

CONVICTED BY THE SPIRIT

*Dedicated to the members of
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
Spring Lake Park, Minnesota*

CONVICTED BY THE SPIRIT

FROM MARTIN LUTHER'S
Postil 235 - John 16:8-13

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FOREWORD

Perhaps no other Christian teaching is more misunderstood today than that of the Holy Spirit. Who is He? What does He do? How does He work? Probably no better indication of the confusion that reigns on this topic exists than simply the size of the recently published *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*.¹ At nearly 1300 pages (!), this one work on the topic dwarfs the size of many standard works which treat all of Christian doctrine! Why the apparent explosion of interest in the workings of the Holy Spirit? It may not have to do as much with Christian curiosity as with a more secular Enlightenment ideal of freedom of expression. As political systems throughout the world have become more open to individualistic expression in a variety of arenas of life, the institutionalized Christian church throughout the world has been forced to do the same. Thus Christian understanding of the Holy Spirit can be found to vary not only from denomination to denomination, but from congregation to congregation, pastor to pastor, and Christian to Christian.

Secondarily, this state of affairs has occasioned somewhat of a begrudging acceptance within mainstream Christianity

¹ Revised and Expanded Edition, Ed. By Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. Van der Maas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002).

of teachings concerning the Holy Spirit that traditionally have been the fodder of fringe movements. Pastors of even the most traditional of Christian denominations therefore no longer are startled by the claims of a parishioner to be able to speak in tongues or to have received direct revelations from God. The pastor may still not believe the parishioner, but is no longer surprised by such claims as would pastors of generations past have been.

Of what help, then, is this book? Does Martin Luther bring anything new to the table? Well, yes. Instead of explaining the Holy Spirit via his outpouring (Acts 2), his gifts in general (1 Corinthians 12) and specific (1 Corinthians 14), or his fruit (Galatians 5) Luther instead, using John 16, explains the overarching purpose of the work of the Holy Spirit of which such specific manifestations are only a part. In John 16 one finds the words of Christ himself who outlines, if we can put it that way, the program of the Holy Spirit, and that is, that he would be sent to the disciples in order that the world in these End Times would be convicted of sin, and righteousness, and judgment.

Still even more startling to the modern Christian: The role of the Holy Spirit in matters that trouble the conscience. So common has become the idea that the work of the Holy Spirit is revealed only in pleasant or pleasing ways, it may be hard for the contemporary Christian to accept the Holy Spirit's work in pointing out sin by means of the law of God. What Christian has every enjoyed a negative reaction to the sharing of the Word of God? Yet as Luther demonstrates, the convicting which causes such reactions is also part of the work of the Holy Spirit.

Perhaps most intriguing, however, is the apocalyptic environment in which Luther views the work of the Holy Spirit. His work does not occur in a vacuum, but in these End Times, between the ascension of Christ into heaven and his return on the Last Day. That being the case, it is a work which continues the preaching of Christ himself until he returns visible in power and great glory. Here there is no distinction made between first century Judea and the rest of time. Instead, there is a continuum of proclamation up unto the present day and certainly until the end of the world. In short, the work of the Holy Spirit is to prepare mankind for that day.

Paul Strawn

“AND WHEN THE [HELPER] COMES, HE WILL CONVICT THE WORLD OF SIN AND OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND OF JUDGMENT. OF SIN, THAT THEY DO NOT BELIEVE IN ME. OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, THAT I GO TO THE FATHER, AND YOU WILL NO LONGER SEE ME. OF JUDGMENT, SINCE THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD IS JUDGED.

I STILL HAVE MANY THINGS TO TELL YOU; BUT YOU CANNOT BEAR IT NOW. YET WHEN THE COMFORTER, THE HOLY SPIRIT, WILL COME, HE WILL GUIDE YOU INTO ALL TRUTH.”

JOHN 16:8-13

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INTRODUCTION

I STILL HAVE MANY THINGS TO TELL YOU; BUT YOU CANNOT BEAR IT NOW. YET WHEN THE COMFORTER, THE HOLY SPIRIT, WILL COME, HE WILL GUIDE YOU INTO ALL TRUTH.”

JOHN 16:8-13

1

THE HOLY SPIRIT ESTABLISHES THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST

The meaning of this text can be found in many other places in the Bible. In those places, however, we do not have the problem we have here. Here it is hard to understand how this text agrees with basic Christian doctrine. It is therefore worth the effort to explain how what is said here is found in almost all gospel readings.¹

The text is part of the wonderful sermon given by the Lord Christ to his disciples after the Last Supper. In that he was soon to depart, he wanted to console them. He was

¹ By 'gospel readings' what is meant are the selections from the four gospels that are read each week publicly in worship.

about to die, leaving them behind, alone, and in danger and peril. For the sake of Christ, the disciples would suffer the world's enmity, persecution and death.

Christ tells the disciples that they would be banished. Those that killed them would boast that they had served God by doing so. Hearing these things, the disciples were disheartened, terrified, and greatly saddened. They were about to lose their Lord and be left in great misery and terrible difficulty.

The disciples had to be comforted. Christ does so diligently and faithfully throughout the three chapters of his last sermon. How? Christ promises to send the disciples the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would alleviate the want caused by his absence. The Holy Spirit would not only comfort and strengthen their hearts, but would initiate the kingdom of Christ and spread it throughout the world!

Christ tells them how his kingdom would be and of what it would consist. He also explains what the Holy Spirit would accomplish within the world through them. This is why Christ says first of all: "I know and clearly see, my dear disciples that you are frightened and saddened because I have told you that I am leaving you."

"Yet," Christ continues, "this is your consolation: It simply is true that it is much better for you that I leave. My absence will actually be beneficial. Instead of my visible presence, you will enjoy the comfort of the Holy Spirit. You will also receive his power, as he will accomplish through you, what I now, while I am with you, cannot accomplish. I was sent to you bodily so that I could suffer and die. I will then go to the Father and send the Holy Spirit to you."

He will do much greater things through you, than what now can be done through me. He will also lay upon you a mighty, precious office and work by which my kingdom will be spread throughout the world.”

Christ explains first what his kingdom on earth would be. He does this to remove the disciples’ long-held delusion of an external worldly

He will do much greater things through you than what now can be done through me

power and rule in this life over the Jewish people and the entire world. Christ clearly spoke against this delusion. He also said that he wanted to leave the world and be seen no longer.

Yet as Christ dies and leaves the world, he obviously cannot govern and rule in an earthly manner. In other words, he could not rule externally and visibly like earthly kings and emperors.

Christ teaches this clearly by foretelling how the disciples would fare after his departure: They would be hated, persecuted, banned, and also killed by their own people. The disciples also would grieve and cry and be afraid in the world, which consequently, would rejoice and be glad.

None of this would make any sense if the disciples’ hope was for a worldly kingdom on earth. They were rather to expect the opposite. And yet, they were to know that Christ wanted to establish and maintain his kingdom within the world. It is for this purpose then, that Christ promises the Holy Spirit.

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1. Why did Christ wish to comfort his disciples?
 2. What would happen to Christ's disciples after his departure?
 3. With what promise does Christ comfort his disciples?
 4. What would the Holy Spirit do?
 5. Was it better for Christ to leave his disciples?
 6. What was to be Christ's kingdom here on earth?
 7. Would Christ's rule be external and visible?

2

BY CONVICTING THE WORLD

What kind of kingdom is Christ's kingdom? How is it governed? Christ explains this in the text when he says: **“The Holy Spirit will convict the world.”**

The kingdom of Christ is not to be a government established and organized in a worldly way. It is not to be run by human wisdom, power, might, law and order. Rather, the kingdom of Christ is to be a government of the Holy Spirit. It is to be a spiritual kingdom, in which Christ rules invisibly. Christ is not to rule externally, by physical force, but internally, by the word that the Holy Spirit is to preach. By the preached word the Holy Spirit will work

in the heart of man.

“The Holy Spirit,” Christ says, “is to convict the world.” This does not mean that the Holy Spirit will conquer the world by armor and weapons and earthly power. Rather, the Holy Spirit will carry out an oral word or preaching office which is called God’s word, or the word

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of the Holy Spirit, sent by Christ. That is what is going to invade the world and attack it.

This is what it means to convict the entire world, not just a few people, not just one or two nations or countries. This is what it means to convict both Jews and Gentiles, scholars, wise men, and saints, who all excel in their respective kingdoms.

By the term ‘world’ Christ does not mean the masses or the rabble. Rather, he means the very essence of the world, that which is most praiseworthy, that which cannot be convicted of anything at all in external earthly kingdoms.

In particular, Christ is thinking of those who wanted to be holier than everyone else, namely, the Jews. They after all had been given the Law of Moses and were called ‘The people of God.’ Christ earlier had said that they hated him and his disciples without cause, just as was written in their law. In this way Christ gave his apostles power and might. Indeed, he gave them authority over all the world, which was to hear them and be subject to their preaching.

Christ strengthens and comforts the disciples. Because

they were simple common people, the preaching of the disciples would be despised by the world and would not have any prestige. In fact, wherever they would challenge the world with their convicting preaching, the disciples would be hated, suppressed, and suffer.

Nonetheless, their preaching would have power, strength, and force. Even though the world would thunder and rage against it with persecution, punishment, and killing—not only with all its own power and might, but also that of the entire kingdom of hell—the world would have to hear it and would not be able to overturn and resist it. “This is why,” Christ says, “you should not be terrified and saddened by the fact that I leave you bodily. For I wish to give you something in leaving which is far better than what you have had so far while you were with me.”

“I also wish to accomplish far greater and more glorious things than what could take place so far. The Holy Spirit will accomplish through you things which pertain to my kingdom far more glorious and powerful than you now imagine. He will do this so that you will not, as you do now, plan and scheme how to become rulers on earth and conquer great kingdoms” (which is all perishing stuff, about which God does not care, and where there has been always more fools than pious men).

