" (Job 19:21). Such sorrow and grief is natural, and we have many examples in the Scriptures showing how the faithful children of God mourned the loss of their loved ones.

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46) As to Ritschl's own personal attitude toward the Savior we are not in a position to pass judgment. His son reports that Ritschl had asked him to comfort him in the hour of death by praying with him Paul Gerhardt's "O Haupt, voll Blut und Wunden." *Leben*, II, p. 524. It is not established historically whether Ritschl's wish was fulfilled.

47) Foster, *Modern Movement in American Theology* (1939), Ch. VII. The reader who is interested in tracing the influence of Ritschlianism in American liberalism will find the additional historical treatises helpful: Coffin, S. H., *Religion Yesterday and Today*; Conger, C. P., *The Ideologies of Religion*, Chaps. VIII—XV; Hopkins, C. H., *The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism*; Knudson, A. C., *Present Tendencies in Religious Thought*; Macintosh, H. R., *Types of Modern Theology*; Smith, G. B., *Religion in the Last Quarter Century*; Wieman and Meland, *American Philosophies of Religion*.

Thus David mourned the loss of Jonathan and Absalom; the widow of Nain mourned the loss of her son; Mary and Martha together with Jesus mourned for Lazarus. Who could enumerate them all? And now you, too, are in deep sorrow.

However, a Christian should not and must not mourn or sorrow as the heathen, who know not God and have no hope. A true Christian is indeed moved to tears and is deeply grieved over the loss of a loved one, but he also comforts himself in his sorrow. Surely the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God. They are at peace. They are glorious and blessed. Does not the sacred hymn read: "Oh, how blest are ye whose toils are ended, Who through death have unto God ascended!"? And yet you might say, But I, I am wounded and forsaken!—Do not despair! Comfort yourself with these thoughts: "All things work together for good to them that love God." What God ordains is always good. Even this visitation is meant for your good. For "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." He wounds and He also heals. "Though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies." For a moment He hides His face, but turns to us again with His mercy. Hope thou in Him!—When your days and our days shall be fulfilled, then shall we follow our loved ones. There shall be a happy reunion with those who have departed; our hearts shall rejoice, and that joy no one will take from us.

May He who is our only true Comfort be gracious unto you and comfort you in your sorrow. Turn to Him in prayer, and ask for such comfort:

O eternal, almighty God and Father, Creator of heaven and earth, in whose hands is our life, my great loss moves me to cry unto Thee in my distress and grief over the departure of my dear child (wife, husband, etc.). I pray Thee, heavenly Father, comfort and refresh me also in my sorrow and distress and so with the assurance of my forgiveness through the blood of Jesus Christ, that through Thy Holy Spirit in this visitation I may recognize Thy holy, good, gracious, and perfect will, and that I may submit to it entirely. If this bitter cup cannot pass from me, do Thou sweeten it with Thy mercy. Help and heal, O Thou great Physician, the deep and burning wound of my heart with the balsam of Thy mercy, according to Thy promise. Keep me from falling into despair, and with the light of Thy grace disperse the darkness which threatens to envelope my troubled heart. Assure me that my loved one has gone to Thee through temporal death, that he (she) is with Thee, and that no harm can draw nigh unto him (her). Grant me such assurance that my heart may be comforted and rejoice in Thee, my God and Savior. Graciously grant that

in my last hour I also may be prepared to close my eyes in Christ Jesus, in peace and joy, follow my loved one, and together with him (her) dwell with Thee forever. Graciously hear me for the sake of Jesus Christ, Thy dear Son, my Lord and Savior. Amen.

*Lord's Prayer.*

*Benediction.*

## 2. Comfort for One Unduly Grieved over the Loss of Temporal Goods

**DEAR FRIEND IN CHRIST JESUS:**

I understand that you are greatly dejected because of the loss of temporal goods. This does no surprise me. Every loss brings sorrow and sadness to him who bears the loss. Temporal goods are required for this temporal life, not only to provide for our own needs and those of our loved ones, but also to help the poor, the widows and orphans, to support church and school, etc.

