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Outlines on Gospels Adopted by Synodical Conference

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Outlines on Gospels Adopted by Synodical Conference

Lactare

John 11:45-57

The Bible, and therefore the entire Christian religion, centers in Christ and His work of redemption, 2 Tim. 3:15; John 5:39; 1 Cor. 2:2. A religion without Christ, the God-Man, and His vicarious atonement will take no man to heaven, but rather to hell. And a religion which detracts from and obscures the work of Christ's redemption makes it difficult for the sinner to get the full comfort of his salvation in Christ; it may even deprive him of it altogether. It is well that we during Lent make a special study of Christ's work of redemption.

Let us learn

"It Is Expedient for Us that One Man Should Die for the People, and that the Whole Nation Perish Not"

1. The sense of these words as spoken by Caiaphas.

a. Caiaphas, the chief priests, and the Pharisees sought to put Jesus to death. He was the "one man" who should die. Caiaphas said so, v. 50. The Sanhedrin said so, v. 53. They asked the people to help them carry out their resolution, v. 57.

b. The reason for so doing: (1) The reason given: "The Romans shall come," etc., v. 48. Jesus was gaining adherents, v. 45. Caiaphas and his plotters said that this must be stopped, lest He pronounce Himself a rebel king (John 19:12) and thus cause the Romans to wage war against the Jews, and their whole nation perish. Jesus had never in any way shown political aspirations, nor did Caiaphas in his own heart believe that Jesus had any such intention. If so, the Jews would have welcomed Jesus as their Liberator from the Roman yoke. That was the kind of "Messiah" they were looking for. (2) The real reason: Caiaphas and his Council were not so much concerned about the Jewish people as they were to preserve their own authority. Nor was there lack of evidence that Jesus was the promised Messiah. They had to admit His miracles, v. 47. See context. These were His divine credentials, proving Him to be not a mere man, but God, and therefore the promised Savior, John 20:30, 31. Spinoza, the rationalistic Jewish philosopher (d. 1632), said that if he could believe that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, he would become a Christian. Why not? The real reason of opposition was simply man's *unbelief*, his enmity against God, man's refusal to admit his own sinfulness, and humbly to accept salvation as a gift of God.

Even so the unbelievers of our day. They cannot prove that the Bible is not the Word of God and that Christ is not true God

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and Savior; in fact, they must admit the truth of much that the Bible says and have often been put to shame when making their false assertions. But nevertheless they continue in their unbelief and continue on the way to eternal damnation! And as the chief priests and Pharisees were the chief sinners in this respect and kept others from Christ, even so today we find ministers in the pulpits and other teachers of false religions who do likewise, Matt. 23:13.

2. The sense of these words as a divine prophecy.

a. Caiaphas spoke better than he knew and intended. Being the high priest in that year when Jesus was to be crucified, God used Caiaphas as an instrument to utter a divine prophecy. Even His enemies the Lord uses to carry out His divine plans. Pontius Pilate spoke better than he knew when he wrote the superscription above the Cross. It was the last time that God spoke through the high priest of the Old Testament. Messianic prophecy was at an end; the days of fulfillment had arrived.

b. What was the divine prophecy? Vv. 51, 52. It was that which was first uttered in Paradise after the Fall (Gen. 3:15) and then repeated during the four thousand years of the Old Testament, especially so by Isaiah, chap. 53. According to God's eternal council one man, God's own Son, the Word made flesh (John 1:1-14), should take upon Himself the sins of the whole world (John 3:16; 1:29; 2 Cor. 5:19-21) rather than that the whole world should perish.

Let us thank God that we are members of a Church, the spiritual leaders of which say with Paul, "I determined," etc., 1 Cor. 2:2. And let us not in unbelief reject God's counsel for our salvation, but in true repentance and faith accept Christ as our Savior.

J. H. C. FRITZ

Judica

John 12:27-36

The memorial day of Jesus' death is fast approaching. The text is admirably chosen. The fact that Greeks sought to see Jesus reminds Him that now the hour is come, the hour of His death, which is at the same time the hour of His deepest humiliation and most wonderful glorification. Vv. 23, 24.