“Rather, the Holy Spirit will place you in a government by which you will judge the consciences of all men. That which is greatest in the world—that is, all its wisdom and holiness—will be subject to you. You will judge, convict, and condemn it. Furthermore, no one shall, nor can, escape sin, death, and hell, or get to heaven, who does not hear

your word and desire to obey the same.”

“The Holy Spirit will also give you such comfort and courage that you will not be terrified as you now are. You also will not be deathly afraid of the world’s intimidation, anger, and rage against your preaching. Rather, you will confidently continue to convict, regardless of what both world and devil can do, and does do against it, with persecution, murder, and the power of all hell.”

This is the promise concerning the work that the Holy Spirit is to begin in the kingdom of Christ, which is the

***This is to be carried out
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teaching office of the apostles.

This is to be carried out by convicting the world as it finds it, and that is, outside of Christ. It does not exclude anyone great or small, learned, wise or holy, rich or poor.

In short, this is what it means to draw the world’s wrath upon oneself and to pick a fight. This is why one must be struck in the mouth. For the world, which rules here on earth, neither wants, nor can put up with, someone who does not want the world to be right. This is why persecutions must begin because of this. This is why one party must yield to the other, the weaker one to the stronger one.

Since, however, the office of the apostles is to be nothing but a teaching office, it cannot be carried out with worldly might and force. This is why the world keeps hold of its external rule and power against the apostles.

At the same time, because it is the office and work of the Holy Spirit, the apostles’ office of convicting, which

confronts the world, is not to be hindered. It is to overcome and permeate everything, as Christ promised the apostles: "I will give you the mouth and wisdom which your opponents will not be able to resist."

To be sure, the Holy Spirit has also previously convicted the world of the same thing. Just as Christ rules at all times, and the same Christ is "yesterday, today, and forever," (Hebr. 13:8), the Holy Spirit has preached from the beginning of the world through the holy fathers Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Elisha, and John the Baptist. Such convicting has been preserved by divine power.

Yet now it is to begin in earnest. Christ wishes to establish a public convicting that is to take place not only among the Jewish people but throughout the entire world until the Last Day.

This public convicting is to be much more powerful and penetrating so that hearts are struck and wounded. This is what was said in Acts 2:37 about the first sermon of St. Peter on the day of Pentecost. The apostle's sermon cut to their heart. That is how they were enlightened and converted from their blindness.

Yet, on the other hand, whenever people do not want to accept such convicting, it is to effect their condemnation. They are to take offense, stumble and fall into eternal damnation. In this way, this convicting is to be a power unto life and salvation for the believers, but for the others it is to be a preaching and power unto death, as St. Paul says in 2 Cor. 2:16.

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1. How is Christ's kingdom to be governed?
 2. Is the kingdom of Christ a physical or spiritual kingdom?
 3. What is the Holy Spirit going to use to break into the world and attack it?
 4. What does Christ mean by the term 'world'?
 5. Would the disciples have prestige in the world?
 6. Would the world be able to overturn and resist the preaching of the disciples?
 7. What were the disciples to judge?
 8. What would be the reaction of the world to the apostles?
 9. What type of office is that of the apostles?
 10. Did the Holy Spirit work before the time of the apostles?

3

ESPECIALLY WORLDLY REASON AND WISDOM

Of what is the Holy Spirit to convict? What is he to teach? Christ expresses this quite simply when he says: **“And when the same comes, he will convict the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment.”**

This truly is overwhelming. It requires much thought. The apostles, those poor beggars, are to interfere in the world in this way: They are to proclaim that everything the world does is condemned. They surely need a strong back and great support for this work.

With these words Christ demonstrates that such convicting is not a joke, and does not deal with trifling, minor

matters. Such convicting is also not about the government, land, people, money and goods. Rather, such convicting is about the highest thing by which the world's government is preserved. What is that? The popularity of its wisdom, its righteousness, its judgment and its own convicting—especially in lofty matters that have to do with worship and what is right before God.

The earthly government's rule over house and farm, money and goods is of no concern to the Holy Spirit and Christ. In such matters Christ lets the world's wisdom, law, and order take their course and remain as they are. For there the world has the commandment to judge what is to be praised or convicted.

Christ also does not convict the offices and different positions in society within the world which are God's creation and order. Christ, rather, convicts the world, that is, the people who rule in their government, with great distinction. Why? Such people want to interfere in God's matters and government with their own reason and wisdom. They dare to establish and judge how a person is to serve God and believe that God should agree and be pleased with what they themselves command.

It is against such human daring that the convicting of the Holy Spirit is directed.

It is against such human daring that the convicting of the Holy Spirit is directed. It does not work partially, attacking only a few works or deeds, but destroys and condemns everything that

reason and worldly wisdom undertakes.

In summary, the Holy Spirit convicts and reproves the world precisely where it does not want to be convicted, but praised and celebrated for teaching and doing what is just and good. The Holy Spirit brings the world with all its honor to sin and shame, and publicly declares it guilty: “The world knows nothing of these matters!” The world also does not know how a person is to recognize sin and get rid of it, how one is to contribute to righteousness, and to convict of injustice. What good is left when all this is soundly struck down as with a bolt of lightning?

1. Of what is the convicting of the Holy Spirit about?
2. Of what is the convicting of the Holy Spirit NOT about?
3. Does the convicting of the Holy Spirit have to do with governments’ rule over houses and farms, money and goods?
4. What does the convicting of the Holy Spirit destroy and condemn?
5. Does the world know how to recognize and get rid of sin?
6. Does the world know how a person becomes righteous before God?

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THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS THE WORLD OF SIN

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4

THE CHIEF SIN IS UNBELIEF

Christ explains this convicting in three parts. He demonstrates what each part means and how it is to be preached. First he says: **“Of sin, that they do not believe in me.”**

The world must simply confess that it does not understand what Christ says here about these three parts. Who among all the wise and intelligent on earth has ever heard anything like it? What reason has ever been given, and in what book has it ever been written, that it is a sin not to believe in this Jesus of Nazareth? Does not Moses himself and the entire world call sin that which is done contrary to the law, be it that which is done or not done, in words

and deeds, or even in thoughts?

Well, what has been done is done and the article is established and set in stone by the Holy Spirit: The sin of the world is that it does not believe in Christ. It is not that there

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believe in Christ***

is no other sin against the law. But this is truly the chief sin that condemns the entire world, even if the world could otherwise not be accused of any other sin.

This convicting sermon is now to go forth to bring people to true knowledge and to salvation. And this is to be the first thing: It makes all men—learned, rich and wise—into sinners because they do not believe in Christ.

Those who are innocent before the world, even those who earnestly strive to live according to the law and the Ten Commandments, also incur God’s wrath in this way and are sentenced to condemnation and eternal death. This is what it means to convict of sin.

St. Paul, Nicodemus, and many others among the Jews were like this initially. St. Paul attests to them that they have zeal to serve God and seek righteousness, but have not attained righteousness, Rom. 9:31. Thus, one’s life and actions without, and outside of, faith in Christ, are most succinctly included in this word ‘sin’.

Here you respond: “How can this be? Is it really a sin to live obediently, honestly, and chastely according to the Ten Commandments; not murdering, not committing adultery, not stealing, not lying or deceiving?” Answer: Certainly not. Yet this is not enough. Keeping the Ten Commandments is not simply a matter of avoiding doing anything against

them externally.

God's command demands not only external actions and appearances, but reaches into the heart and demands perfect obedience there as well.

This is why it does not only judge man based on external life and behavior, but according to the motivation of his heart.

Yet the world does not understand and acknowledge this. It does not know anything but public, external sin: Murder, adultery, theft, and what the jurists declare and convict as sin.

But the world does not know or see the true sources and roots of external sin: Contempt for God, inherited impurity of the heart, and disobedience of the will of God. These are and remain in all people who are not sanctified by Christ. This is what everyone finds in himself, if he dares to look, no matter how pious he may be (as the true saints earnestly lament). Even if a person would like to keep God's law, his flesh and blood, that is, his whole nature with his heart and all his members, fight against it.

This is what St. Paul says in Rom. 7:23: "I find another law in my members which resists the law of the mind and holds me captive in the law of sins." This is much more true for those who are without grace and the Holy Spirit, who live irreproachably in an external manner, only out of fear of punishment, or because of fame and vain honor. In reality they would do the opposite if they did not fear hell or punishment and shame. In any case, the heart always

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remains an enemy of the law and strives against it with inner disobedience.

It is therefore simply true: No man fulfils God's commandment or is able to stand before God without sin. Therefore all people are condemned by the law under God's wrath to eternal damnation.



1. What is the chief sin that condemns the entire world?
2. Into what does the convicting sermon of the Holy Spirit make all people?
3. Is keeping the Ten Commandments "simply a matter of avoiding doing anything against them externally?"
4. What does God's command demand?
5. Does the world know or see the true source of sin?
6. What fights against even the person who wishes to keep the law of God?
7. Is the heart a friend of the law?

5

THE CHIEF REMEDY IS FAITH

God has found a remedy for this evil. God resolved to send his Son into this world to become a sacrifice for us and to make satisfaction for our sins by shedding his blood and dying. The Son did this to take God's wrath—which no creature could otherwise appease!—from us and to bring us the forgiveness of sins.

The Son did this also to give us the Holy Spirit, so that we attain and receive this satisfaction and begin to become new people. Only in this way can we leave sin and death and arrive at righteousness and eternal life.

This is what the Son has now done. This is what is

commanded to be preached through the gospel. And as we heard in the Easter texts,¹ repentance is demanded of all people.