But many persons are apt to place too great an emphasis on temporal goods; love them too dearly; give their heart entirely to them, and forget about everything else. For such persons temporal goods become a dangerous snare. There is the example of the rich man mentioned in the holy Gospel, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day—and forgot his God and the salvation of his soul—and perished. As for the prodigals and the epicureans so temporal goods often become dangerous for the miserly and the stingy who—in order to gather as much as possible—often cheat, steal, rob the poor, and thus anger God and harm their own soul. For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

Therefore, dear friend, do not lament too much the fact that you have lost a treasure which moth and rust doth corrupt, and thieves steal. You still have the greater treasure, namely, the salvation which Christ wrought for you and as you are by faith a child of God, you may hope that as you continue to work and carefully manage your temporal affairs, the Lord may again bless you as He blessed Job, who also lost all he had and yet was richly blessed again by the Lord. Or as is stated in Ecclesiasticus 11:18: "Trust the Lord, and abide in thy labor, for it is an easy thing in the sight of the Lord swiftly on the sudden to make a poor man rich." Remember, it is an easy matter for the Lord to make a poor man rich. He exalts, He humbles, thus performing His wonders. Or as Tobit says to his son, "Fear not, my son, that we have become poor; you have plenty if you fear the Lord, and, abstaining from all sin, do His good and gracious will." Therefore seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. The Lord cares

for us. He clothes the lilies of the field and the cedars of Lebanon. He shall also take care of you and help you. See to it that you are rich in God. For he who has God, has everything. Strive and care for the eternal treasures, which neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal. All the other necessary things will be added. Blessed is that person who can sincerely say with the poet: "Hence, all earthly treasure! Jesus is my Pleasure, Jesus is my Choice. Hence, all empty glory! Naught to me thy story Told with tempting voice. Pain or loss, Or shame or cross, Shall not from my Savior move me Since He deigns to love me."

May the Lord comfort and bless you with all good both now and forever.

*Let us pray:*

O rich and gracious God, from whom I receive all good things for body and soul, and without whose permission no loss can come nigh me, I, miserable creature, confess that I have suffered a great loss of temporal goods, which has brought me much sorrow. Undoubtedly I clung too firmly to these temporal goods. Graciously forgive me my straying and comfort me, Lord God, that I may say with Job: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." I pray Thee sincerely, create in me a heart which above all will first seek Thy kingdom and care more for the riches of heaven than for the treasures of this life. I firmly believe that Thou wilt provide me with all other things I need for the support of this body and life. Help me to be content with what I have. Bless Thou my work and my business. Open Thou Thine hand, and satisfy me and my loved ones according to Thy good pleasure. If it is pleasing to Thee and would serve my welfare, bless me as Thou didst bless patient Job. Guard my heart that it may not love earthly things. Help me to manage my temporal affairs wisely and to use Thy gifts to help the poor and needy, and support the work of Thy kingdom. Comfort and hear me for the sake of Jesus, my Lord and Savior. Amen.

*Lord's Prayer.*

*Apostolic Blessing.*

### **3. Comfort for One with a Lingering Illness or an Incurable Disease**

**DEAR FRIEND IN CHRIST JESUS:**

Your heart is much grieved because of this serious illness in which you have lingered so long and for which you have been unable to find a cure. Indeed your position is sad and difficult. During the day you long for the night; the nights, however, seem so long that you cry out, Watchman, will the night not come to an end? You cry with Job: "Oh, that my grief were

thoroughly weighed and my calamity laid in the balances together! For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea." And yet you should not give yourself to hopeless mourning. Rather turn to God, who graciously bids you: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." Do not lose hope; despair not. The Great Physician, Jesus Christ, who so wonderfully healed many, will come nigh your bed and heal you also. And even if the Lord may seem slow in coming to your help, you should not despair nor grievously mourn. For whether you live or whether you die, you are the Lord's. For a God-fearing Christian and dear child of God to live is Christ, and to die is gain. We sing in the hymn, "For me to live is Jesus, to die is gain for me." Thus we reach our goal where "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes." Until that time be patient. May God give you the needed endurance in rich measure. Pray to Him for it. Trust in Him. May the Lord comfort you, grant you true patience, and graciously deal with you here in time and hereafter in eternity.

*Let us pray:*

Almighty, eternal God, heavenly Father, the Father of all mercies and the God of all comfort, in whose hand is my sickness and health, death and life, who wounds and heals, who killeth and maketh alive, with a contrite heart I pray Thee, of Thy boundless mercy be gracious unto me, turn Thou me unto Thyself, heal me, save me, refresh me, comfort me, for I am sorely distressed and troubled. In this day of trouble I call upon Thee; deliver Thou me, and I shall yet glorify Thee. Grant me patience that I may cheerfully bear Thy fatherly chastisement and despair not. Help me to know that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us, and that our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. But if it be Thy will that I no longer rise from this illness, confirm me in the faith that death is my gain, so that I may have the desire to die and be with Christ. Have mercy upon me, and for Jesus' sake forgive me all my sins. Be Thou present with me in my last hour, and lead me out of this vale of tears, and bring me to Thy heavenly kingdom, there to behold Thy glory forever. Amen.

