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Homiletics: Outlines on the Swedish Gospels (Alternate Series)

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HOMILETICS

Outlines on the Swedish Gospels (Alternate Series)

NEW YEAR'S DAY

LUKE 13:6-9

In Mammoth Cave, Kentucky, in a chamber known as "The Cathedral," the guide mounted a rock called "The Pulpit" and announced he would preach a sermon. It was a short one: "Keep close to your guide." It was practical—there were many pits, labyrinths, precipices. On this New Year's Day, in Jesus' name, I plead with you: "Keep close to your Guide." Keep close to your God. Many dangers, pitfalls, labyrinths of sin, temptation, weakness, and misery. Keep your eye on the lamp of God's Word. Look to God; listen to Him; do what He says. Today He tells you: "Bear fruit." To this command may we respond in prayer:

Lord, Help Me to Bear Fruit

I. God demands fruitfulness

A. Tree planted to produce. "In His vineyard," v. 6. Received care, nourishment, protection. Jesus speaking to Israel, who are God's people, not heathen—protected, nourished by Messianic promises, love and care through the centuries. We are "in His vineyard," same care, nourishment, protection.

B. He "sought fruit thereon," v. 6

1. To abstain from evil not enough. Nothing to indicate a crippled, deformed, ugly tree. Cf. Jesus' answer to insinuation of gross iniquity of Galileans, those killed by tower in Siloam, vv. 1-5. Many people, to all appearances, are good. Not thieves, murderers, spies, dope addicts, racketeers; rather, decent, honorable, law-abiding, respected. But no fruit! God isn't satisfied with a beautiful tree, barren; or a beautiful life, unproductive.
2. We must bear fruit. We are called "the salt of the earth," "the light of the world," "a royal priesthood." In our church we have the Word of reconciliation, the Gospel, the holy Sacraments. Our children have Bible-based, Christ-centered lessons. Here spiritual nourishment is offered to give strength, comfort, life.

3. We have so much more than Israel, abundant blessings. To Moses and the prophets are added the messages of the evangelists and apostles. To a glimpse here and there of the shrouded future is added the full New Testament story of God's love in Christ. Instead of a few symbols, types, prophecies, we are blessed with the full story of the cross, the resurrection, the living Christ. God expects more than "shade trees": God expects fruit-bearing branches of Christ, the Vine, John 15:1-8. To Him, daily, we pray: "Lord, help me to bear fruit."

II. *God destroys the unfruitful*

A. A warning for us. V.7: "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" Vv.3,5: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." John 15:2,6. A time to ask: Am I sorry for my sins? Do I believe in Jesus? Do I promise to amend? A time to act as a prodigal son, as a publican. We are not on the sidelines, not in the bleachers, watching God's panorama. We are in the cast, the players on the stage, the members of the team.

B. A warning God gave again and again: e. g., to Josiah, 2 Kings 22:16, 17; through Jeremiah, 11:8; 18:6, 7; through John the Baptist, Matt. 3:10; through Christ, text, v.7; Luke 19:41-44.

C. A threat which will be carried out. Men may say: "God won't do it. He is a God of love and not of wrath. He will surely save all. He will tolerate our weakness." What does God say? V.7: "Cut it down." God destroyed the world in Noah's day; Jerusalem in A. D. 70. In God's hour the ax laid to the root of the tree will be swung.

III. *God is long-suffering, but there is an end to His patience*

A. He grants ample time for repentance. Ps. 100:5. He waited 120 years before the Flood; 31 years at the time of Josiah; 40 years before destroying Jerusalem. He is long-suffering and merciful today.

B. Finally, however, there is an end to His patience. The barren tree will be cut down, for it is useless, even harmful. It makes the soil unfertile, prevents the growth of other trees and vines. The barren Christian may harden the sinner in his besetting problem, disturb the person who seeks to lead a godly life, hinder Christian faith and life. A hypocrite may deceive man, but no one deceives God. God knows the heart, the thoughts, the desires, the deeds, and the failures.

We can never thank God enough for His mercy; we do not deserve

the patience and love He shows us. We face a new year today, a year of grace. Will we please Him in this coming year? Will we bear fruit? If not, how long is our year of grace? If not, how long will God be patient with us? If not, when will God's patience run out, when will the ax be swung, when will His long-suffering mercy be turned to wrath? Today we pray, "Lord, help me to bear fruit."

Day by day, dear Lord,
Of Thee three things I pray:
To see Thee more clearly,
Love Thee more dearly,
Follow Thee more nearly
Day by day. Amen.