What is repentance? True recognition of sins, earnest terror of God's wrath, and faith that God wants to forgive sins in such repentance for the sake of his Son.

He who believes such preaching has by that same faith forgiveness of sins and is in God's grace. Even though such a person does not satisfy the law, the sin remaining within him is not imputed to him, but is also covered by that forgiveness. Along with such faith the Holy Spirit is also given to him that he might gain love and a desire to do what is good and resist sin.

Therefore, even though such a person does not fulfill the law, he no longer is condemned by the law as a sinner. Instead, he is accepted and held before God on account of God's grace and forgiveness as if he had no sin.

On the other hand, whoever does not have that faith cannot be rid of sin nor escape God's wrath. Even though he strives most eagerly to live according to the law, he does

Even though such a person does not fulfill the law, he no longer is condemned by the law as a sinner

not have forgiveness and remains under condemnation. He cannot fulfill the law, and what is more, does not accept Christ who brings forgiveness to him and gives the believer his

fulfillment (Christ also gives the strength so that a person with faith might begin to keep the law wholeheartedly!).

¹ Bible texts that were read in church services during the Easter season.

Therefore, whoever does not want to accept this preaching remains in sin and condemnation. Indeed, such unbelief becomes the true chief sin. For if there were faith in Christ, all other sins would be forgiven. Yet since they do not want to accept this Savior by faith, they are justly condemned in their sins.

Unbelief becomes the true chief sin, for if there were faith in Christ, all other sins would be forgiven

It does not help that people perform many works of the law and external acts of worship. It does not help that they judge according to reason that just as they sinned by works, they also should pay by works, or eliminate sin, and earn God's grace. By doing so, they do nothing but dare to expel sin by sin. In fact, they strive to atone for big sins with little ones, or to commit such great ones as to eliminate the others.

For on top of living in disobedience and sinning against God's commandment, such people are so blind that they neither comprehend nor consider that they are doing so. Without any repentance or fear of God, they are so arrogant and conceited that they want to please God by their own works and merits.

They disregard all of this. They not only despise this preaching of Christ which calls for repentance and faith, but they even persecute it. This alone, even if they had no other sin, and fulfilled the law in its entirety, would be sufficient for them to bring upon themselves eternal wrath and damnation.

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1. What is God's remedy for sin?
 2. Why does the Son give us the Holy Spirit?
 3. Is repentance demanded of all people?
 4. How does one attain God's grace?
 5. Can a person fulfill the law without faith in Christ?
 6. According to reason, how does a person rid himself of sin?

6

ALL FLESH MUST BE CONVICTED

The Holy Spirit convicts justly and equitably as sinners and as those condemned all who do not have faith in Christ. And where there is no faith a multitude of other sins will follow. God will be so despised and hated to the point that one is filled with disobedience against the entire First Table.¹

Whoever does not recognize God in Christ cannot expect anything good from God. Such a person cannot call upon God from his heart nor honor his word. Instead,

¹The first three commandments: 1) You shall have no other gods before me; 2) You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God; 3) Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

that person clings to the lies of the devil, persecutes and blasphemes the true doctrine, and goes on and on in hardness and spite to the extent that he also blasphemes the Holy Spirit.

Later, he will also disobey the other commandments in his station and life. That person will not do what he is supposed to do in relation to anyone. He will have in his heart no real true love, goodness, mildness, nor patience. He will have no desire for chastity and justice, faithfulness and truth. He will only do the opposite, and will not be afraid of shame or punishment.

Behold, this is how the dragon's tail of the devil follows unbelief with all hell. Why? Because he who does not believe in Christ has already turned away from God and utterly isolated himself from him.

This is why such a person cannot have the Holy Spirit and will not have one good thought. This is why he also cannot have a true desire to live according to God's will—even though on the outside he hypocritically pretends and acts differently to avoid accusation and punishment.

Such a person acts like evil, undisciplined servants who are enemies of their master. They do good only because they *must* do what they do, not because they *want* to. Whenever the opportunity arises, they do evil. Such are the noble, beautiful fruits, all of which sprout from this source and stem, where one does not want to accept and hear Christ as the Savior, whom God gave us to expunge our sin and to take God's wrath away from us.

What is depicted here is what the world truly is, namely, nothing but a big bunch of evil, stiff-necked people who

do not want to believe in Christ. They also despise God's word and praise and accept the deception of the devil.

Moreover, such people spitefully fight against all of God's commandments. They take all of God's good and benefits, and pay him back with ingratitude and blasphemy.

And yet, in all this, they do not want to be convicted or accused. Rather, they want to be called praiseworthy, pious, and holy people. In the same way, the Jews who crucified Christ and persecuted his apostles wanted the fame of offering a great service to God.

This is why the Holy Spirit must confront the world and constantly carry out his convicting office by means of his divine power and might until the Last Day. The Holy Spirit has not started to convict as if he wanted to cease and allow himself to be silenced.

Rather, he must continue to convict in the devil's kingdom, since there is nothing good in it. The Holy Spirit, regardless of how angry the world becomes and rages

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because of it, must cast everything under God's wrath and condemnation. He does this in order that by such convicting, he brings some to repentance and faith.

This is why this preaching has begun. However, whoever does not want to be convicted, will have to be convinced and condemned by this preaching.

All flesh and blood must be convicted, either unto salvation or unto damnation. The judgment will stand as Christ commands to preach to all creatures: "Who believes will be

saved, but who does not believe will be condemned.” Let this be enough concerning the first part of the preaching of the Holy Spirit.

1. What does it mean that the Holy Spirit convicts “justly and equitably”?
2. Can a person who does not recognize God in Christ expect anything good from God?
3. What is the result of unbelief?
4. Why do evil household servants do good: Because they must do good, or want to do good?
5. What is the world truly?
6. Does the world accept the goodness of God and all His benefits?
7. Will the Holy Spirit continue to work in His office of convicting until the Last Day?

“AND WHEN THE [HELPER] COMES, HE WILL CONVICT THE WORLD OF SIN AND OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND OF JUDGMENT. OF SIN, THAT THEY DO NOT BELIEVE IN ME. OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, THAT I GO TO THE FATHER AND YOU WILL NEVER SEE ME. OF JUDGMENT, SINCE THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD IS JUDGED.”

THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS THE WORLD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

“I STILL HAVE MANY THINGS TO TELL YOU; BUT YOU CANNOT BEAR IT NOW. YET WHEN THE COMFORTER, THE HOLY SPIRIT, WILL COME, HE WILL GUIDE YOU INTO ALL TRUTH.”

JOHN 16:8-13

7

CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IS UNSEEABLE

The second part of the preaching of the Holy Spirit follows: **Of righteousness, that I go to the Father, and you will no longer see me.**

The world is not only convicted of the fact that it has sin, but also of the fact that it does not know how to be pious. It does not even know what righteousness and piety truly are. Christ, however, is not speaking here of the righteousness spoken of by philosophers and lawyers—called secular law or imperial law—which is all about doing what reason teaches. He, rather, speaks of that righteousness that is accepted by God, or that God considers righteousness.

Now, what sort of righteousness is this? Of what does it consist? That righteousness is, Christ says, “that I go to the Father and you no longer see me.”

This is truly speaking in an unclear and, before the world, pretty preposterous manner. The first part of the text was spoken in a strange and unclear way, namely, that the world’s sin is that it does not believe in him. Now this part of the text is expressed in a much stranger and more incomprehensible way: Righteousness is exclusively that Christ “goes to the Father and no longer is seen.”

What is the whole world to say about this? The world strives for righteousness and desires to be pious before God. Jewish, Turkish, and papist saints are offended by this assertion of Christ as insulting. In fact, they think of it as a foolish teaching, as if all the good works, devotion, good reputation, obedience, seriousness, and strict life of many people are nothing before God.

And what does it mean that Christ makes such a strange

***How does it fit together,
to be righteous on account
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cannot see or feel?***

and nonsensical definition, that one is to be pious before God on account of Christ’s going to the Father where no one can see him? How does it fit together, to be righteous on account of

something that one cannot see or feel?

There you hear that Christ powerfully and forcefully concludes that this alone is the kind of righteousness he himself calls righteousness. With this statement Christ convicts the world because it does not have this righteousness.

It is just as if Christ wanted to say: “Why do you dispute long and hard concerning good works, a holy life, and whatever you have in mind to become righteous? If you do not have this, namely, that I go to the Father, all the other things are, and count for, nothing before God. Even if you strove and wrote, thought and studied yourselves to death, you would still neither understand nor accomplish it.”

“It must be a different righteousness than what you understand and assert, that a person should learn the law and obey it and live according to it. It must come from far above all this, where there is neither law nor commandment nor human work and life, but where it only is about what I do, namely, “that I go to the Father.”



1. Does the world know how to be pious?
2. What is the source of the “righteousness spoken of by the philosophers and lawyers?”
3. What few words from the Gospel of John describe the righteousness of Christ?
4. How can a person be righteous on account of something that is not seen or felt?

8

GOING TO THE FATHER

How does this happen? In the first part we heard that all men are convicted of sin. Consequently, no one fulfills the law or the Ten Commandments. If there were someone who fulfilled the law, he certainly would not be convicted of being a sinner. Such a person would be called and actually be righteous by this obedience or fulfillment of the law, as St. Paul says in Gal. 3:21-22: “If a law had been given that could make alive, then righteousness would truly come from the law; but the scripture has enclosed all under sin.”

Therefore, because no person can fulfill the law, we as

well do not have a righteousness from the law—either within ourselves or from that which we do—by which we could stand before God against his wrath and judgment. Rather, if we are to come before God, we must have an alien righteousness, which God beholds and by which he is pleased.