*Prayer of those present:*

Almighty God, Lord of heaven and earth, who didst promise through Thy dear Son Jesus Christ that if two shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done

for them, we pray Thee on behalf of this Thy servant, grant him Thy Holy Spirit to help him in his weakness, and bear the comforting witness that he is Thy son and heir of eternal life. Graciously be with him in the struggle with death, and help him to overcome that he may receive from Thee the crown of life. Hear us for the sake of the bitter suffering and death of Thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

*Lord's Prayer.*

*Apostolic Benediction.*

#### 4. Comfort for One Unduly Troubled by Sin

A brief exhortation, somewhat similar to a confessional address, stressing sin and the grace of God in Christ Jesus, may first be spoken.

*Prayer:*

Merciful God, rebuke not Thy servant in Thine anger, neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure. Have mercy upon me, for I am weak; heal me, for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed; but Thou, O Lord, how long? Return, O Lord, deliver my soul; Oh, save me for Thy mercies' sake, for I am weary with my groaning (Ps. 6). Remember, O Lord, Thy tender mercies and thy loving-kindnesses; for they have been ever of old. For Thy goodness' sake, for Thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great (Ps. 25). Grant peace to my troubled conscience; heal my soul; restore unto me fullness of joy; strengthen me; protect me, and comfort me. Let all know that Thou hast heard the voice of my weeping and hast heard my supplication. I shall offer Thee honor and praise, draw near unto Thee with thanksgiving, and praise Thy name now and forevermore. Amen.

(If the patient desires Holy Communion, the pastor shall use the Order of the Communion of the Sick.)

*Lord's Prayer.*

*Apostolic Blessing.*

#### 5. Comfort for One Unduly Grieved in General

DEAR FRIEND IN CHRIST JESUS:

You are in great sorrow. You are troubled and perplexed and like David of old you mingle your drink with weeping, and your tears are your food day and night. This should not dishearten you, for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. In this respect the godly must suffer with the Lord here, that they may be partakers of His glory there. The disciples of the Lord have sorrow here on earth. Here they must weep and mourn, that later their

mouth may be filled with laughter and their tongue with singing. Indeed, blessed are they that mourn, for they that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Not only will God wipe away our tears in the life to come, but He is mindful of our tears and our sorrows also in this life. King Hezekiah was near death and turned his face to the wall that no man should see him, but the Lord said to him, "I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears." Thus neither will the Lord forsake you, dear friend, He is your Father who pitieth His children. He will not forsake you, as a mother forsaketh not her own child. Who trusts in the Lord, shall find much comfort even in his cross. The Lord Jesus is your Brother. He makes your suffering His own and assures you that He is your Brother, who is not angry with you. Then, too, the Holy Spirit helpeth our infirmities and maketh intercessions for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Your sincere and humble prayer will reach the merciful heart of God, and He assures you: Is not Ephraim my dear son? Is not he a pleasant child? Since you know that God, who has placed this cross upon you, is ready and able to deliver you, why, then, weep and mourn? He has placed this burden upon you, He will also help you to bear it. He assures you: "I will be with you in trouble; I will deliver you and honor you." Hence rejoice and sing:

I leave all things to God's direction,  
 He loveth me in weal and woe;  
 His will is good, true His affection,  
 With tender love His heart doth glow.  
 My Fortress and my Rock is He:  
 What pleaseth God, that pleaseth me.

*Prayer:*

O my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who wast exceeding sorrowful even unto death and who didst gloriously rise from the dead and didst comfort Thy sorrowing disciples, Thou seest how greatly troubled is my soul. I cry to Thee for comfort. "O God, forsake me not! Thy gracious presence lend me." My soul waiteth for Thee more than they that watch for the morning. I believe that Thou wilt not leave me without comfort. Come and comfort me, O my Lord and my God. Remove from my heart this great sorrow, and inflame it with heavenly joy that I may ever rejoice in Thee, my Savior. Thou art my Comfort, my Strength and Victory, my Light and Salvation. Hear Thou my prayer, and my mouth shall be filled with laughter and my tongue with singing. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God. Amen.