Omaha, Nebr.

ELMER E. MUELLER

SUNDAY AFTER NEW YEAR

JOHN 1:29-34

Progress! Magic word. Everyone wants to make progress. Business, nation, individual. The Christian wants to make progress too. Luther: "(The Christian's) life is not static but in movement, from good to better, as a sick man moves from sickness into health. . . ." The Christian has his goals, e.g., the conquering of specific sins, the deepening of Christian virtues, etc. Problem: the power to achieve these goals which we naturally set at this time of the year.

Power for Progress

I. *The Christian needs power to make spiritual progress*

A. Everywhere we see scientists and technicians seeking sources of power. Power is greatly needed in modern society. Hence the search goes on in deserts, mountains, in the heart of great cities for sources of power.

B. The Christian, too, needs power. The spiritual life operates under laws different from those of the physical. The Christian needs spiritual power. He cannot supply this by himself. He finds that in knowing and doing the will of God he is weak and powerless. Cp. Paul in Romans 7. (Opportunity here for personal application to the hearer.) Hence, the Christian, too, seeks sources of power.

II. *In Jesus Christ the Christian receives the Holy Spirit as power for the new life*

A. God fulfills our need for spiritual power. Long ago He promised that men would have such power. The prophet Ezekiel expresses this

promise in Ezek. 36:25-27. Here we see that others longed for the same thing we long for. God promises a washing from spiritual uncleanness and the Spirit to help man walk in God's ways.

B. In Jesus Christ God kept His promise

1. Jesus Christ, as the Lamb of God, takes away the sin of the world, v. 29. The Baptist witnesses to Christ as the Atoner. We can understand Christ as a Lamb two ways. He makes atonement by *being* the sacrifice itself as the lamb was in the Jewish ritual. Secondly, He makes atonement by *meekly going* to the cross, like a lamb to the slaughter as the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. Jesus as the Lamb of God shows us God working out our salvation.
2. Because Christ removes sin as the Son of God, He is able to give men the Holy Spirit. Christ is the Source of spiritual power, the Holy Ghost. In Him we confront God in His saving and redemptive dealing with men. So from Him we receive the very Spirit of God Himself when we believe and trust in Him. This was the conviction of the Baptist, vv. 32-34. Jesus "baptizes" people with the Holy Spirit, i.e., He supplies them with God's Spirit, something no one else can do.
3. Thus God has kept His promise. Millions have found it to be true. The Baptist did, as our text shows. Believers through the centuries did also. They find the Spirit of God laying hold upon them through Jesus Christ. Hence, it is true: "To them that believe on His name He giveth *power* to become the sons of God and hath promised them His Holy Spirit." In Christ we have power for progress, the power of the Holy Spirit.

III. *Christians should use Christ as the Source of spiritual power*

A. Jesus Christ is available for us today. His saving work meets us in Baptism, the Eucharist, the Gospel. Each of these shows us the cleansing and forgiving love of God for the sake of Jesus. Today Holy Baptism lies close to our attention. Besides the Baptism of John and the baptism of the Spirit, we have a third Baptism, the one commanded by our Lord, the one all of us have received. We have been washed clean of all sin in Holy Baptism. Here we experience the saving act of Christ in a most personal way. We feel the pressure of God's Spirit mightily when we recall what we poor sinners have received in Baptism.

B. If Christ is available to us today, then we have a source for spiritual power in the coming year. The possibilities of growth and progress are limitless because the love of God in Christ is limitless. The goals we have chosen, the areas of the spiritual life wherein we want to make progress, these can be obtained and won.

What goals do you have for the coming year? Cling to Christ, and you will obtain them. In Him God gives His Spirit. Open your hearts to Him, in Gospel, Eucharist, Baptism, and pray that God will bless you with power of the Spirit for progress. He will keep His promise!

Yonkers, N. Y.