The Mystery of the Cross of Jesus

1. *There we behold the Man of deepest degradation and shame*
2. *There we see the Father and the Son glorified*

1

Speaking of His death (v. 33), Jesus described it as His being "lifted up from the earth," a direct reference to the manner of

His death, already designated by Him as crucifixion: Matt. 20:19; 26:2. The death on the cross was not only a painful one, it was shameful, a disgrace, the death of a criminal. So the Romans viewed it, while to the Jews it was evidence of God's curse, Deut. 21:23. This death Jesus was to suffer, a death whereby He was numbered with the transgressors, Is. 53:12; Mark 15:28; yea, became a curse, Gal. 3:13; an outcast not only from society, outlawed not only by His own people, but forsaken of God, Ps. 22:1; Matt. 27:46. That was a death the very thought of which caused Jesus to be "troubled," v. 27; distressed, perplexed; cp. Luke 12:50; Matt. 26:37, 38; Luke 22:44.

The Son of Man lifted up from the earth! The Lord of Glory crucified, affixed to the accursed tree, dying the death of a malefactor. How shameful a death! How ignominious a degradation! The Holy One made sin, laden down with all the iniquity and all the crimes and all the atrocities of which mankind ever had been guilty, a reproach of men, despised of the people, forsaken, accursed of God! Can shame more ignominious be imagined? A mysterious cross, indeed, the cross of Calvary!

2

Yet in the hour of deepest shame both Jesus and His Father were glorified. Though troubled at the thought of His Passion, He exclaims: What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? No, no! for this very cause came I into this hour! This was the hour appointed by the eternal counsel of the Trinity for the redemption of the world, and as willingly as the Father gave His Son as the sacrifice for sin, so willingly did the Son accept all the agony this sacrifice, this redemption demanded. He bore the shame of our sin to bring us back to God! Glorious love! A love of which only God was capable! John 3:16; 15:13; Rom. 5:6-8.

Here on the Cross was glorified the obedience of Jesus as an obedience unequaled, unparalleled in the history of the world, Phil. 2:5-11. Glorious obedience of Jesus!

From this Cross goes forth a light dispelling all darkness of sin and death (vv. 35, 36; Is. 25:7, 8) and pointing out to men Him who is the Light of the world, Is. 9:2; John 8:12; 14:6. Glorious Cross!

This crucified Savior draws all men unto Himself, v. 32. He does that not by force, compelling men against their will to glorify Him and accept Him as their God and Savior. No, He draws them with bands of love, Hos. 11:4; Jer. 31:3. His love divine begets in their cold and sluggish hearts faith and love and hope. The crucified Jesus by that very hour of shame has glorified Himself as the perfect Redeemer, our Savior.

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This glory was evidenced by the Father, vv. 28, 29. There need be no doubt that this despised Jesus (Is. 53:2, 3; 1 Cor. 1:23) is our glorious Savior.

Is it not strange that men will turn away from Him who was in so marvelous a manner glorified, that they will not believe? Cp. vv. 29, 34. The loving Jesus warns them, vv. 30, 31, 35, 36.

Through this death the world, sinful mankind, who heaped shame and reproach upon Jesus and sought to do away with Him, was itself judged, condemned, the prince of this world, Satan, cast out, deprived of his absolute dominion over mankind; the kingdom of sin and death and hell overthrown. And whosoever remains in this kingdom of darkness will not see the light, will walk in darkness, uncertainty, hopelessness in this world and be cast out into utter darkness. Is. 8:19-22.

Let no one turn from the crucified Son of Man in unbelief! Let our prayer be Hymn 171:7, 8. (*The Lutheran Hymnal*)

THEO. LAETSCH

Palm Sunday

John 3:22-36

This man, John the Baptist, occupies a unique position. He was not a Prophet of the Old Testament, neither was he an Apostle of the New Testament. He held an office which only one man could hold. There were many prophets of the Old Testament, there were a number of Apostles in the New Testament, but there was only one forerunner of the Messiah; there could be only one, for the Old Testament had prophesied that there would be one particular herald for the Savior, Mal. 3:1; Matt. 11:10. John is unique also in this, that he is the only one of whom Jesus said: "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." Certainly this man is worthy of our attention. But remember, his importance is due to his testimony. We have that here in our text.

The Witness of John the Baptist

1. Its content.

a. Essentially this was the same as that of all the writings and testimonies of the Prophets and Apostles: Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Savior of the world, Acts 3:24; 10:43; 4:12; 1 Cor. 2:2. All these testimonies form a great harmonious chorus. Each tells us the same glorious, precious truth, but each in its own way; each adds to the volume which swells the chorus; each rings out in its glorious unity in variety and variety in unity. John's peculiar witness is expressed vv. 31-36.

b. He warned against misconceptions. John's disciples were troubled by some of these. They had too high an opinion of John the Baptist. John corrected that, vv. 26-28.

c. In order to clarify the picture, he also explained his own office, v. 29. He is "the friend of the Bridegroom." That is another picture of the messenger who prepares the way for the King.