*Lord's Prayer.*

*Benediction.*



### 6. Spiritual Care of the Mentally Afflicted

The spiritual care of the mentally afflicted (idiotic, *fixa idea*, raving, despairing) is very difficult and at times impossible, since the mind is more or less darkened and not very receptive to the Word of God. However, in less serious cases the pastor should make use of the clear periods (*lucida intervalla*) of the patient and briefly converse with him on topics which may interest him. Through tact and sincere conversation lead the patient away from the thoughts of his illness, and refresh his mind — if the patient is receptive — with the best-known Scripture passages, e. g., "God so loved the world" . . . "Come unto Me" . . . and also appropriate hymn stanzas. Of great help to the pastor are the words and explanation of the relatives. The most appropriate prayer to be used is the Lord's Prayer.

If the patient has few clear moments, or if he soon tires of the pastor's presence, then the pastor's task is at an end. However, he can comfort the relatives by commending the patient into the gracious keeping of the Lord and praying:

O Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Thou great Physician, who didst heal the sick of body and soul during Thy visible sojourn here on earth, mercifully look upon this Thy redeemed servant, who is great troubled. Thou art the true Light, dispersing all darkness; we sincerely pray Thee mercifully to disperse the darkness which is enveloping his soul, and if it is pleasing to Thee and profitable to him, restore light to his soul.

For Thy bitter sufferings, for Thy precious wounds, for Thine innocent death, for Thy glorious resurrection and ascension, have mercy, have mercy upon him. Have mercy upon his loved ones and upon us all. Amen.

*Lord's Prayer.*

*Benediction.*

*Prayer of Christians for a person having an evil spirit:*

O most merciful Lord Jesus Christ, we humbly pray Thee on behalf of this afflicted person, who is troubled by an evil spirit. Thou art able to do all things, and all things must obey Thee. In answer to the prayer of the Syrophenician woman, whose daughter was grievously vexed with a devil, Thou didst miraculously heal her with Thine almighty Word. Thou didst come to destroy the works of Satan. Have mercy upon this person, who is also troubled with an evil spirit. Lord, remember that Thou didst cleanse this person, created in the image of God, with Thy precious blood. Remember that the Holy Ghost has sanctified him and made him a child of God. Cast him not from Thy presence; rather remember Thy mercies, which are of old. Thou, O God,

art faithful, and wilt not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; but wilt with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it. O Lord Jesus, God of our salvation, strengthen him by the power of Thy might, that he may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil and quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. Simply speak the word and Thy servant shall be healed. Lord Jesus, show Thy divine power with which Thou didst cast out devils, that even this evil spirit may know that Thou rulest over all and hast power even over the hosts of hell. Hear us, O holy, almighty, eternal God; hear us, O Lord and King, for the sake of Thy great mercy and the glory of Thy name, blessed forever and ever. Amen.

### 7. Spiritual Care of Prisoners Serving Time

The purpose of visiting prisoners serving time is to instruct, comfort, and lead them to repentance. Prisoners may be classified according to two groups: 1. Those held for investigation. 2. Those convicted of a crime. The pastor deals with them accordingly.

#### I

1. A prisoner held for investigation may simply be a suspect and is not convicted of any crime. His guilt is not established. If the pastor is permitted to see him, he should speak to him sincerely along these thoughts: The omniscient, omnipresent God knows all; no secrets can be hid from Him; eventually the truth will come to light. Hence it is best to cling to the truth. If the prisoner has committed a crime, it is better to pay the penalty now than to withhold the truth and later come under the condemnation of God. The pastor may have a prayer.

2. In the second case the pastor should gain the confidence of the prisoner. He will succeed by dealing patiently with him. It is only with the most hardened prisoners that his efforts may be in vain. If the pastor has done all in his power and his attempts are unsuccessful, then he has done his duty, and his work is at an end. However, he can still inform the prisoner: I will pray for you that God may enlighten your mind and change your heart. I will remember you in my prayers. Perhaps you will change your mind and may wish to see me.

The pastor may address the prisoner as follows:

DEAR N. N.:

Let it not surprise you that I sought you. As a father seeks his child and a shepherd seeks the lost sheep, so have I sought you. That is a sacred duty of my office. The Lord sends me; I am His messenger. However, I sought you not only out of duty, but also out of compassion and love for you. I feel close to you and

desire to speak with you sincerely as a father with his son, or as brother to brother. I am sorry to see you here. I would have been more pleased had this not happened, and you could have been at home with your loved ones and friends, rejoicing with them and going about your daily tasks. Instead, you are alone within these four walls. But it is too late to mourn over that. No amount of mourning and sorrow can undo what has happened. You must pay for your deed here. You must suffer your punishment for your own correction and as a warning to others. May the Lord grant you patience and endure your suffering.