Conviction due to sin applies to all human life and being on earth. The saints and Christians must also suffer this conviction for their commendable life and work and confess that they too have sin—sin which would still be unrighteous and damnable should it judged according to God’s law and before his judgment seat. This is how the prophet David, although he was holy and full of good works, prays and speaks in Ps. 143:2: “Lord, do not judge your servant, for no one lives and is righteous before you.” And St. Paul says in 1 Cor. 4:4: “I am not aware of anything, but I am not righteous on account of this.”

Yet what prevents them from being damned like others is only this: They accept such conviction. They confess

Yet what prevents them from being damned like others is only this: They accept such conviction

and lament that they have sin. They believe in Christ and seek forgiveness of sins through him! This is how they have an alien righteousness which is entirely the work, power, and merit

of the Lord Christ alone.

He calls such an alien righteousness “to go to the Father.” This expression, “that I go to the Father,” encompasses the whole work of our redemption and salvation. It is for this

work that God's Son was sent from heaven. Christ has done this work and continues to do it until the end, namely, his suffering, death, and resurrection, and his entire kingdom in the church.

This "going to the Father" means nothing else than that Christ gives himself as a sacrifice by his shedding of blood and death in order to pay for sin. By his resurrection he overcomes and subdues sin, death, and hell.

Christ sits alive at the right hand of the Father, where he invisibly rules everything in heaven and on earth. He gathers and spreads his Christendom by means of the preaching of the gospel. And because they still have weakness and sin remaining, Christ represents those who believe before the Father and intercedes for them as an eternal mediator and high priest. Additionally, he gives them the Holy Spirit's power and might to overcome sin, devil, and death.

Behold, this is called and is the Christians' righteousness before God, namely, that Christ goes to the Father. He suffers and rises for us and reconciles us to the Father in such a way that we have forgiveness of sins and grace for his sake. This is not due to our work or merit, but only due to his going which he does for our sake.

This is called an alien righteousness because we have not done or merited anything, nor can we merit anything. It is given to us as a gift and possession to be our righteousness by which we are pleasing to God and are his dear children and heirs. It is by faith alone that such given righteousness is in us and that we can comfort ourselves by it as our treasure and chief possession. For it has to be received and accepted by us.

This, however, cannot be done in any other way than by the heart which clings to Christ's going and firmly believes that it has forgiveness and redemption from sin and death for the sake of his going. For it is not an external matter which one could carry out by means of human works, orders, and exercises.

Rather, it is a sublime, hidden treasure which cannot be seen with our eyes or grasped with our senses. Christ himself says this much: "So that you will no longer see me." So it must only be believed.

What the entire world seeks, discusses, and asks for without end, namely, how one might become pious before God, is now thereby immediately invalidated and eliminated. Everybody gives a different answer to this question. One teaches to do this. Another to do that. And yet, no one has reached this goal—even if they have heard, learned and practiced the whole teaching concerning the law and good works.

This is why people asked and were glad to hear what this master Christ also had to say about it. Everyone would wish to hear this sermon and, wherever this sermon is not heard, would be glad to run after it to the end of the world.

This is because everyone certainly hoped that Christ would also say something about what one should do, and that his instruction would point to higher and better things than that of all others. Yet what does Christ say? Nothing about our deeds and life.

To the contrary, Christ says: "All this is still not the righteousness that avails before God. If you desire to be pious and righteous before God, you must have something else,

something that neither you nor all people are, or are able to do, and that is this, “that I go to the Father.” This is to say: No one becomes righteous before God in any other way than by my dying and rising.” This going alone is righteousness and fulfills righteousness so that God receives man in grace and regards him as righteous—if he clings to Christ by faith.

***This going alone is
righteousness and fulfills
righteousness so that God
receives man in grace***

-
1. Would a person be a sinner if he could fulfill the law?
 2. What does it mean to “have an alien righteousness?”
 3. What prevents Christians from being damned?
 4. What does Christ mean by the phrase “going to the Father”?
 5. How is Christianity spread throughout the world?
 6. Why does Christ continue to intercede for Christians before the Father?
 7. Is the alien righteousness of Christ given to Christians as a reward?

9

GOOD PERSON OR CHRISTIAN?

These words—how Christ is such a daring man who speaks out against human reason and the thoughts of all people, especially against those of the wise and the saints—are to be noted carefully. When asked to speak about what it means to be pious or righteous, then such people can speak about nothing other than what they call *justitia formalis*. What is that? *Justitia formalis* is any virtue which is found within us, or which we do ourselves, or which is called our work and obedience.

But then you say: “So what about the doctrine of good works? Is it not to be, or is it not a nice, praiseworthy thing,

that man strives to keep the Ten Commandments and is obedient, chaste, honorable, and truthful?”

Answer: Yes, indeed. All this a person is to do, and it is also a good teaching and life. Yet this is to be left in its place where it belongs.

One is to distinguish between two different doctrines: 1) How one is to become pious and righteous before God and, 2) how, and for what, one is to do good works. Although the doctrine of good works needs to be taught, one must along with it – in fact, before it – diligently also teach the following to keep the doctrine of the gospel and faith pure and unadulterated: All our works, no matter how good and holy they may be, are not the treasure and merit that make us pleasing and acceptable to God and gain for us eternal life.

This is accomplished only by Christ’s going to the Father. By this going Christ acquires for us, and gives to us, and shares with us, his righteousness, innocence, and merit. This is how Christ begins such a kingdom within us that we, who believe in him, shall also be redeemed from sin and death and live with him forever. This is not a righteousness that remains only here on earth, and then stops. It is instead a new righteousness which remains forever in that life with God, as Christ lives and reigns there eternally.

This is why I have often said, that in order to speak and judge rightly concerning these matters, a person must distinguish carefully between a good person (as the philosophers call him, *bonum virum*) and a Christian. We certainly do praise a good person: There is nothing more praiseworthy on earth. A good person is God’s gift as well

as sun and moon, grain and wine, and all creatures.

Yet one must not confuse matters. Rather let a good person be praised before the world and say: A good person is certainly an excellent,

precious person on earth, but this still does not make him a Christian. For such a person could also be a Muslim or a Pagan, as there were several famous Mus-

A good person is certainly an excellent person on earth, but this still does not make him a Christian

lims and Pagans in history. It really cannot be different: Among so many evil people, there must at times be found a good person. Yet no matter how good he is, despite such goodness, he remains a child of Adam, that is, an earthly man under sin and death.

Yet if you ask for a Christian, you must search much higher. For this is a different person. He is not called “Child of Adam” and does not have father and mother on earth. He is rather a child of God, an heir and prince in the kingdom of heaven. He is called a Christian because he clings with his heart to this Savior, who has gone up to the Father. A Christian believes that he has God’s grace and eternal salvation and life for Christ’s sake.

This is neither conquered nor grasped, either acquired nor learned by our life, virtue, and work from which we are called good people on earth. It also has nothing to do with righteousness according to the law and Ten Commandments, although they, as was said above, are also necessary. The law and Ten Commandments are also found in every Christian. Even there, however, this main article and righ-

teousness, about which Christ here speaks and which he calls righteousness, is never achieved.

Even if a person has practiced and done what he could throughout his entire life, he could still not attain certainty in the matter of pleasing God this way and truly finding his grace. This is why in such a life the heart always remains uncertain and in doubt.

Experienced consciences have to witness to this. The monks themselves bear witness to it with their books, wherein they publicly taught that one should doubt. No

***No man could know
whether he is in grace***

man could know whether he is in grace. It would be great arrogance to boast about oneself in this way.

All this must lead to the following conclusion: Since man is in such doubt, he neither can have a right heart in relation to God nor can he turn to him and call upon him wholeheartedly. He rather is shy and flees God and must finally fall into hating God and despair. For when the true battle has come, and he must stand trial, such a person feels and sees that he cannot endure before God's wrath with his life and works, but sinks with all of them into the abyss.

If we are to persevere against despair and overcome it in such trials, we must have a different foundation than our own or the law's righteousness. We must have the eternal righteousness of Christ, which is at that place, at the right hand of the Father. There the devil cannot overthrow it and God's judgment cannot say anything against it.

If he wants to, the devil can overthrow me along with all my life and works. When he threatens me with God's

judgment and wrath, the devil can blow all of my life and works away like the wind blows a feather.

Yet if I direct the devil away from me and my works to the right hand of the Father, where my Lord Christ is seated who gives me his righteousness as a gift (which is why he has gone to the Father) the devil will have to leave Christ un-overthrown, even un-attacked. This is why Christ, as a faithful, good Savior, draws all this away from us and all people to himself alone, and establishes and builds our righteousness only upon his going to the Father. Christ does this so that we might know where we would be safe from every attack and raving of the devil and his gates of hell. If it were to depend upon us, or our own worthiness, or whether we have repented purely enough and done enough good works, our heart would never find rest and could finally not endure.



1. How do the wise of the world speak about piety and righteousness?
2. What is the difference between the righteousness that avails before God, and the righteousness the world praises?
3. Does the righteousness of a Christian remain here on earth?
4. Why must a person distinguish between a good man and a Christian?
5. Does a good man remain under sin and death?

6. Why is a Christian called “Christian”?
7. Can a person have a right relationship with God if his heart is in doubt?

10

RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT COUNTS!

One can see how shameful, how cursed, the monks' and the entire papacy's doctrine has been. The entire world was misled by it. Not only did they not teach a word about Christ and faith, but they also arrogantly alleged that their monkery is a much higher, nobler, more perfect state than that of common Christians. This should be an abomination for all Christians to hear. Even if you pile up the life and piety of all men as high as you wish—the chastity of virgins, or the discipline and chastening of hermits, the praiseworthy deeds and virtue of great, excellent, good lords and rulers—all this can never be equaled to a Christian. The

Christian has the Lord Christ, seated at the right hand of God, and his righteousness.

