

Christmas Day and Morning.

Titus 2-11-15 & Hebrews 1:1-12

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

THE APPEARING OF THE GRACE OF GOD

1. It is written in the book of Nehemiah (ch 4) that the Jews, in rebuilding Jerusalem, wrought with one hand and with the other held the sword, because of the enemy who sought to hinder the building. Paul in Titus 1, 9 carries out the thought of the symbol in this teaching that a bishop, a pastor, or a preacher, should be mighty in the Holy Scriptures to instruct and admonish as well, as to resist the gainsayers. Accordingly, we are to make a twofold use of the Word of God: as both bread and weapon; for feeding and for resisting; in peace and in war. With one hand we must build, improve, teach and feed all Christendom; with the other, oppose the devil, the heretics, and the world. For where the pasture is not defended, the devil will soon destroy it; he is bitterly opposed to God's Word. Let us then, God granting us his grace, so handle the Gospel that not only shall the souls of men be fed, but men shall learn to put on that Gospel as armor and fight their enemies. Thus shall it furnish both pasture and weapons.

2. The first consideration in this lesson is, Paul teaches what should be the one theme of Titus and of every other preacher, namely, Christ. The people are to be taught who Christ is, why he came and what blessings his coming brought us. "The grace of God hath appeared," the apostle says, meaning God's grace is clearly manifest. How was it manifested? By the preaching of the apostles it was proclaimed world wide. Previous to Christ's resurrection, the grace of God was unrevealed. Christ dwelt only among the Jews and was not yet glorified. But after his ascension he gave to men the Holy Spirit. Concerning the Spirit, he before

testified (Jn 16, 14) that the Spirit of truth, whom he should send, would glorify him. The apostle's meaning is: Christ did not come to dwell on earth for his own advantage, but for our good. Therefore he did not retain his goodness and grace within himself. After his ascension he caused them to be proclaimed in public preaching throughout the world - to all men. Nor did he permit the revelation to be made as a mere proclamation of a fact, as a rumor or a report; it was appointed to bring forth fruit in us. It is a revelation and proclamation that teaches us to deny - to reject - ungodly things, all earthly lusts, all worldly desires, and thenceforward lead a sober, righteous and godly life.

3. In the first verse, the true essence of the text, "The grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men," Paul condemns the favors of the world and of men as pernicious, worthy of condemnation, ineffectual; and would incite in us a desire for divine grace. He teaches us to despise human favor. He who would have God's grace and favor must consider the surrender of all other grace and favor. Christ says (Mt 10, 22), "*Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.*" The Psalmist says (Ps 53, 5), "*God hath scattered the bones of him that campeth against thee.*" And Paul declares (Gal 1, 10), "*If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ.*" Where saving grace of God comes, the pernicious favor must be ignored. He who would taste the former must reject and forget the latter.

4. According to the text, this grace has appeared, is proclaimed, to all men. Christ commanded (Mk 16, 15) that the Gospel be preached to all creatures throughout the whole world. And Paul in many places - for instance Colossians 1, 23 - says, "The Gospel, which ye heard preached in all creation under heaven." The thought is, the Gospel was preached publicly in the hearing of all creatures, much more of all men. At first Christ preached the Gospel and only in the land of the Jews, knowledge the Holy Scriptures being confined to that nation, as Ps. 76,2 and Ps 147, 19 declare. But afterward the Word was made free to all men; not confined to any particular section. Psalm 19, 4 declares, "*Their line is gone out through the earth, and their words to the end of the world.*" This is spoken of the apostles.

5. But you may object, "Surely the words of the apostles did not, in their time, reach the end of the world; for nearly eight hundred years elapsed after the apostolic age before Germany was converted, and also recent discoveries show there are many islands and many countries where no indication of the grace of God appeared before the century." I reply: The apostle has reference to character of the Gospel. It is a message calculated, from the nature of its inception and purpose, to go into all the world. At the time of the apostles it had already entered the greater and better part of the world. Up to that day, no message of like character was ever ordained. The Law of Moses was confined to the Jewish nation. Universal proclamation of the Gospel being for the most part accomplished at that time, and its completion being inevitable today - the Scripture phraseology makes it an accomplished fact. In the Scriptures we frequently meet with what is called "synecdoche;" that is, a figure of speech whereby a part is made to stand for the whole. For instance, it is said that Christ

was three days and three nights in the grave, when the fact is he passed one entire day, two nights, and portions of two other days in that place. Mt 12, 40. Again, we read (Mt 23, 37) of Jerusalem stoning the prophets, yet a large proportion of the inhabitants were godly people. Thus, too, the ecclesiastics are said to be avaricious, but among them are many righteous men. This way of speaking is common to all languages; especially is it found in the Holy Scriptures.