The pastor may touch upon other matters, such as his health, prison routine, etc. This will suffice for the first visit. The pastor may pray the Lord's Prayer and, commending the prisoner into the gracious keeping of the Lord, depart.

## II

With the second visit the pastor may briefly touch upon the matters spoken of during the first visit, convey to the prisoner any messages from those at home, and then continue:

DEAR N. N.:

As a master instructs his servants what they are to do, so God informs us of His holy will. He tells us in His Commandments what we are to do and not to do. We are to avoid and shun all evil and do that which is good. For instance, he tells us not to kill, steal, commit adultery, lie, cheat, etc., for it is a sin to do such things. On the other hand, it is pleasing to the Lord to worship Him, come to church, read and study His Word, honor our parents, help the poor, lead a chaste and decent life. We are to do such things because it is God's will, and it is good and profitable for us. The Lord clearly states that He will punish evildoers, but will bless and do good to those who keep His Commandments. It should also be remembered that not only that is a sin which a person commits through an evil deed or act, but also his evil words, yes, even his evil thoughts and desires. Hence we are to be on guard not only against evil deeds, but also against evil words, thoughts, and desires. We are to do and say, think and desire only that which is good and pleasing to the Lord.

Thus we are to live according to God's holy will, according to His Commandments. And this we are to do all the more readily since God is so good and merciful to us. He has created us and has given us our body and soul, etc. (First Article.) No tongue can adequately describe the blessings which we have received from our gracious and merciful God. Above all, in Holy Baptism He has received us into the covenant of grace, has cleansed us

of our sins, received, adopted us as His children in Christ Jesus, and adorned us with the gifts of His Holy Spirit. How great is His love! How that should prompt us to forsake all evil and follow after that which is good!

And yet, how ungrateful is man; how grievous are his sins against the Lord, his Benefactor! Man sins against God secretly and openly, willfully and out of weakness, and thus brings upon himself the wrath and punishment of God.

It grieves me to say, dear N. N., that you are such a man. Without mentioning other sins, I wish to remind you of that sin only which has brought you into this prison. The thought pains and frightens me. For consider, just how were you wronged by N. N., whom you (robbed, killed, etc.)? Does not the Lord clearly forbid you to (steal, kill, etc.)? Dear friend, where was your heart, your mind, at that time? The Lord saw you and was moved to anger. It would not have been surprising had the Lord struck you with death at the time. (The pastor should strive to lead the prisoner to acknowledge his sin and repent.)

I am deeply grieved over what you did, and I pray God that He may lead you to the knowledge of your sin and to sincere repentance. May you truly repent even as we sing in the hymn (322:1). And now I commend you to God. Remember that God is your Judge, who punishes all evildoers, but receives all penitent sinners. May the Lord help you.

*Lord's Prayer.*

### III

The pastor will briefly touch upon what had been said during the previous visit and seek to bring the prisoner to repentance. If the prisoner remains obstinate, hardened, impenitent, the pastor should continue to apply the Law. It is self-evident that the pastor will not give the prisoner absolution and the Lord's Supper as long as he remains impenitent.

However, should the pastor see signs of repentance, he shall continue:

DEAR N. N.:

I have done everything possible to bring you to the knowledge of your sin and lead you to repentance. I thank God that through His Holy Spirit He hath begun a good work in you, and I pray Him to perform it. I wish to announce to you the grace of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Therefore out of love, God gave this world His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. The Son of God suf-

ferred and died upon the cross for our sins in order to redeem us. Whoever in true faith trusts in the merits of His Cross and with a penitent heart pleads for mercy, he shall receive the grace of God, forgiveness of sins, righteousness, eternal life, and salvation. The Lord is ready and willing to forgive all sins to you who are penitent and, trusting solely in the merits of your Lord Jesus Christ, plead for mercy. But woe unto you if you should accept His grace in vain and — God forbid! — return to your former sin, thinking that God is merciful and will forgive again. May God guard you against such a thought! It is true that God is merciful, but He is also just and righteous, and whoever uses the grace of God in vain and willfully returns to sin, he thereby brings upon himself the wrath of God unto the Day of Judgment, and his end is eternal damnation. May the merciful Lord preserve you from such an end. Rather may the Lord guide you with His Holy Spirit to walk in daily repentance and serve Him in holiness and godliness at all times and all places, in prison, at home, and in His temple.