We give all the other things their due honor and praise them as precious gifts. Yet in comparison to such things, the Christian is to be elevated far and above all that as a lord. As just such a lord, the Christian, with Christ his brother, has this eternal possession and inheritance in the kingdom of heaven at the right hand of God,

The person who understands this and can distinguish this can also rightly teach and judge concerning all life. He can also relate to all things properly and guard himself from all error. Such a person judges and measures everything according to this rule and standard which Christ teaches here, namely, that the Christians' righteousness is not a righteousness that develops along with us, like the other righteousness, called the righteousness of the law or human righteousness. Instead, the righteousness of the Christian is a righteousness which is outside of us and above us. It is entirely heavenly and divine.

Therefore, if someone comes to you and with great animation makes much to do concerning great, special holiness and instructs you to follow the example of this or that great saint in order to please God, or to become a Christian, you can say simply this: "Dear friend, that is all well and good and I also want to be good and follow God's commandment and avoid sin. Yet this you are not to teach me: That by doing such things I become a Christian or attain something greater or higher. Such people themselves did not become Christians by fasting, doing, and suffering much. For this would encroach on my dear Lord Christ,

as if he had done his going in vain and the works of man be equaled to it.”

“I rather want to be called a Christian based on what Christ taught me and what all the saints had to do if they wished to stand before God, namely, that I cling to my Savior and, as St. Paul says in Phil. 3:9, be found to have, not my own righteousness according to the law, but Christ’s righteousness, which he acquired for me in this going. By his going he overcame my sin and death which he proclaims and gives to me by the preaching of the gospel.”

Once you have this righteousness, then go ahead and do as many good works as you can. Do them, however, according to God’s commandment. For without Christ’s righteousness, and before you have Christ’s righteousness, you will not be able to do anything that is good, because you are still in unbelief and neither have, nor know, Christ. In such a case, you along with all that you do (as we have heard in the first part) would still be under sin.

***Once you have this
righteousness, then go
ahead and do as many
good works as you can***

This is what it means to speak in the way of Christ and with his words about righteousness which he himself considers to be righteousness. It is not an external, human matter on earth, but an incomprehensible matter, one that is invisible in this life. It is not found here on earth in people, nor is it acquired by them.

Rather, it is a heavenly righteousness which Christ has acquired solely by his dying and rising. Since we do not

see it, we must grasp it now by faith. Its goal is an eternal, infinite life and existence where Christ rules in the new heavenly being. Since this life is all corrupted by sin and death and will ultimately perish, this life is not that existence.

This is why the Son of God from heaven has instituted such a kingdom which is not about external, worldly things and rule—as the Jews and apostles supposed of his kingdom—nor with the poor, beggarly righteousness of this life. Rather, Christ came to establish a new, eternal righteousness by which humanity would be transformed and renewed. Then there will be no more sin and death, but only God’s perfect work and life.

This is the work that he has begun by this going to the Father and that he has already carried out perfectly in his person. Such a kingdom he promotes in this life until the Last Day by the preaching of the gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the believers.

Yet this kingdom will be lived and found perfectly in us only in that life. “This is what it means,” he wants to say here, “that I go to the Father and you see me no more. I do not speak of this temporal life and being on earth, which cannot be without sin and death in this corrupted nature. This is why there can also be no perfect righteousness and life here.”

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1. Are monks any better than run-of-the-mill Christians?
 2. By what does a Christian judge and measure everything?

3. Is the righteousness of a Christian within the Christian himself?
4. What did Christ accomplish by his “going”?
5. Must good works be done according to the Ten Commandments?
6. What is the goal of the Christian’s righteousness?
7. How does Christ further his kingdom in this world?

“AND WHEN THE [HELPER] COMES, HE WILL CONVICT THE WORLD OF SIN AND OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND OF JUDGMENT. OF SIN, THAT THEY DO NOT BELIEVE IN ME. OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, THAT I GO TO THE FATHER AND YOU WILL NEVER SEE ME. OF JUDGMENT, SINCE THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD IS JUDGED.”

THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS THE WORLD OF JUDGEMENT

“I STILL HAVE MANY THINGS TO TELL YOU; BUT YOU CANNOT BEAR IT NOW. YET WHEN THE COMFORTER, THE HOLY SPIRIT, WILL COME, HE WILL GUIDE YOU INTO ALL TRUTH.”

JOHN 16:8-13

11

THE WORLD REJECTS ITS CONVICTION

“My kingdom also is not to consist in such a corrupt existence” Christ would say. “It must become a different existence. It must be that you no longer see me. I rule outside of this bodily, visible existence. I also bring you to where there is a totally new, perfect righteousness and eternal life. This I begin now in Christendom by the preaching and work of the Holy Spirit, **of judgment, since the prince of this world is judged.**”

In the first two parts of this text, Christ spoke about doctrine and included the gospel in its entirety. First: Everything that is human nature, ability, doing, and life is

sin and under God's wrath because man does not believe in Christ. Second: We become righteous—that is, we are redeemed from sin and death, please God and have eternal life—only because of Christ's going to the Father.

The third part follows. It is about how the world reacts to this kind of preaching and how, again, the Holy Spirit works through this preaching. Concerning this Christ says, that he will **convict the world of judgment**.

This certainly is also said in a manner that is somewhat strange and mysterious to our ears, since we are not used to the Hebrew language. In Hebrew the word “judgment” means “dealing with and judging between two conflicting parties to determine which one is right and which one is wrong.”

The term also includes the two essentials that must always be in court proceedings: Grace and wrath, or award and penalty. The one acquits the innocent party and grants him justice. The other condemns and punishes the guilty.

Yet the term ‘judgment’ is used almost exclusively for

***Neither will the world accept
nor wish to be convicted
of being in sin and being
without righteousness***

the second aspect of judgment or sentence, namely, condemnation and the result or the implementation of condemnation. It is in this way that Christ also

speaks here about judgment and wishes to point out, that when the Holy Spirit delivers the two parts of his sermon in the world, and convicts it of sin and righteousness, the world will not accept it. Neither will the world accept nor

wish to be convicted of being in sin and being without righteousness. The world will also not let itself be moved by being offered Christ's righteousness.

The world rather will assert everything against such teaching and convicting of the Holy Spirit and condemn and persecute it. The world will even pretend to do the right thing by doing so and be in no way obligated to put up with having its wisdom and righteousness—which it considers to be God's gifts and worship—destroyed. It rather pretends to be obligated to resist such preaching by force.

The Holy Spirit must continue to convict for the sake of such judgment. He must also teach that conviction and tell the world that it and its judgment are condemned along with its prince and head, the devil.

Here then begins the strife: One judgment runs into conflict with the other. For the world also asserts its judgment and wisdom against the conviction of the Holy Spirit and despises this teaching. It does this because the conviction of the Holy Spirit does not originate in the world's wisdom and in people who are great and excellent in the eyes of the world, but is preached by poor, lowly people. The world opens its mouth against this and says: "What is this but a few disoriented beggars rebelling against the ordained power and wishing to reject and refute everything that was believed by everybody before their time, which was established by God himself?"

This is how the world condemns and curses both doctrine and preachers and continues to shut their mouths with threats of force. Taking hold of the sword in a seri-

ous manner, the world does not wish to have its error and idolatry attacked and convicted. Indeed, the world wishes its error and idolatry to be considered wisdom and holiness and to have them defended against God and Christ. And all the while the preaching of the gospel is to be uprooted and erased.

Yet Christ says against this that the Holy Spirit is to retain the supreme judgment. He is to penetrate such judging of the world with his convicting until the Last Day.



1. What does the word 'judgment' mean in Hebrew?
2. What are the two essentials of 'judgment'?
3. How does Christ speak about 'judgment'?
4. Will the world allow itself to be moved by the righteousness of Christ?
5. What must the Holy Spirit teach about the judgment of the world?
6. How does the world condemn and curse both doctrine and preachers?
7. How would the world have its error and idolatry be considered?

12

BUT THE CONVICTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL PREVAIL

Within this whole process Christians end up between a rock and a hard place. Here cross and persecutions begin.

The kingdom of Christ, as we have heard, is not of this world but spiritual, and presently invisible on earth. This is why the world's might and force, which it has on earth, turns against Christendom, condemning, persecuting, torturing, harassing, killing, and murdering by sword, fire, water, and whatever else it has at its disposal.

Moreover, the world is driven and hounded and strengthened by the devil's bitter, grim anger and hatred against Christ. It is the devil's desire and design to erase and ex-

tirpate Christianity altogether. The devil would that Christianity appear before the world and the eyes of Christians as if the church indeed will be destroyed. Why? Because there is such persecution, cruelty, and murder against the Christians who confess and hold this preaching of the Holy Spirit.

Thus, with this third part Christ gives first of all the prophecy as to how this preaching is to be received by this world and what the apostles will suffer for it. The world will despise them because they come along without a public authority and command. The apostles bring also a new doctrine against the established government, priesthood, and teaching office, ordained by God. Moreover the world would convict and reproach everything they do, as if it were to be considered nothing before God.

Especially because the apostles wish to continue preaching and not to stop, the established powers of this world as well will issue a judgment against them and execute it as against people who are not sent by God, who do not preach God's word, but who must be the devil's messengers. Recognizing the apostles as blasphemers, disobedient men, and rebels against God's law, God's people and worship, they are declared to be liable of death and people who should not be allowed to live. The Jews, accordingly, scream against Paul in Acts 22:22 that it is not right to let such a person live. In Acts 21:28 they give the reason for this: "This man does not stop talking against the people, against the law, against the temple and the holy city."