Application: Thank God, this glorious testimony is the same which is also proclaimed here in this church, in all of our hymns, our Catechisms, our publications.

2. Its success.

a. Jesus must increase, v. 30. That has actually occurred during all these centuries. What a wonderful growth of the disciples and influence of Jesus! Consider the enmity of the mighty, the hatred of the most powerful, the ridicule of the wise, which was marshaled against Jesus. And yet all these hordes have gone down and are still going down, and the name of Jesus is rising. His emblem, the cross, is seen all over Europe and all over America. The Bible, the Book which testifies of Him, which also contains the testimony of John the Baptist, has increased in influence and in power. And the end is not yet. For God has given Jesus a name that is above every name, Phil. 2:9-11. For the testimony of the Church, like that of John the Baptist, contains a wisdom which all our adversaries will not be able to gainsay nor resist, Luke 21:15 and 33.

b. There is one minor note in this testimony when John tells us, "I must decrease." John did not say this with sadness. He knew that his person, happiness, honor were all in the hands of Him who has all power in heaven and in earth. John the Baptist finally suffered martyrdom, Matt. 14:1-12. What of it? He will receive that reward which the King of Kings will bestow upon him, Matt. 5:11, 12.

Application: We also must decrease. All members of the flock of Jesus, laymen and clergy, must suffer persecution and ridicule, many of them have had to bear stripes, imprisonment, even death; but all faithful disciples and lovers of Jesus should never forget the testimony of one who suffered much for Jesus' sake, Rom. 8:18.

MARTIN S. SOMMER

Maundy Thursday

Matt. 26:17-30

Love moved Jesus to undertake the work of our redemption. His love prompted Him to enter this world in the form of human flesh. Throughout His three years' sojourn love characterized His words and works. Even in His last sorrowful hours on earth His love stands out, John 13:1. This is apparent also from our text.

The Savior, Even in the Shadow of the Cross, Gives Evidence of His Matchless Love

1. *He tries to halt an erring disciple on his headlong course to destruction*
2. *He institutes the Lord's Supper to strengthen and preserve the faith of all His disciples in the coming trying days*

1

Jesus (v. 17 ff.) made arrangements to celebrate the Passover as directed Ex. 12. In the evening He and the Twelve are reclining around the table to eat the Paschal lamb. Among the disciples was Judas Iscariot. He had been a problem before this. Jesus called him to the apostleship (Matt. 10:4) and placed His trust in him. Judas appears then to have been a true follower of Jesus. But the love of money got the better of him. He became a hypocrite (John 12:5), and he was a thief, John 12:6. Finally his greed led him to the wicked bargain with the chief priests, Matt. 26:14, 15. What a sorry figure had he become, and yet, there he was brazenly present at the solemn Paschal meal.

Our Lord, who knows what is in the heart of man, was well aware of Judas' doings. He could have exposed him, held him up for contempt, reproached him publicly for his treachery and ingratitude, and even driven him out in disgrace from His presence. But that was not the Lord's way. Though Judas dealt treacherously with Jesus, the Lord still desired with love to win him back, if that was possible. So Jesus warns him (v. 23) without directly branding him as a traitor. He points out the awful nature of the sin he is about to commit, v. 24. Only in the end, when nothing seemed to break down Judas' hypocrisy, did Jesus charge him directly, v. 25. The sequel is recorded John 13:30. Jesus' love struck no responsive chord in Judas' heart.

We may feel honestly shocked at Judas' behavior, but Jesus' way of dealing with him carries comfort for us. We may not be tempted to betray Jesus for thirty paltry pieces of silver, but the best of us fails to be true to Jesus at all times. We indeed betray Him in many ways. What a comfort for us to know that Jesus does not at once cast us aside, but again and again comes to us with His Word, reproves, admonishes us, and calls us to repentance! His love toward us never ceases. It will do its utmost to win us back and keep us with Him. Do we appreciate His unselfish love?