*Let us pray:*

O almighty and righteous God, who dost not permit iniquity to go unpunished, yet in mercy receivest all penitent sinners who turn to Thee: I, a poor miserable sinner, confess unto Thee that with my many sins (specify) I have angered Thee and have justly deserved Thy temporal and eternal punishment. But I pray Thee, for the sake of the precious wounds of Thy Son Jesus Christ, graciously forgive me all my sins, even this transgression for which I am in prison; endow me with Thy Holy Spirit, and comfort me that I despair not. Receive me into grace as the penitent thief on the cross and still my troubled conscience. Grant me Christian patience. Deliver me from the prison of hell that I may not suffer eternal punishment. I place my trust entirely in Thee; unto Thee I wish to live and die. Have mercy upon me, a poor miserable sinner, for the sake of the innocent sufferings and death of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, my Redeemer. Amen.

*Lord's Prayer.*

(In later visits instruct the prisoner on Confession and the Lord's Supper. Lead him to desire the Sacrament.)

*Prayer of a person in prison because of faithfulness to the Gospel:*

Lord God, look Thou upon me, and have mercy upon me, for I am forsaken and sorely afflicted. Behold my lot, O Lord, and as a righteous Judge, defend me. In Thee do I trust. Deliver me as Thou didst once deliver innocent Joseph from prison, Daniel from the lions' den, and Peter from his chains. Into Thy hands,

O merciful and faithful God, do I commend my spirit and all my loved ones. Do Thou comfort them through Thy Holy Spirit, and keep them in the true faith and confession of the truth and Thy name until their end. If it is Thy will to keep me in this prison, grant me patience and endurance to bear my cross. Teach me what is still unknown to me; through Thy Holy Spirit remind me of what I have forgotten; comfort me in my sorrow; strengthen me in my weakness; defend Thou me, since I am forsaken by all men. Enlighten and incline toward pity all who are in position to free me from this captivity. Remember and have pity upon me according to Thy great mercy. Thou art my Refuge and my Portion in the land of the living. Deliver my soul from prison that I may praise Thy name.

If it be Thy will that my death serve to the glory of Thy name, then endow me with a firm mind, and give courage to my heart that I may overcome the fear of death and fight the good fight of faith, and, holding faith and a good conscience, receive by grace the crown of righteousness and eternal life.

Grant me all this for the sake of Jesus, Thy dear Son, who innocently suffered and died and rose again. To Him with Thee and the Holy Ghost be honor and glory forever. Amen.

*Lord's Prayer.*

### 8. Preparation for the Condemned

(Laws regulating the duties of pastors preparing the condemned. During celebration of the Lord's Supper all handcuffs and chains should be removed from the prisoner. After execution all remarks of the prisoner should be kept in secret.)

It often happens that a criminal will refuse the service of a pastor or will later become hardened. Whenever the pastor is convinced that his efforts are in vain, then his task is at an end.

The following may be used in addition to what has already been given in the foregoing.

#### I

O Christ, for Thy suffering, grant us forgiveness of sins.

DEAR N. N.:

I am very sorry at what has happened. Because of your transgression you are condemned to die. I come to you in order to comfort you. That is my sacred duty. O Lord God, show me the manner in which I can best perform this duty.

DEAR N. N.:

The criminal court could not judge you otherwise and issue any other verdict than it did. You are to pay the supreme penalty

not only because by your crime you have made yourself dangerous to society, but also to satisfy justice and truth and as a warning to others.

However, in addition to a human court there is another court, the Court of God. That Judgment will be more merciful for you if in these last moments you come to sincere repentance. Firmly trust that even though you pay for your crime with your life and die, yet, and this is more important, if you repent of your sins and penitently turn to God, He will be merciful to you and will deliver you from eternal death and damnation.

Hence it is my sincere desire to lead you to sincere repentance, to assure you of the grace of God, to comfort you, and through fervent prayers lead you to God and to the peace which passeth all understanding. Bless my efforts, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

DEAR N. N.:

Two malefactors were crucified with our Lord Jesus Christ. One malefactor railed on Him; the other, however, rebuked the railing malefactor and said: "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man hath done nothing amiss." Later he turned to Jesus and said: "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." The Lord heard his plea and, seeing his penitent heart, mercifully replied: "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise."