6. So the Gospel was in the apostolic day preached to all creatures; for it is a message introduced, designed and ordained to reach all creatures. To illustrate: A prince, having despatched from his residence a message and seeing it started upon the way, might say the message had gone to the appointed place even though it had not yet reached its destination. Similarly, God has sent forth his Gospel to all creatures even though it has not so far reached all. Note, the prophet says the voice of the apostles has "gone out through all the earth." He does not say their voice has reached the entire world, but is on the way - "is gone out." And so Paul means the Gospel is continuously preached and made manifest to all men. It is now on the way; the act is performed though the effect is not complete.

FIRST EVIL - UNGODLINESS

7. The appearing of grace, Paul says, instructs us in two things: one is described as "*denying ungodliness and worldly lusts.*" We must explain these terms. The Latin word "*impietas,*" which the apostle renders in the Greek "*asebia*" and which in Hebrew is "*resa,*" I cannot find any one German word to express. I have made it "*ungoettlich wesen,*" "*ungodliness.*" The Latin and Greek terms do not fully convey the Hebrew meaning. "*Resa,*" properly, is the sin of failing to honor God; that is, of not believing, trusting, fearing him, not surrendering to him, not submitting to his providence, not allowing him to be God. In this sin, those guilty of gross outward evils are deeply implicated indeed; but much more deeply involved are the wise, sainted, learned ecclesiasts who, relying upon their works, think themselves godly and so appear in the eyes of the world. In fact, all men who do not live a life committed to the pure goodness and grace of God are "impious," ungodly, even though they be holy enough to raise the dead, or perfect in continence and all other virtues. "Graceless" or "faithless" would seem to be the proper adjective to describe them. I shall, however, use the term "ungodly." Paul tells us that saving grace has appeared to the graceless to make them rich in grace and rich in God; in other words, to bring them to believe, trust, fear, honor, love and praise him, and thus transform ungodliness into godliness.

8. Of what use would be the appearing of saving grace were we to attempt to become godly in life through some other means? Paul here declares grace was revealed and proclaimed to the very end that we might deny ungodliness and thereafter live righteously; not through or of ourselves, but through grace. No one more disparages divine grace, and more gainsays its appearing, than do hypocrites and ungodly saints; for, unwilling to regard their own works ineffectual, sinful and faulty, they discover in themselves much good. Measuring themselves by their good intentions, they imagine they deserve great merit independently of grace. God,

however, regards no work good - nor is it - unless he by his grace effects it in us. It was for the sake of accomplishing in us all many such works, and of deterring us from our own attempts, that God manifested his saving grace to men.

9. Now, the foremost evil of men is their godlessness, their unsaved state, their lack of grace. It includes first a faithless heart, and then all resultant thoughts, words, works and conduct in general. Left to himself, the individual's inner life and outward conduct are guided only by his natural abilities and human reason. In these his beauty and brilliance sometimes outshine the real saints. But he seeks merely his own interest. He is unable to honor God in life and conduct, even though he does command greater praise and glory in the exercise of reason than do the true saints of frequent Scripture mention. So worldwide and so deeply subtle an evil is this godless, graceless conduct, it withholds from the individual the power to perceive the evil of his way, to believe he errs, even when his error is held up to him. The prophet (Ps 32, 2) looks upon this blindness as not that of reason, or of the world, or of the flesh, but as a spiritual deception, leading astray not only the reason but the spirit of man.

10. In fact, that ungodliness is sinful must be believed rather than felt. Since God permitted the manifestation of his grace to all men to lead them to deny ungodliness, we ought to believe him a Being who knows our hearts better than we do ourselves. We must also confess that were it not for the ungodliness and faulty character of our deeds, God would not have ordained the proclamation of his grace for our betterment. Were one to administer remedies to an individual not ill, he would be looked upon as lacking sense. Accordingly, God must be regarded in the same light by them who, measuring themselves by their good intentions and their feelings, are unwilling to believe all their deeds ungodly and worthy of condemnation and that God's saving grace is necessary. To them this is a terrible doctrine. Christ (Mt 21, 32) charges the chief priests, doctors and ecclesiasts (elders) with disbelieving John the Baptist, who called them to repentance; they refused to know their sin. All the prophets met death for accusing the people of the sin of ungodliness. No one believed the prophets. No one of the people thought himself guilty of such sin. They judged themselves by their feelings, their intentions and works; not by God's Word, not by his counsel delivered through the prophets.