Secondly, Christ gives this comfort against such offense of judgment and persecution by the world: The apostles

should know nonetheless that he will protect his preaching and preserve his church against the world and the anger and raging of the devil by his divine power and strength. The devil and his kingdom will have to give way to Christ as one conquered by him. The devil will not be able to carry out against Christ's church what the devil would like to do in his grim, angry wrath and hatred.

Therefore, although the Christians become the victims of the devil and the world on account of this preaching, this word shall not be overthrown. It will finally win the victory and prevail. This word will reveal the unjust judgment against the gospel before the whole world, so that it will finally have to be ashamed of its injustice and of itself.

Although Christians become the victims of the devil and the world... this word shall not be overthrown

And the world will indeed have to confess about itself that it has unrightfully and unjustly condemned and persecuted the gospel—just as Christ's judges and even his betrayer had to bear witness to his innocence in his suffering. He says that the reason for this is that this King, Christ, has already overcome both world and the devil by his going to the Father.

This Christ now has his apostles proclaim that he is the Lord over everything and has power and might over all things that assert themselves against him, to condemn and punish them with eternal hellish fire, along with the devil and his angels. This is what it means when he says that this convicting of the world must go on even as the

gospel is persecuted.

Finally, the gospel will retain the upper hand. Christ will then overthrow the world's judgment and condemnation and condemn and shame the world in return. This will be true not only of the world, but also of its god, the devil himself, who drives the world against Christ. For the devil is, says Christ, already judged himself. And the sentence of condemnation has already been pronounced over him.

All that is left to do is the execution of the sentence, that the conviction is also applied to the devil in eternal hellfire. This is just like a thief or murderer, who has been condemned by his judge and who has already received the wrath and the capital sentence and has been handed over to death. He now needs to be brought to the gallows and receive his just deserts.

In the same way, this judgment here emanates from

***The world's prince and
his followers are in
condemnation already***

the power and might of the Lord Christ, seated at the right hand of the Father. Such judgment is publicly declared by the preaching office, that the world's prince

and his followers are in condemnation already and are not to accomplish anything against Christ. The devil rather has to let Christ remain the Lord under whose feet he must lie eternally to have his head crushed.

In such a way the Holy Spirit has preached throughout the world. Whoever does not want to believe in this Lord is to be condemned also along with the devil, regardless of how high, mighty, learned, and holy he may be; regardless

of how he dares to condemn or suppress this doctrine, be he Roman or Muslim, emperor, king, and lord over all.

Now, regardless of whether the world goes on despising and ridiculing such judgment (which has already been issued to the devil and all his members) because it does not see it, regardless of whether it despises the first and second part of this sermon, Christ also always continues and confidently allows himself to be despised. Still, he shows the devil and the world that he is the Lord who can break and direct the devil's wrath and raging and who can overthrow his enemies, as Ps. 110:1 says about him, "until he makes them all his footstool." For "the axe is already put to the tree" and the chains and ropes have already put into place, as St. Peter says in 2 Peter 2:4, by which the devil is bound for eternal darkness in hellfire.

No one is supposed to believe this except Christians who consider the word of the Lord to be true. They know his power and kingdom and comfort themselves with the King and Lord. The others are not supposed to have anything else as their reward than what they seek with their own lord, the devil. They will disappear in eternal darkness into the abyss of hell and have to be overthrown and perish despite their raging against the Christians. This is the first part of this gospel on the kingdom of Christ and the preaching of the Holy Spirit in the world.



1. Where do the cross and persecution of Christians begin?

2. Why does the world's might and force turn against Christianity?
3. When it comes to Christianity, what is the devil's desire?
4. Why would the teaching of the apostles be despised by the world?
5. What is the comfort Christ gives the apostles in the face of persecution?
6. What will happen finally to the world's judgment and condemnation?
7. How is the judgment of the devil by Christ publicly proclaimed?

“AND WHEN THE [HELPER] COMES, HE WILL CONVICT THE WORLD OF SIN AND OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND OF JUDGMENT. OF SIN, THAT THEY DO NOT BELIEVE IN ME. OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, THAT I GO TO THE FATHER, AND YOU WILL NO LONGER SEE ME. OF JUDGMENT, THAT THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD IS JUDGED.

CONCLUSION

I STILL HAVE MANY THINGS TO TELL YOU; BUT YOU CANNOT BEAR IT NOW. YET WHEN THE COMFORTER, THE HOLY SPIRIT, WILL COME, HE WILL GUIDE YOU INTO ALL TRUTH.”

JOHN 16:8-13

13

THE HOLY SPIRIT BRINGS CLARITY

Now follows: **I still have many things to tell you. You cannot bear it now. Yet when the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, will come, he will guide you into all truth, etc.**

These words also belong to the promise of the Holy Spirit and his work within Christendom. With them Christ finishes what he had set out to say concerning this doctrine. Christ explains, in a few words, what the Holy Spirit is to preach.

Christ emphasizes to the apostles that the Holy Spirit himself will come to teach them this. The apostles will then understand it and become experienced in this work. “For

now,” Christ wants to say (as he is to give them a farewell dinner and comfort them in view of his departure) “is not the time to talk much about doctrine.”

Even if Christ were to speak much about such things, the apostles would not be sufficiently prepared to understand how things would be in his future kingdom. They are still

They are still deeply submerged in the thought and hope of an external, bodily kingdom

deeply submerged in the thought and hope of an external, bodily kingdom and worldly glory. The apostles cannot resign themselves to what Christ tells them concerning his spiritual

kingdom and work which he will carry out by the Holy Spirit.

The apostles cannot help but think: If Christ is to become a king, he himself must be present with us. He must conquer the world by his preaching and miracles. By conquering the world in such a way, it might even obey and accept him willingly as its Lord. But if the world will not subject itself to Christ’s goodness, he must force it to submit by external force and punishment.

Yet if Christ goes away from them (as he said he would) and is no more to be seen, that is, die, then there is no hope that he will become a king and accomplish such great things. The apostles therefore are and remain confused by what Christ says until after his resurrection. They do not understand what he then tells them without also experiencing the onset of the sorrow, grief, and persecution at the hands of the world, which he here proclaims to them.

This is what Christ means when he says: “I still have many things to tell you, but you cannot now bear it. What has been said about it, and still could be said about it, is still much too difficult for you. It is contrary to your thoughts and hopes. If you understood it, you would be comforted and glad of heart.” This is just as he said before: “If you loved me, you would be glad that I told you: I go to the Father.”

“Yet what I tell you about my glorification, ascension, and the glorious kingdom I wish to begin through you now only makes you terrified and sad. For this truly is what it means: “You cannot bear it now.” This is why I must refrain from saying more until the time has come when the things I told you before begin and the Holy Spirit comes.”

“The Holy Spirit himself must teach it to you. He must lead and guide you from your erroneous thoughts and misunderstanding to the truth and right understanding. For this,” says he, “is to be the Holy Spirit’s work. He is to glorify me, that is, reveal me and bear witness that I, out of suffering and death, and elevated to glory and seated at the right hand of the Father, am a ruling Lord over everything.”

“The Holy Spirit is also to declare within the world that this is the counsel of the Father. The Holy Spirit is sent so that this would be recognized by the whole world and the world be brought to my kingdom. When I am taken from you and the Holy Spirit comes, then it will be easily taught, and so much different than what you now think and understand. At that time you will find in your own hearing everything what I have now told you. You will be

able to explain it and expound it in greater detail. I still could say many things.”

In just this way Christ later concludes this chapter of the Gospel of John, as we shall hear in the gospel for next Sunday, and says: “I have told you these things in figurative speech,” that is to say: “What I have said so far concerning my suffering and rising, and your suffering, and how you are to ask the Father in my name, all these things are now for you utterly strange, dark, hidden words you do not understand.”

“Yet the time will come when I will no longer use figurative speech. I will speak openly about my Father, namely, when I have ascended to heaven and have sent you the Holy Spirit. At that time you will hear it just the way I tell you, which now is all figures for you. This is the true and simple meaning of this text: “I have still many things to tell you.”



1. Did the apostles have a hard time understanding what Christ was saying?
2. What were they thinking about Christ’s kingdom?
3. Who would ultimately teach the disciples about the kingdom of Christ?
4. How does the Holy Spirit glorify Christ?
5. When would Christ speak openly about the Father?

14

THE HOLY SPIRIT REMAINS WITH CHRIST

These words have been abused, twisted, and contorted by the papists to strengthen their worthless ideas. They have become the foundation for their assertion: “A Christian should believe and obey much more than what the gospel and the scriptures teach. He should also obey what the councils and fathers have said and established. For in this verse,” they say, “Christ promised that the Holy Spirit will tell them much more than what he has said already “and lead them into all truth”.”

This interpretation makes it seem as if the apostles had understood immediately what Christ told them. The

apostles themselves disprove this interpretation, however, by their unbelief concerning his suffering and rising. The

This interpretation makes it seem as if the apostles had understood immediately what Christ told them

papist interpretation also makes it seem as if Christ's words are easily understood today without the help of the Holy Spirit—even though no papist to this day under-

stands anything of it, as I know very well. For I also learned their methods. They continue to demonstrate by all their books that they do not understand any of this.

This is why one needs to answer such fools to confute their worthless lies. First, you hear Christ say: "I have still much to tell you." Who are these "you"? Or with whom does Christ speak? Without a doubt, with the apostles, to whom he also says: "You cannot bear it now;" likewise, "The Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth."

Since Christ does not lie, this promise must have been fulfilled when the Holy Spirit came. The Spirit must have carried out everything the Lord here mentions in the apostolic writings. He must have guided the apostles into all truth.

How does one want to conclude from this that Christ, and the Holy Spirit, did not tell everything to the apostles, but left many things for the councils to teach and adopt? According to the papists' own premises the opposite is true, namely, that the Holy Spirit told the apostles everything. And Christ certainly drives at the fact that the Spirit would explain everything to the apostles and bring into the world

what they learned from Holy Spirit.