Note that the malefactor acknowledged and confessed his guilt and that he was receiving just punishment. The fact that Jesus mercifully dealt with him and promised him: "Today thou shalt be with Me in paradise" shows that the thief acknowledged his guilt and penitently confessed it. You, N. N., likewise should repent of your transgression, penitently confess it, and with a contrite heart pray the Lord to remember you, and out of grace forgive you your sins and open the gates of paradise to you at your death. Two paths are before you, dear N. N., the path of sorrow and repentance, or the path of hardheartedness and impenitence. The first leads to life and salvation, the second to eternal death and damnation. Why should you be eternally damned? Just consider what you did. You took the life of an innocent person. The righteous God demands of you: "Where is Abel, thy brother?" "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground." Are you not sorry that you took an innocent person's life? Are you not sorry for the widow and orphans? Have you no sorrow for your own soul, which justly deserves to be condemned to eternal death and damnation because of your impenitence? (The pastor should try to lead the condemned to a knowledge of his sins and to repentance.)

Pray God for a contrite, penitent heart. I also shall pray for you. I shall now leave you for awhile with your God. But I remind you again: Repent while you have time for repentance.

*Lord's Prayer.*

II

DEAR N. N.:

Two paths are before you: the path of impenitence and hard-heartedness which leads to damnation, and the path of repentance which leads to life. Although you must die the temporal death because of your crime, you can be spared the second death, eternal death and damnation, if you but repent and in sincere repentance turn to God. (The pastor may continue along the line of thought leading to repentance.)

DEAR N. N.:

It would please me very much to save your soul and help bring it onto the path of eternal life, that even the angels of God in heaven might rejoice over you, a penitent sinner. Therefore, tell me, N. N., are you truly and sincerely sorry that you have sinned, especially that you have committed this sin for which you are condemned?

(The prisoner may or may not reply. If he should hesitate, the pastor should not force him even though he may feel that a change is taking place within the prisoner. Such a confession if it is to be of any value should be willingly made. The pastor can say: You do not reply. However, I still hope that you will consider it thoughtfully, repent, and confess. I pray God to lead you to such repentance. *Lord's Prayer.* I commend you to God. The pastor, however, should not give up even though the prisoner may at first say: I do not repent, or, I have nothing to repent or be sorry about. As a good shepherd seeks the lost sheep, the pastor should seek the sinner until he finds him or until the sinner definitely refuses.)

(Should the condemned person reply sincerely: I do lament my sin, the pastor should then continue):

I trust and hope, dear N. N., that what you say you also feel in your heart and that your confession comes from a sincere heart. Thanks be unto God that through His Holy Spirit He has brought you to repentance. (Hymn on repentance.)

DEAR N. N.:

The merciful God forgives the sins of those who repent and ask for mercy for the sake of the merits of Jesus Christ, and gives them righteousness, eternal life, and salvation. The Lord Jesus gave His believers the power of the Keys to forgive the sins of penitent sinners and to retain the sins of the impenitent.



I also by virtue of my office am prepared to give you absolution. Prepare yourself therefore for Confession. Meditate on your sinfulness and the grace of God in Christ Jesus. Turn to God in prayer, into whose gracious keeping I commend you.

*Lord's Prayer.*

### III

#### Susprium

The pastor prepared the condemned for Confession. Following the confessional address, the pastor will present the questions, etc.

The pastor should use every opportunity to be with the condemned. Let the condemned person decide whether he should have Communion once or more often. If only once, it should take place the night before the execution.

### IV

#### The Day of Execution, Before Being Led Forth

DEAR N. N.:

You have but a few moments in this vain world. You are at peace with God and can be sure that the word of your Lord Jesus will be fulfilled: "Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise." The tears which you now shed shall this day be wiped away from your eyes. Just pray God: Lord, remember Thou me in Thy kingdom.

*Let us pray:*

O Lord God, merciful Father, behold the hour of my departure from this vale of tears is drawing nigh. I know that no one beside Thee can help me. I therefore pray Thee, do not forsake me, a poor, miserable sinner, but grant that the doors of Thy mercy and Thy heavenly paradise be opened unto my soul and that with my last hour all my sins and transgressions and all punishment, both temporal and eternal, come to an end. Grant that my last hour on earth be the first in Thy eternal kingdom, for the sake of Jesus Christ, my Savior. Amen.