2

But Jesus' love at that last Paschal meal also kept in mind the remaining eleven and, in fact, all of His disciples in the coming ages. Jesus' work on earth was drawing to a close, v. 29. His

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visible presence was about to be withdrawn. He knew that difficulties lay ahead for His followers, *e. g.*, the world's hatred (Matt. 28:34, John 15:20), tribulations (Acts 14:22), attacks on the faith (2 John 9). Throughout these their faith must remain firmly rooted in Him. Only then can they remain His true disciples, John 8:31, 32.

To sustain the faith of all His disciples until His visible return, Jesus before His Passion instituted the Lord's Supper, vv. 26-28. In, with, and under the bread and wine He gives us His body, given into death for us, to eat, and His blood, shed for the remission of our sins, to drink. Each is actually present in the Sacrament. This is a divine mystery which human ingenuity will never fathom. By this meal the Savior makes us sure that our sins are really atoned for and that we are His own. What a great proof of the Savior's love for us is this Sacrament!

But are we always aware of what Jesus' love is offering us for our soul and for our faith in this sacred meal? If we are, we must feel compelled to partake of the Lord's Supper often. Awareness of the Lord's love in giving us this Sacrament will impel the Christian to pray, *Lutheran Hymnal*, 305:9. G. V. SCHICK

Good Friday

Luke 23:39-53

The Cross of Christ is the rallying place for all believers — the mightiest invitation to all sinners to come, behold, and believe. Before His death Jesus prophesied John 12:32. The representatives of mankind were assembled beneath the Cross. It still has the same wondrous drawing power.

Behold the Wondrous Death of Jesus on the Cross

1. *Wondrous in its manner* 2. *Wondrous in its effects*
3. *Wondrous in its fruits*

1

Brief is the record of Luke concerning the death of Jesus. Adding the record of John, we note that Jesus said: "It is finished. Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit," v. 46. "Having said thus, He bowed His head and gave up the ghost," v. 46. Jesus spoke these final words with a great and mighty voice. He yielded up His life voluntarily. His life did not ebb away drop by drop. Jesus had power to lay down His life, and He had power to take it again. John 10:18.

It was the wondrous death of the Son of God, who commended His spirit into the hands of His Father. The sin, which Christ

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assumed for us and which separated us from the Father, was now atoned for. "It is finished." 1 John 1:7b.

Unlike unbelievers Christ died with a word of God on His lips. Ps. 31:5a. Death is the separation of body and soul. Christ placed His soul into the hands of His Father for safekeeping and ultimate return. It behoved Jesus to be made like His brethren even in death that He might be our merciful and faithful High Priest. In the hour of our departure we may also pray Ps. 31:5a and confidently add: "Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." Ps. 31:5b.

2

The death of Jesus was also wondrous in its effects.

A. Effects upon nature, vv. 44, 45a. At the time of day when the sun is brightest, and near the time of full moon; when no eclipse is ordinarily possible, the sun's light failed for three hours. Nature's face was veiled in mourning over the death of the Son of God. In these bitter hours Jesus tasted the outer darkness of eternal death for every man. Heb. 2:9b.

B. Effects upon the Temple service, v. 45b. In the Temple at Jerusalem the massive veil before the Holy of Holies was rent from top to bottom. Remarkable! This signified that the way to the presence of God, barred by sin, was opened by the wondrous death of Christ. Eph. 2:18.

C. Effects upon the hearts of men.

a. The Centurion, v. 47. Moved by the wondrous death of Jesus, impressed with His matchless patience, and stirred by the words spoken from the pulpit of the Cross, the commander of the Roman soldiers boldly confessed: "Certainly this was a righteous man. Truly this was the Son of God." Is. 53:12 fulfilled.

b. All the people, v. 48. A large group of people beheld the events of that first Good Friday and were moved to contrition and repentance, indicated by the smiting of their breasts. The wondrous death of Jesus was an effective sermon. The people believed and returned to their homes, assured that the Crucified was He that should redeem Israel. Luke 24:20, 21.

c. All His acquaintances, v. 49. Matthew mentions their names — pious women, devoted in their service to Him. They could not separate themselves from their beloved Master. Their love was undimmed. May we abide in the love of Christ. John 15:9, 13, 14.

d. Joseph of Arimathea, vv. 50-53. The wondrous death of Jesus awakened to action Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Joseph had not consented to the death of Jesus. He was wealthy and respected. Secretly a believer, but now boldly when he begged the body of Jesus to prepare it for burial. The smoking flax of weak faith had burst into the flame of victorious faith. Joseph furnished a new sepulcher. Is. 53:9 fulfilled.