RICHARD E. KOENIG

THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

JOHN 8:12

The lights of Christmas are beginning to disappear. In many homes and churches the day of Epiphany, the "twelfth night," is the traditional time for the removal of Christmas trees and lights. The brightness of the festive season is waning. But it is not so in the worship of the church. The Epiphany season keeps alive the glow of Christmas. Now we think of the ongoing manifestation and self-revelation of Jesus. With Epiphany we still celebrate the birth at Bethlehem, but we also remember the coming of the Magi, the Lord's entry into His public life by His baptism in the Jordan, and the first showing of His power in a miracle at the wedding in Cana. In fact, Epiphany reminds us that the total life and work of Jesus Christ brings us

The Dawn of a New Day

I. *The world is in darkness*

A. The world walks in darkness. Sin is often described in the Bible as darkness. Black is symbolic of sin and death; it is a mourner's color; it filled the sky when sin had its day at Calvary. Jesus told His enemies that they were in darkness. Cf. John 8:19, 23, 24, 42-44; 9:39, 40. Without Christ it is night. The world is walking and groping around in darkness. The world is looking for something. It is like a watchman waiting through the long night for the first streaks of dawn. Cp. Ps. 130:6 and Hymn 71 in *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Think of the missionary emphasis associated with Epiphany.

B. Even we Christians walk partially in darkness. The divine image is marred by sin. In spite of our baptism our faith is often weak, and our trust often totters. The paradox of *simul iustus et peccator*. *Illustration*: The Christian who is both in darkness and in light, who

is both a saint and a sinner, is illustrated by the shadows of half-light and half-darkness at dawn or dusk. It is neither day nor night. The sun is in evidence, but it is not fully up. More car accidents occur during the dawn and dusk hours. Special attention is required. The Christian, too, must be careful and find light for his half-darkened condition.

II. *But there is a Light for the world — Christ*

A. There is only one real Light in the darkness of the world— Jesus Christ. Jesus makes an exclusive claim in this text. He is *the* Light of the world. There is no substitute for Christ to do away with the darkness of the world. The Nicene Creed calls Christ the "Light of Light." *Illustration:* When there is darkness, there is no substitute for light. Other things such as sound, ultraviolet rays, or radio waves won't dispel darkness. Only light will do it. So with Christ and the darkness of sin in the world. *Other illustrations:* Only a certain vaccine will prevent polio; only a healthy kidney transplanted from an identical twin will save a life when a certain kidney disease strikes. *Parallels:* John 1:4-9; 3:19; 9:4, 5; 12:35, 36, 46; 1 John 1:5, 6; 2:9-11; Ps. 27:1.

B. By His redeeming death on the cross Jesus Christ brought the dawn of a new day. The Son of Mary becomes the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings, Mal. 4:2. A new light shone out into the world when the Son of Man was "lifted up" on the cross, John 8:28. Include the fact of the resurrection. *Illustration:* A sunrise sending its light out across the land. So Christ by His redemption is like the rising of the sun.

III. *In Christ we personally have the Light of life*

A. Our baptism into Christ has brought the dawn of a new day into our lives. Baptism personalizes an objective thing. It makes it real to us. We by our baptism are crucified with Christ and buried with Him. We have become part of His body. Our lives are aglow with the light of His forgiveness. *Parallel:* 1 Peter 2:9. *Illustration:* As Baptism brings us the newness and goodness of God's love, so light is a symbol of something new, something good. Cp. the Olympic torch, the torch carried by the Statue of Liberty.

B. By this Light we now have life. Christ is called in this text the "Light of life." Light is a symbol; life is real. Life is our most precious earthly possession. We cling to it; we grasp at it; we refuse to let it go. Cp. a sick or a drowning man. Therefore the hope that

Christ gives us is called "life." It is eternal life, but those who follow Christ already "have" it now (text).

IV. *We ought to follow the Light*

A. Being a Christian means following the Light. We follow the Light as we follow our Lord closely in the Word and the Sacraments. Cp. the dramatic Epiphany picture of the Magi following the star. *Illustrations:* Sailors following a blinking lighthouse light on a stormy night (in pre-radar days!); a pilot following a radar beam (modern illustration!). *Parallels:* Check the magnificent Epiphany Propers, esp. Introit, Gradual, and Epistle.

B. We do this by faith in Christ. The Bible describes "faith" in many ways. Here it is "following Christ." Cp. Jesus' call to His disciples, "Come, follow Me!" This text would make a fine text for an evangelistic sermon. Instead of the overused appeal, "Believe in Jesus Christ," the appeal could be stated in terms of the text's metaphor, "Follow the Light"—presupposing, of course, that it is undergirded with genuine Gospel. Cp. the Epiphany collect: "O God, who by the leading of a star didst manifest . . . grant that we, who know Thee now by faith, may. . . ."

Follow the Light. Don't think that our worship after Christmas is anticlimactic. Christmas was the beginning, the lighting of the match, the first glimmer of light in a dark world, the first trace of God's New Testament fulfillment. Now we see the full glory of God's goodness unfolding itself. Epiphany leads us on to greater and greater manifestations of Christ. It shows us "the Dawn of a New Day."