(If time permits, use appropriate passages of Scripture and hymn stanzas for comfort.)

*When the condemned is being shackled.*

Remember, dear N. N., the bonds with which our Savior was bound. Through His bonds we received eternal freedom. With His bonds He has bound us to Himself that no power may separate us from His love.

*Let us pray:*

O Holy Spirit, Thou true Comforter. Comfort me in this hour and final anguish. Strengthen my weak body, strengthen

my sorrowing heart, and help me to remain with my Redeemer and Savior Jesus Christ unto the end and say: Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit, for Thou, faithful God, hast redeemed me. Amen.

*At the start of the last journey.*

Go, dear N.N., on this last journey. Soon you shall walk before the Lord in the land of the living. You need not fear the judgment of people if you have found mercy with God. Your heart is sprinkled with the blood of Christ. Hope! The Father loves you; the Son intercedes for you; the Holy Ghost strengthens you!

*Let us pray:*

O Lord, be with me as I leave this world; be at my right hand as I give up my spirit. Deliver me from the power of the devil. Comfort and strengthen me. Keep me in the true faith, that in the hour of death I may gaze upon Thy grace and mercy and say with Stephen: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. If I should faint through fear of death, grant that my heart may still cling to Thee. Amen.

DEAR N.N.:

As many drops of blood as the Savior shed for you; as many wounds He suffered for you, so much comfort and strength may He grant you for a joyful and blessed end. Go in peace!

*While on the way.*

Appropriate scripture passages and hymn stanzas.

*As they draw near to the place of execution.*

DEAR N.N.:

Pray: O my only Redeemer and Savior, Lord Jesus Christ, I commend myself entirely to Thee. In Thee do I place my hope and comfort. I long for Thee only, that I may be with Thee and rise to eternal life. Amen.

*On the place of execution.*

DEAR N.N.:

Here is the end of your suffering and the beginning of your peace and joy. The Lord says to you: "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands, Thou art Mine. Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Hope! Hope! The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Kneel and pray: God the Father, have mercy upon me! God

the Son, Christ Jesus, have mercy upon me! God the Holy Ghost, have mercy upon me! O Blessed Trinity, one eternal God, have mercy upon me! Amen.

**DEAR N. N.:**

The Triune God has heard your prayer and is merciful to you. (Place the right hand upon the head of the condemned.) Be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you in the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Lord Jesus, to Thee I live. Lord Jesus, to Thee I die. Lord Jesus, whether I live or die, I am Thine. Into Thy hands I commend my spirit. Amen.

Arise and go in peace. May God grant you to see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. The Lord Jesus receive thy soul and save it eternally. Amen. Amen. Amen.

During the execution the pastor prays.

Chicago, Ill.

Translated from the Slovak by JOHN BAJUS

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**Ansprache Dr. F. Pfothenhauers**

Gehalten vor der Fiskal- und Visitatorenkonferenz in River Forest, Ill., am 3. September 1936

**TEURE BRUEDER IN DEM HERRN!**

In den Kreisen unserer Synode wird geklagt, dass das geistliche Leben bei uns zurueckgegangen sei. Diese Klage ist berechtigt. Die Kirchengeschichte lehrt, dass die Generationen, die Gueter von ihren Vaetern geerbt haben, diese nicht so hoch einschuetzen wie die Vaeter, die sie erkaempft und erarbeitet haben.

Dass das geistliche Leben bei uns gesunken ist, ist aus mancherlei Wahrnehmungen ersichtlich. Der Hausgottesdienst wird wenig gepflegt und infolgedessen die christliche Erziehung der Kinder in der Familie vernachlaessigt. Einst bluehende Gemeindeschulen sind eingegangen, in manchen Faellen ohne zwingende Not. Man begnuegt sich mit Sonntagsschule und mangelhaftem Konfirmandenunterricht, statt Fleiss anzuwenden, auf allerlei Weise den Mangel einer christlichen Schule einigermaßen zu ersetzen. Der Besuch der Gottesdienste laesst viel zu wuenschen uebrig, zumal in den Sommermonaten, wo das Automobil am Sonntag die ganze Familie ins Freie fuehrt. Das Weltwesen macht sich immer breiter. Der Unterschied zwischen unserm Lebenswandel und dem der Kinder dieser Welt wird immer geringer. Tanz, Theater und Wandelbild bieten haeufige Ergoetzungen. Und die Beteiligung an den Werken der Kirche, an der Ausbildung von Predigern und Lehrern