Does it make sense when the papists pretend that the things one needs to know, believe, and do in Christendom are said, taught, and decided first after the death of the apostles during the End Times? If what the councils taught or established after the apostles must be considered truth (as something revealed anew by the Holy Spirit), then the apostles themselves did not attain to the truth, much less those to whom they preached.

The church and the apostles would have been deceived by Christ who promises them: “The Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth.” Second, Christ clearly says: “I still have many things to tell you.” He does not say: “I still have many different things to tell you,” and “the Holy Spirit will teach and explain to you things that are different from what I told you.”

That is the papist’s addition, as they alter and twist Christ’s words so that teaching *many* things is supposed to mean teaching *different* things. We grant them the word *many* and wish them grace from the Holy Spirit to teach many things. But it is intolerable that they wish to introduce under the word ‘many’ also the power to teach ‘different’ things.

As they allege arrogantly that the church after the apostles has, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, established and ordained many things, which one must do (e.g., among other things, the article of taking only bread in the sacrament, the prohibition of marriage of priests, and the like) this is no longer teaching “more” or “further.” It is teaching something *different*, indeed, something *contrary* to the clear

order and command of Christ, which they themselves have to confess to be right.

And yet, it is to be heresy and wrong to act contrary to their laws, according to Christ's command. "For," they say, "the church has ordered it differently."

When you ask for the reason, they say: "Christ says: "I have still many things to tell you."” Indeed, he even still has things to say that are contrary to his own word and command. Truly, this would be a fine church which arrogated to itself the power (as does the anti-Christian church of the pope) to teach whatever it wanted against Christ and to change his order and then want to prove and confirm this by this saying: "I have still many things to tell you."

This would be in violation of what Christ clearly says about the Holy Spirit. Christ sets a limit and goal for the Holy Spirit, that the Spirit would not speak of himself, but would declare Christ. The Holy Spirit would take from what is Christ's (that is, that he would take from Christ's word) and command and proclaim it.

This is why the rabble that teaches differently cannot be from the Holy Spirit or Christ's church, but must be the wretched devil's sects. For the Christian church and the Holy Spirit himself remain exclusively with what Christ said and commanded. To be sure, the Church and the Spirit

The Christian church and the Holy Spirit himself remain exclusively with what Christ said and commanded

make them more, that is, they expound them in great detail, but do not change them. For this "saying much" means that one article is taught in

many ways, yet without changing the thing.

This is like John the Evangelist who wrote more things than Christ said here. John, however, always remains in the one thing, namely, thoroughly teaching the article of Christ's person, office, and kingdom, about which Christ himself speaks. This is how his scope or main point always points to this Lamb of God. St. Paul, in the same way, teaches and inculcates the one article concerning the righteousness of faith in the letter to the Romans and almost the entire letter to the Galatians.

This is what it means to preach much and to say more than Christ does with these few words, while at the same time saying the same thing and not something else. For this is what makes a good preacher, that he can take up a matter and comprehend and conclude it with two or three words and then, if need be, expand on it and explain it with sayings and examples, making a whole meadow out of one flower. Just like a goldsmith can hammer a piece of silver into one big chunk, while he is also able to take this chunk again and hammer it into a thin sheet. In this way it is both a long and short sermon, and yet remains one and the same without contradiction. For "God's word is to dwell among us richly," Paul says in Col. 3:16, so that they would master the scripture and could prove from it the right doctrine.

This is what the letter to the Hebrews does, which speaks for the most part of the priesthood of Christ: It draws a long sermon out of Ps. 110:4, "You are a priest forever," and adds many sayings, texts, and examples to it. And yet, when looking at it in summary, it is no more than this one article,

how Christ is the one eternal Priest. This is truly saying more than David mentioned in the psalm, but nothing else than what David said.

1. How have the words of Christ about the work of the Holy Spirit been twisted and contorted?
2. Did the Holy Spirit fulfill the word of Christ at the time of the apostles, or does He continue to reveal more and more new things about Christ to the church today?
3. Were the apostles “guided into all truth”, or was their truth yet to be revealed after the time of the apostles?
4. Does “teach *many* things” mean the same as “teach *different* things”?
5. What is the limit and goal of the Holy Spirit?
6. What does “saying much” actually mean?
7. What makes a good preacher?

15

THE ENTIRE BIBLE POINTS TO CHRIST

Since the beginning of Christendom there has been much more teaching and preaching (by the Holy Spirit) than the words Christ actually taught and preached. There might still be more teaching and preaching in the richest, most varied way, as more is revealed to one preacher than to another, or is more richly attained or given to speak to one teacher, than to another. Yet this is to be done so that, in the end, when it is all brought together, it all points to the one Christ.

And how much can be deduced from the entire scripture,

indeed, from the similarity of all creatures, which all agree with the doctrine of the gospel, and which, even though Christ never taught or spoke them, is still the same doctrine? St. Paul also talks about this when addressing the gift of prophecy or interpretation of scripture. He gives it a standard and rule by which it is to abide. "If anybody prophesies," says he in Rom. 12:7, "let it be similar to the faith," that is, so that it may fit and agree with the doctrine of the faith.

Take, for example, the incident where Abraham led his son Isaac onto the mountain to sacrifice him there, but left his servants and donkeys at the foot of the mountain. Such an example can be interpreted according to the faith against it.

This is what the Jewish preachers and teachers did who taught that whoever let himself be sacrificed and strangled would do the highest work of all and would go right to heaven. This is why the kings, who wanted to be excellent saints, sacrificed their children to God alive and burned them. Monks have interpreted it in the same way: If a person wishes to come into God's presence, he is "to leave the servants and donkeys at the foot of the mountain," that is, to cast aside the five senses and have nothing to do with external, worldly things and existence. Isolated from everything, he is to live in spiritual contemplation.

This is not what it means to interpret and teach according to the faith, but against the faith. Rather, interpret it this way: He who wants to come to God must go beyond human reason and thoughts to the point of having God's word by which he learns to recognize and grasp God. There

he must bring the sacrifice – Christ, the Son of God, given for us as a sacrifice to God – by faith before God (if the conscience is to stand before God). All the while, he must “leave the donkey with the servants below,” that is, everything that pertains to our works and deeds.

This is then how I have adduced the example, which is just the same as the gospel teaches everywhere. It is not against, but for, the faith, although this would not be the literal, certain interpretation of this event. Our papist donkeys, sows, and fops do not want to heed this. They instead want to talk us into accepting whatever is alleged and taught in the name of the church or councils, as if the Holy Spirit himself taught it—regardless of how it fits or agrees with the doctrine of the gospel. All this is supposedly confirmed by this verse: “I still have many things to tell you.”

No, dear friend, it does not follow that, although he has *more* things to say, you may say *whatever you wish* or what any monk has dreamed up or what some arrogant papist wants to have obeyed. I gladly concede to you that you may expound these words of Christ and, if you are an inventive preacher, may make a thousand words out of one in order to make it all clear, bright, and light, so that everybody may understand. Yet do it in such a way that you remain with the one pure and unadulterated doctrine.

Yet if you bring forward against this a new doctrine and allege: Whoever becomes a monk has a new baptism and becomes as clean as a young recently baptized child, it is not the Holy Spirit who tells you to say this but the devil. And this is not teaching more, but something totally different and the opposite of what Christ teaches.

This is why a Christian must have understanding in these matters. As St. John says, the Christian must be able to distinguish the spirits according to God's word to see to it that he is not told anything else, be it a long or a short sermon, and that he is not directed to and led down a different path.

1. To whom shall all preaching and teaching within the Church point?
2. According to Romans 12:7, should new prophecies contradict the Christian faith?
3. May Christians say anything about Christ just because they are Christians?
4. Who is the source of teachings contrary to those of the Holy Spirit?
5. How does a Christian distinguish between spirits?

16

THE HOLY SPIRIT SPEAKS ONLY OF CHRIST

Christ also says: “You cannot now bear it.” Here he speaks about excellent, great matters that are too difficult for the apostles. Christ does not want to say more about them right now when the apostles are too imperfect and weak.

Christ is talking here about nothing other than what he had started to talk about, namely, how his kingdom is to fare in the world: How he had to die the most shameful death and be cursed, and still be believed to be the Savior, the Son of God and Lord over everything. Christ also alludes to the fact that the apostles would be persecuted and

killed by the world and that the gospel would go on nonetheless. Because of the gospel, the Jewish nation with their priesthood, temple, worship, and all their glory would fall to the ground. Even if Christ had preached to them about it for many years, the apostles would not have understood until the Holy Spirit would teach it to them in the course of their preaching office by experience.

In comparison, what is it that has been ordered and established after the apostles by the councils or popes? Should it be so difficult that one can neither understand nor bear without a special revelation and power of the Holy Spirit, e.g., how one should keep the rule of this or that order and monks? Wear black or gray cowls? Not eat meat on Fridays? Use only one form of the sacrament? Or should the apostles not also have been able to understand and bear what every unlearned, godless knave can well understand and do?

Alas, the things the apostles could not bear are much higher things and a higher art than what these useless babblers are dreaming. And believe it for certain that whatever the apostles were unable to understand and do you too will not understand or bear so easily and without the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

The doctrine of the faith is difficult to grasp. It is not so easily understood (as the inexperienced spirits dream!) that a man can step outside of himself, that is, away from his own life and works, and cling with all his might to something he neither sees nor experiences in himself, namely, that Christ goes to the Father. Oh, it is a difficult art: To despair so utterly of oneself and let go of everything one

has, both of a good and of an evil life, and simply cling to the word of Christ—losing one's body and soul for it!