3

Wondrous finally in its blessed fruits. Vv. 39-43. Crucified with Christ were two malefactors. Both joined at first in railing on Christ. One grew silent, while the other went to the length of blasphemy. He gave utterance to his unbelief in the face of death. He tempted Christ and sought release from his fate to return to his sinful life. He spurned the wondrous offer of salvation.

In the meantime a wondrous change came into the heart of the other malefactor. He gave evidence of contrition and repentance. He reminded his fellow malefactor of his lack of the fear of God and his failure to realize their well-deserved fate. Wondrous is his confession of faith in the Messianic kingdom of the Crucified — a faith that sees farther than the cross, the thorns, the nails, and the wounds of the Savior.

Wondrous is the promise that Jesus made to the penitent malefactor. That very day, fast drawing to a close, the converted malefactor, this brand plucked out of the fire, would be safe in Christ's hands in heaven. What a wondrous fruit of the wondrous death of Christ! "Our Lord will not permit Christ to be without people who confess Him even if it be but a thief on the gallows," Luther. Gal. 2:20; Hymn 510:1.

God grant that we be moved to like repentance!

H. C. HARTING

Easter Sunday

Luke 24:1-12

The Christian Church rejoices again to hasten to Joseph's Garden and to contemplate another mystery in the life of Him who is the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh. What St. Luke has recorded is based upon reliable information of witnesses, upon careful study and investigation, and is written by inspiration that we might be certain. Luke 1:1-4. He has recorded an important question addressed to the first visitors at the sepulcher:

"Why Seek Ye the Living Among the Dead?"

1. *An earnest reproof*
2. *A blessed assurance*

1

A company of named and unnamed women had come to the grave of Christ for a specific purpose. Mark 16:1. Text: "with spices which they had prepared." They definitely expected to find Jesus in the tomb. Sorrow had filled their hearts, even as it fills the hearts of people who render a departed one the final loving service. Sorrow had so overwhelmed the women that they forgot

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all about the stone, the watch, the seal. Not until they neared Joseph's garden did they think of their impotence to overcome these obstacles, Mark 16:3. When rays of the rising sun revealed that the stone had been rolled away, they were "much perplexed," v. 4. They entered the sepulcher to look, but did not find "the body of the Lord Jesus," v. 3.

We must not question the devotion or sincerity of these women. They had bought and prepared spices, perhaps on Friday before the Sabbath began, or on Saturday after the Sabbath closed. It may well be that they had slept little during the nights since the crucifixion. They came to the sepulcher "very early," v. 1, "at the rising of the sun," Mark 16:2. That was greater devotion than the Eleven had shown.

When the angel addressed them, the women were afraid. Sinful man simply cannot stand in the presence of perfect holiness. Hence the women "bowed down their faces," v. 5.

The angel reproved the women, "why seek ye, etc.," v. 5. They should have known better. Christ had repeatedly foretold His resurrection, v. 7. They had been so slow to believe. On Sunday morning they should have gone forth with shouts of joy and triumph, convinced that the Crucified was risen, but their hearts were heavy and disturbed. The angel's question must have put the women to shame.

Simon Peter, told about the open sepulcher by Mary Magdalene (John 20:2), acted like the women and sought the living among the dead. He ran to the grave. He was bewildered. What thoughts must have crowded through His mind! How foolish! He should have remembered, Luke 22:21-32.

How often do we not act as though Jesus were not living! Difficulties, discouragements, disheartening experiences, worries, cares, sorrows, tribulations often cause us to forget Christ and His wonderful promises. We should be ashamed of our stupid and foolish doubts and unbelief. What an earnest reproof!

2

V. 8. "The Living" the angel called Christ and added, "He is risen." Christ has achieved the greatest triumph in history. Death, hitherto unconquered, had been defeated. The women knew that Christ had died. Loving hands had taken His lifeless body down from the Cross. The women were at the grave to anoint the body. But now He was no longer dead, but living. He had burst the fetters of death and destroyed this monster, Is. 25:8; 1 Cor. 15:26, 54; 2 Tim. 1:10; Rev. 21:4. In His own power He had defeated death, John 2:19; 10:17-18.

This is the most marvelous message of victory ever proclaimed. It is a message for faith. Human reason finds it un-

believable. However, it is true. God sent an angelic messenger to proclaim it. The angel offered the evidence of the empty sepulcher. It is based upon specific prophecies, v. 6. The risen Christ appeared to the disciples repeatedly. They saw Him, touched Him, ate with Him, talked with Him, etc.