Berkeley, Mo.

HAROLD W. SCHEIBERT

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

JOHN 7:14-18

"How come we have to go to school so long?" little George wanted to know. The importance of formal study and training seems exaggerated when the whole world invites to action and enjoyment. But also informal training often galls and seems tedious, as when teen-age Mary complains, "Oh, mother, why do I have to know how to do that! I'm not getting married for years."

Patient teaching with a thoughtful concern for the good of the one taught is often an unappreciated task, but nevertheless a very important one. Too easily we resign responsibility in this regard and trust to future circumstance or to other people to do our job for us.

God's people are concerned to know what responsibility they have for teaching and how they may fulfill it.

Our text tells us about Jesus as teacher and in so doing shows us the kind of sense of responsibility we are to have, what we should teach in spiritual matters, and what assurance we may have that it is ours to teach.

Learn Teaching from Jesus

I. *Jesus' competence and concern as a teacher is an example for us, vv. 14, 15*

A. At this Feast of the Tabernacles in the fall of the year, a time of thanksgiving, Jesus attended the temple not only for personal worship but also to teach. Deut. 16:1-15; Matt. 26:55.

B. His coming to this feast at this time had been an occasion for discussion with His brethren (cp. context), the burden of which was much the same as Jesus' utterance in our text.

C. Jesus demonstrated in His teaching in the temple a breadth of knowledge which implied not only wisdom such as might come by experience or reflection but also learning and information. We do well to prize such knowledge and education as serves God and our fellow men. John 3:2; Matt. 22:16; Ps. 111:10.

D. Jesus is portrayed constantly in Scripture as teacher. His patience in teaching as well as His clarity in presentation is a model for all who teach, but even more so His willingness to deal with people's real spiritual problems and His evident concern for them at all times. Matt. 4:23; Luke 23:5.

II. *Parents and teachers need a relationship of submission and of obedience to the Father to be good teachers, vv. 16, 17*

A. Just as Jesus was conscious of the Father's will and dedicated to it in His substitutionary suffering and death for all sins of all men, so also in His teaching. Matt. 26:39; John 10.

B. Often people act as though "tolerance" and "freedom of worship" implied that God does not care what we believe or teach as long as we have some kind of religious convictions. What a difference it makes when our hope and comfort rest in God's revealed will! John 5.

C. The spirit of submission and of obedience to the Father's will which Jesus had and which we are to have, we must seek also to transmit to those whom we teach. Matt. 20:23.

D. Those who have a hunger and a thirst for God will recognize in Jesus a true Messenger of God and find in Him the answer of forgiveness and salvation which they seek. Matt. 5:6; Matt. 11:28.

III. *Responsibility and authority to teach must be accepted when given by God but must not be seized without warrant, v. 18*

A. How often there are those who want to instruct when they should learn, and even insist on the right to teach though it is self-imposed! Matt. 15:2-20.

B. When God gives parents children to teach, or people friends or relatives who need instruction which they can give, or calls us to serve as teachers of the children or youth of the community, and we seek God's glory in our efforts, then we are a blessing to others as Jesus was. Ps. 78:2-8; Deut. 11:18-21; Is. 28:9, 10.

C. We must neither seek to evade our responsibility for teaching nor seize it without warrant, but, like Jesus, serve the Father's will. John 17.

Jesus' teaching unfolded the meaning of His life and death on our behalf. We teach spiritual things because others need to be taught, and by ability, opportunity, and circumstance God calls us specifically to do that which Jesus directed all His people to do, namely, "go and teach."

Portland, Oreg.

OMAR STUENKEL

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

JOHN 4:5-26 (read vv. 13 and 14)

Water is an essential of life. Who would have come to church this morning without the use of water for drinking and washing? Water provided in our homes, public places, churches, schools, etc.

Our Lord rested on Jacob's Well in Samaria, vv. 5-8. His request for a drink of water gives an excellent example of His teaching and missionary methods. He spoke simply and clearly to a woman of Samaria, v. 7. His inoffensive request aroused the interest of the woman and directed attention to Himself. He then proceeded from the physical to the spiritual realm, yet without a full explanation. He spoke of "living water," v. 10. Her attention continued unabated. She still thought of the well water, v. 11. She asked regarding the source of "living water" without knowing Christ's real meaning, v. 12. The Lord then spoke of the unsatisfying nature of physical refreshment and promised water that would truly and permanently quench thirst.