What reason can explain or teach this, even if it were to search the whole world? Just try it in earnest, in the true struggle of conscience, then you will experience it! For the devil and our own nature, many sects and false teachings, strive against it too powerfully. Let this be said against the false distinction and asinine art of the papists by which they foul and smear this beautiful text in order to confirm their lies.

However, the meaning of Christ's expression calling the Holy Spirit the "Spirit of truth" belongs to the other gospel and is expounded richly elsewhere. Yet in due diligence let us simply say this: "The Spirit of truth," and "the same will guide you into all truth," means "into the right, pure, and unadulterated doctrine which preaches about me" and, as he says a little later, "glorifies me."

Christ here sees far into the future how the lying spirit, the devil, will also be active and arise in the church and will accomplish much with great splendor and renown. It is as if Christ wanted to say: "Oh, how many sects will arise which all will boast excellent things about the great spirit, but which only will lead people away from Christ and the truth into error and condemnation." This is why Christ also describes the Holy Spirit and gives him a genuine mark by which to know and test him: "He will glorify me; for he will take from what is mine."

This indicates that the Holy Spirit will be the only one explaining Christ in accordance with how Christ made himself known by his word. This tells you that whoever

teaches something else and pretends to be, and decks himself out to be, a spirit – this is not the Spirit of Christ.

For the Spirit is not to teach anything else, but remains with the same doctrine of Christ

For the Spirit is not to teach anything else, but remains with the same doctrine of Christ, except that he spreads it further and makes it clearer and brighter. This is why he says: “He will glorify me.”

Likewise, he says: “He will not speak of himself.”

Christ distinguishes between the false spirits and this true Spirit. For all the others come from themselves and talk about themselves with whatever they have thought up. Now Christ says that this is not a property of the Holy Spirit but of the devil. “When he lies, he speaks of his own; for he is a liar and a father of the same,” John 8:44.

This is why Christ wants to say: “Where you hear a spirit that speaks about itself, you know for sure it is a liar. Yet the Holy Spirit will not speak about himself, but he will declare what he receives from me and how he hears me and the Father talk to each other.”

This is certainly a harsh text containing the article of the three Persons in the divine Being, where the Son of God is the eternal Word of the Father, which no one hears speaking except the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit not only hears it, but witnesses to it and proclaims it to the world.

In summary, all this goes to show that God has decided that the Holy Spirit is to promote and teach only the article concerning Christ, how we become righteous before God for Christ’s sake. This is why Christ concludes: “He will

glorify me; for he will take from what is mine.”

This is to say: “The Holy Spirit will certainly do more than I did, and bring it more clearly to the light of day. But he will only take from what is mine, only speak about me, not about men and their own holiness and works.” This is to be the Holy Spirit’s proper office and work by which he is to be known. He will carry it out without ceasing until one knows this Christ well.

When you have learned enough of this, then you may look for another holy spirit. Yet we, so I hope, will remain the students of this Master and Teacher until the Last Day.

-
-
1. What would finally allow the apostles to understand Christ’s teaching?
 2. Is the doctrine of faith easy to understand?
 3. Can human reason grasp Christian faith?
 4. Why is the Holy Spirit called the “Spirit of Truth”?
 5. What is the genuine mark by which we can know and test the Holy Spirit?
 6. How will the Holy Spirit explain Christ?
 7. About whom do all other spirits speak? About Christ or themselves?

AFTERWORD

The text in this volume is a new translation of a sermon of Martin Luther (1483-1546) known by scholars today as postil 235¹. In contrast to a sermon that was actually delivered in a worship service, recorded by a listener, and later printed in one form or another, a postil (from Latin: *post illa verba* = “according to each word”) was a sermon prepared to be published and then read either from the pulpit or at home by someone other than the author. *Postille* were also considered to be a help in the preparation of sermons by others, or simply for personal edification. It was Elector Frederick the Wise (1463-1525), Luther’s sovereign, who in 1520 requested that Luther prepare such postils for the pericopes of every Sunday of the church year, in part, to extricate Luther, if only for a while, from the theological firestorm that had embroiled Europe. Luther himself, however, also saw the need for a collection of such sermons, as the state of preaching in the common congregation of his day was somewhat grim. Other such collections, like that of the Dominican mystic John Tauler (c. 1300-1361), had long been in use for that purpose, and with the printing press producing all sorts of biblical commentary from every conceivable source, sermons which simply and clearly

¹ Enumeration according to: Kurt Aland, *Hilfsbuch zum Lutherstudium*, 4th ed., (Bielefeld: Luther-Verlag, 1996), p. 197.

explained the Biblical texts used in worship in view of the Gospel of Jesus Christ were truly needed.

This particular postil, treating John 16:8-13, expounds upon the standard Gospel text for Cantate Sunday, the 4th Sunday after Easter. Appearing in 1544 in a collection prepared by Caspar Cruciger the Elder (1504-1548)² and approved by Luther himself, it is a revised and expanded edition of an earlier postil that appeared first in the sermon collection requested by Frederick the Wise in 1523. It also was printed that same year three separate times as a simple pamphlet. In 1528, 1531, and again in 1532 a revised version of the postil from 1523 was included in a collection of Luther's sermons prepared by M. Rodt of Zwickau. Subsequent editions of the writings of Luther have frequently included all three versions (that of Luther, Rodt and Cruciger) not the least of which being the English edition of Luther's sermons by John N. Lenker³ that is still readily available today in various forms.⁴

Besides these collections of Luther's Postille, known now as his *Kirchenpostille*, or "church sermons" there is also a collection of sermons from Luther known as his *Hauspostille*, or "House sermons." These *Hauspostille* first appeared in print 1544, having been compiled by Luther confidant Veit Dietrich (1506-1549). What are they? The *Hauspos-*

² Cruciger was a member of the faculty in Wittenberg as well as preacher at the castle church, had assisted Luther with a revision of his German translation of the Bible, and was the editor of the first volumes of the Wittenberg edition of Luther's works (1539 ff.).

³ Reprint, Vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, Baker Book House: 1989), pp. 110-166.

⁴ Most later editions have also included long digressions of the relative merits of one edition of the postil over another.

tille are sermons that Luther delivered on occasion in his home on Sundays and holidays for his family and friends, between the years 1530 and 1534, for their instruction, and also, when he himself was feeling too ill to preach in public. Both Dietrich and another close friend of Luther, Georg Rörer (1492-1557)—who would make a name for himself by recording Luther’s lectures, table talks and letters—were frequently present on such occasions and each recorded the sermons. Rörer’s notes, however, were not published until 1559, and only then, after a controversy broke out as to the authenticity of a number of the sermons that Dietrich had included in his edition. Consequently, two different sets of *Hauspostille* have been past on to posterity.⁵ Thus we have two more editions of a sermon on John 16:8-13. One preached in the Luther home on Cantate Sunday 1531, that of Dietrich (Po. 346)⁶, and the other preached on Cantate Sunday 1533,⁷ that of Rörer.⁸

Still other sermons preached on this same text, which were not used for either the *Kirchenpostille* or *Hauspostille* are extant: One presumed to have been preached in 1520 (Pr. 93) and another from 1522 (Pr. 2056).⁹ Those sermons given exact dates: May 14, 1525 (Pr. 601), June 6, 13, and 27, 1528 (Pr. 967, 968, 969), May 7, 1531 (Pr. 1230), May 11, 1533 (Pr. 1402), April 25, 1535 (Pr. 1530),

⁵ So in the St. Louis edition of Walch, Vol. 13a contains the Dietrich *Hauspostille*, Vol. 13b that of Rörer.

⁶ Aland, p. 201.

⁷ According to Walch, Vol. 13b, Col. 1984.

⁸ Ibid, col. 1984 ff.

⁹ This dating is according to Walch, Vol. 12, Col. 1830. Aland does not assign a date.

May 19, 1538 (Pr. 1722). Luther treated John 16:8-13 as well within a series of sermons delivered in the summer of 1537 on John 14-16. The material on John 16 was printed in 1538 under the title *The Sixteenth Chapter of St. John Preached and Interpreted*.¹⁰ An English translation of these sermons was printed in 1961 by Concordia Publishing House in St. Louis as volume 24 of the American edition of Luther's Works.

Returning then to the text translated in this work, as stated above it is that which appeared in 1544 in a collection prepared by Caspar Cruciger the Elder. It has long been understood that this collection, thus the text used in this volume, is not pure Luther, but Luther distilled and refined by Cruciger. Even though this is the case, the content, the theology, remain that of Luther. Those aspects of the Cruciger edition translated here which speak in its favor of its use include clarity of language, the incorporation of material from other sources, and the fact that it was printed, with Luther's approval, shortly before the Reformer's death. In other words, the Cruciger text provides a mature Luther's precise treatment of a text through which he had worked many times.

As for the translation, Holger Sonntag created the initial text of the sermon from Walch (St. Louis Ed., Vol. XI:884ff., 1901). I then took Sonntag's work, divided it into chapters, split up, reworked and shortened sentences, and then added chapter headings, call out boxes, and study questions. If any problems with the translation appear, it is

¹⁰ "Das 16. (und 17.) Kapitel S. Johannes gepredigt und ausgelegt." Aland # 334, p. 95.

because of this secondary process. As always, however, it is hoped that by presenting the text in this way, it has become more accessible to the modern English-speaking reader.

Paul Strawn
Spring Lake Park, Minnesota
June 2008

NOTES

NOTES

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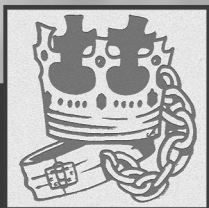
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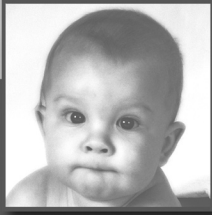
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