The message convinced the women. Unlike the Eleven they believed the angelic Easter sermon. They hastened to tell the disciples. Though the disciples "believed them not," the women proclaimed the great Easter message.

The Easter message of the risen Christ is the most glorious triumph for us today. Christ is our Substitute, our Savior. In Christ we have deliverance from sin, death, and the power of the devil. His death was our death, His resurrection is our resurrection. Everyone of us has reason to rejoice and to thank God for this message of triumph. What wonderful assurance also in this day of sad messages of casualties from the battlefields!

Convinced of Christ's victory for us, we shall not fail to proclaim the joyous news to others. The Easter message is powerful motivation to mission work. We especially, blessed with the pure, clear-cut Scriptural message of Christ's resurrection and its marvelous significance and purpose, should be moved mightily to wholehearted and aggressive mission work. J. W. BEHNKEN

Easter Monday

Luke 24:36-49

Acts 1:3. Who would not like to have seen and heard what Jesus did and said during the forty days after His resurrection? Luke tells us what happened on the evening of Easter Sunday.

The Manifestation of the Risen Savior on Easter Sunday Evening

1. *He proves the reality of His resurrection*
2. *He opens the Scriptures to His disciples*
3. *He gives them a glorious commission*

1

While the disciples, Apostles, and other followers of Jesus, men and women (cp. the preceding verses), were discussing the events of the day, wavering between belief and doubt, fear and hope, the object of these discussions, Jesus, suddenly stood in their midst. The omnipresent Lord became visible, cp. John 20:19. His first words, "Peace be unto you," are designed to calm their fears and silence their doubts, which had raised their ugly heads to rob the disciples of faith and hope and joy. Yet they imagine to see a ghost, and new fear grips their heart. Again He speaks, v. 38. That was the same voice they had heard before when fear and doubt had disturbed their peace of mind, Matt. 9:26; 14:26-31.

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Jesus continues, vv. 39, 40. And now their very joy prevents their full assurance and therefore vv. 41-43. It is the same Jesus; the same body that was dead and buried now stands before them. There we have the indisputable proof of the bodily resurrection of Jesus; proof sufficient to convince the doubting disciples, to dispel the doubts of millions of such as came to faith in spite of their former unbelief. Our Christian faith rests, indeed, on many infallible proofs, Acts 1:3.

This Jesus still speaks to us in His Word to strengthen our faith and overcome our fears and doubts and worries, even in these troublous times.

2

Vv. 44, 45. Time and again Jesus had called the attention of His disciples to the many prophecies speaking of His suffering and death and the following glory, Matt. 16:21; 17:22 f.; 20:17 ff.; 26:1, 2. But we read Matt. 16:22; Luke 9:44, 45; 18:34. Now He opens to them the true meaning of Scripture, together with the glorious fruits and effects of His work: repentance, a complete change of mind from a state of enmity to faith and trust in Jesus as the only Savior, that faith which joyfully grasps the forgiveness of sins provided for, and offered to, all men.

Natural man does not and cannot understand the truths of Scripture, be they ever so clearly expressed. 1 Cor. 1:18-23; 2:14; John 8:40-47. The risen Savior still opens our eyes that we may understand Scriptures unto the salvation of our souls. Therefore let us diligently search the Old as well as the New Testament, Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 3:15; and do so with the sincere prayer, Ps. 119:18. Then Scripture will become to us also the joy and rejoicing of our heart, John 4:14; 5:24.

3

What His followers had seen and heard and now understood, they were to proclaim as witnesses and heralds. A glorious message of forgiveness of sins bringing life and joy and hope to a world walking in the darkness of sin and worry and despair!

This is to be brought to all nations, v. 47. What an all-comprising commission! What an honorable charge to be heralds of world-wide peace, peace with God through Jesus Christ!

They are to begin at Jerusalem, as foretold, Ps. 50:2, 3; Is. 2:3; etc. Cp. John 4:22; Acts 1:8. Beginning at the Jerusalems of our homes, our congregations, our neighborhood, our fellow workers, our business associates, let us not rest until all the world has been filled with Easter joy and peace.

The Risen One will endow us for this work with His Holy Spirit, the same Spirit that rested on Jesus, Is. 11:2. That was promised to all flesh, Joel 2:28; Acts 2:16 f.; Ez. 36:27; John 16:1-5. Are you a witness?

THEO. LAETSCH