Christ's true purpose, even when performing a miracle, is to give much more than a physical gift. Changing water into wine in today's Gospel. This "manifested forth His glory," John 2:11. Our text gives

a typical situation from "real life." Do we make use of similar opportunities offered in daily conversation?

The Living Water

I. *The living water is God's gift which gives eternal satisfaction, vv. 13, 14*

A. Natural water does not permanently quench thirst, v. 13. "This water"—from Jacob's Well; water available now in our homes and buildings. How true is this simple statement! Thirst quickly returns especially during heavy work and in hot weather.

B. Those who drink that which Christ gives never thirst. The living water comes from Him. "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in Him," Ps. 34:8. The "inexpressible gift" of God, 2 Cor. 9:15, RSV. The "fountain of life" with God, Ps. 36:9. Often spurned and neglected, Jer. 2:13. Christ the only Source, Rev. 21:6.

C. The living water which He gives does more than quench thirst. It becomes a "well of water" within the Christian, "springing up into everlasting life." The believer himself becomes a fountain, a blessing to many others, Is. 58:11.

D. The aridity of spiritual and intellectual life in our times has produced an incessant thirst in many. Multitudes are haunted by inner longings which no material possessions or knowledge can satisfy. Preachers cannot satisfy people with learned discourses on ecumenicity or the right ordering of our social problems. Man needs Jesus Christ!

II. *The living water comes only to those who truly thirst after righteousness in Christ, vv. 15-19*

A. The woman wanted this living water. Yet she was not conscious of her real sin and need, v. 15. Typical of many "seekers" in our time. Interested, but ignorant of the Source of life. Self-righteousness within her heart.

B. How did Christ deal with this situation? Spoke the Law in simple, sharp, and appropriate terms. Did not continue His Gospel message. The conversation took a new direction: "Go, call thy husband, and come hither," v. 16.

1. A true Law message. Sixth Commandment, Ex. 20:14. Her impenitence and rebellion against God most evident in this area of her life.

2. A personal message from the Law. No excuses possible, or complaints because of hypocrisy of others. She saw the point:

"You personally have broken the holy Law of God, which you formally acknowledge."

3. An effective preaching of the Law, vv. 17-19. She realized that Jesus was a prophet. Authority in bearing and words, wisdom in His approach to her.

C. The deep meaning of His previous Gospel teaching now became evident. Matt. 5:6.

D. Many modern people remain "seekers" because Gospel preachers sometimes fail to apply the Law properly. Cf. C. F. W. Walther's great work, *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*.

III. *The living water comes through Christ alone in true worship,* vv. 20-26

A. The Samaritan woman raised a vital point of theological dispute, v. 20. Easy to discuss "theology" in an impenitent, self-righteous spirit.

B. Jesus gave the correct answer to her question, vv. 21, 22. Yet, He did not permit the conversation to remain on an impersonal point of fact and truth.

C. Christ declared the eternal principle of true worship: ". . . the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth," vv. 23, 24. True worship is created by the Holy Spirit in Christ, who Himself is the Truth. "Praying in the Holy Ghost," Jude 20; Gal. 4:6. The woman had to face the personal question which was implied: "Do I so worship?"

D. Christ clearly declared His own Messiahship, vv. 25, 26. 1 Cor. 10:4: "And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ."

E. No real spiritual food and drink anywhere, anytime, without Christ and His pure Gospel. Much modern religiosity is empty and unsatisfying because it builds on human thoughts, desires, and deeds. Examples: "positive thinking" and the "cult of reassurance." Mere humanitarianism as religion. The pseudo-Christianity taught by many lodges and semireligious fraternal organizations.

F. In a time of reviving religious interest we must "try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world," 1 John 4:1.

How well we are able to furnish our American homes! In many cases we have far more than the essentials of life. Luxuries and comforts. Ideal of the "home beautiful." Yet many fine modern homes are really empty. The hearts of parents and children are cold and unsatisfied.

Does Christ dwell in your home? His presence alone will truly hallow it and satisfy your hearts. He satisfied the guests at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. He still gives the living water to all who thirst for it. May His presence and gifts bless your home and satisfy your heart!

Chicago, Ill.

JAMES G. MANZ

LAST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY
(TRANSFIGURATION)

MARK 13:31-37

"Better get busy; the boss is coming!" Employees dawdle and dally when out of view of employer. Human beings tend to be unfaithful servants. Christians tempted in same direction.

Message of text is parallel to quip about boss. Christians don't think of Jesus as "boss." "Nevertheless, the old Adam clings to them still . . . even to the grave. . . . The Holy Ghost employs the Law so as to teach the regenerate from it." (Thor. Decl., Art. VI)

The truly believing render due obedience, not from driving of Law, but from a voluntary spirit. While Law arouses Christian, he then acts on impulse of love.

Jesus is more than our Lord and Master; He is our Savior, who has bought us with a price. Therefore, we gladly acknowledge Him as Master. 2 Cor. 6:20; Eph. 2:8-10; 2 Cor. 5:15. Even so, He *is* our Lord, whom we can expect at any moment. Therefore,

Be on the Lookout for Your Lord

I. *He will return to judge all*

A. As surely as He appeared in shining glory to Peter, James, and John at the climax of His epiphanies, so surely will all eyes behold His dazzling glory at His second coming.

A consideration of Christ's epiphanies is incomplete without reference to His revelation of His complete glory at the end of time when the earth, despite its seeming durability, will pass away.

Men wonder about the reality of flying saucers; they wonder about the mechanics that will bring on the end of the world; they wonder whether or not a cobalt bomb will someday destroy life on earth with a cloud of radioactive dust. No question about certainty of Christ's second coming. 2 Cor. 5:10.

B. The time of His return is uncertain. There'll be no warning sirens to alert men on day of judgment, to give us 20 minutes to repent.

II. *What is involved in being on the lookout*

A. Readiness. Oriental houses of Jesus' day were fitted with heavy doors, bolted and locked with wooden keys, too large to be carried about. Even master of household could not gain entry until door was opened by porter. Alert doorman was constantly on lookout, wide awake, ready to hail and welcome returning lord. Master of parable left strict orders for that.

Christians, to remain spiritually alert, in state of grace, must use means of grace — "more sure word of prophecy" and sacrament, where Christ gives us His Body and Blood.

Christ's last great epiphany is not to be confounded with our death; but for all practical purposes, death is the coming of Christ to judge.

When Mrs. Ramsay MacDonald was dying, her husband asked if she desired anyone to come and speak to her of that which was to come. Not necessary, she replied, because "I have always been ready."

Careful not to dull and droop and fall asleep spiritually. Man in danger of freezing to death first feels drowsy. He must concentrate on keeping moving, or else! During Napoleon's retreat from Moscow, 145 years ago, soldiers fell out of the ranks and lay prostrate in the snow. Once they fell asleep, they died. 657,000 veteran troops started for Moscow; 85,000 escaped the horrors of war, frost, famine, and snow.

B. Prayerfulness. "Prayer is the conversation that keeps us awake."

If we watch without prayer, we depend on human strength and spurn divine aid. If we pray without watching, we despise means of help which God has given us to use.

C. Busyness. Religion of watchful Christian not simply a folding of the hands; not a casual thing; not a pleasant kind of piety that smiles and nods approvingly when the name of Jesus is spoken; not a Sunday-go-to-meeting religion. Rather, a religion of loving dedication and consecration to Christ, that makes a man roll up his sleeves and get to work for Jesus — work that dare not be postponed, because time is limited and too much is at stake.

Watchfulness is not an idle sitting on a mountaintop. Cp. Peter. We are to live Christ down on the plain, in the factory, shop, kitchen, office, bowling alley, corner drugstore. We ought to reflect His glory; Christ should appear in my transfigured life.

Sea captain's wife who spends all her time at the pier or pacing back and forth on the "captain's walk" watching for boats cannot be so well prepared to give her husband a good reception as woman who

is busy at her housekeeping and homemaking and who only now and then turns a longing eye seaward.

We must watch for opportunities to serve.

Part of our work is to help keep one another spiritually awake, as fellow members of the body of Christ so to serve one another.

Important part of our task while watchfully waiting for Christ's second coming is mission work. We are to be more than doorkeepers in the house of our Lord; we are His ambassadors. Cp. January emphasis of planned parish program.

At this time of our country's "operation deepfreeze," undertaken in conjunction with the International Geophysical Year, we of the church must be engaged in a spiritual "operation deepfreeze," a missionary operation, in the cold and frozen wastes "at the bottom of the world"—staking out claims for the King of kings!

III. *The outcome of our watchfulness*

Today's collect looks forward to the fulfillment of all of Christ's promises to us at His last epiphany: "make us coheirs with the King of His glory, and bring us to the enjoyment of the same." On that day we watchful Christians shall come into our inheritance.

"Blessed is he that watcheth!" Rev. 16:15.

Fairview Park, Ohio

BERTWIN L. FREY