11. Paul employs a strong Greek term, "paedeusa," meaning "to instruct" - such elementary instruction as we give children concerning a thing whereof they have no knowledge at all. The children are guided, not by their reason, but by the instructing word of their father. According to his representation they regard a certain thing as useful or as harmful. They believe in and are guided by him. With intelligent and learned individuals, however, we explain in a way comprehensible to their reason why a certain thing is profitable and a certain other thing unprofitable. God designs that we, as childish pupils, be instructed by his saving grace. Then if we cannot feel we may yet believe that our natures are godless and faulty, and so receive grace and walk therein. Well does Christ testify (Mt 18, 3), "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven;" and Isaiah (ch. 7, 9), "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." Divine, saving grace, then, has appeared, not only to help us, but also to teach us our need of grace.

For the fact of its coming shows all our works godless, graceless, and condemned. The psalmist (Ps 119, 5-8) fervently entreats God to teach him his judgments, laws and commandments, that he may not be guided by his own ideas and feelings, a thing God has forbidden (Deut 12, 8), saying: "*Ye shall not do . . . every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes.*"

SECOND EVIL - WORLDLY LUSTS

12. The other evil in man Paul terms "worldly lusts." Therein is comprehended all disorderly conduct the individual may be guilty of, touching himself and his neighbor; while the first evil - ungodliness - comprehends all wrongs toward God. Observe Paul's judicious choice of words - "lusts," "worldly lusts." By the use of "worldly" he would include all evil lusts, whether it be for goods, luxuries, honor, favors or aught of the world wherein one may lustfully sin. He does not say, however, we must deny ourselves worldly goods, or must not make use of them. They are good creatures of God. We must avail ourselves of food, drink, clothing and other necessaries of life. No such thing is forbidden; it is only the lust after them, the undue love and craving for them, that we must deny, for it leads us into all sins against ourselves and our neighbors.

13. In this expression is also condemned the conduct of godless hypocrites, who, though they may be clad in sheep's clothing and sometimes refrain from an evil deed through cowardice or shame or through fear of hell's punishment, are nevertheless filled with evil desires for wealth, honor and power. No one loves life more dearly, fears death more terribly and desires more ardently to remain in this world than do they; yet they fail to recognize the worldly lusts wherein they are drowned, and their many works are vainly performed. It is not enough to put away worldly works and speech; worldly desires, or lusts, must be removed. We are not to place our affections upon the things of this life, but all our use of it should be with a view to the future life; as follows in the text: "*Looking for the . . . appearing of the glory,*" etc.

14. Observe here, the grace of God reveals the fact that all men are filled with worldly lusts, though some may conceal their lustfulness by their hypocrisy. Were men not subject to such desires, there could be no necessity for the revelation of grace, no need for its benefits, no occasion for its manifestation to all men, no need it should teach the putting off of lusts. For whosoever is not subject to lusts is not called upon to forsake them. Paul's statement here has no reference to such a one. Indeed, he cannot be a human being; hence he has no need of grace, and so far as he is concerned its manifestation is not essential. What, then, must he be? Unquestionably, a devil, and eternally condemned with all his holiness and purity. Could the hypocrites, however, wholly hide their worldly lusts, they could not conceal their ardent desire to hold to this life, and their unwillingness to die. Thus they reveal their lack of grace, and the worldliness and ungodliness of all their works. Nevertheless, they fail to perceive their graceless condition and their perilous infirmity.

15. Further, Paul speaks of "denying," or renouncing. Therein he rejects many foolish expedients devised by men for attaining righteousness. Some run to the wilderness, some into cloisters. Others separate themselves from society, presuming by bodily flight to run away from ungodliness and worldly lusts. Yet others resort to tortures and injuries of the body, imposing upon themselves excessive hunger, thirst, wakefulness, labor, uncomfortable apparel. Now, if ungodliness and worldly lusts were but something painted upon the wall, you might escape them by running out of the house; if they were knit into a red coat, you might pull off the coat and don a gray one; did they grow in your hair, you might have it shaved off and wear a bald pate; were they baked in the bread, you might eat roots instead. But since they inhere in your heart and permeate you through and through, where can you flee that you will not carry them with you? What can you wear under which you will escape them? What will you eat and drink wherein they will not be with you? In a word, what can you do to escape yourself, since you cannot get out of yourself? Dear man, the great temptations are within you. To run away from them would necessitate, first, fleeing from yourself. James says (ch 1, 14), *"Each man is tempted, when he is driven away by his own lust, and enticed."*

16. The apostle means, not simply that we must flee the outward temptations to sin, but, as he says, that we must "deny" them, must mortify the lusts, or desires, within ourselves. Our lusts being mortified, no external temptation can harm. By such subjection do we truly flee. If we fail to mortify our desires, it will not avail to flee outward temptations. We must remain amidst temptations and there learn through grace to deny lusts and ungodliness. It is written (Ps 110, 2), "Rule thou" - or apply thyself - in the midst of thine enemies." Conflict and not flight, energy and not rest, must be the order in this life if we are to win the crown.

17. We read of an ancient father who, unable to endure temptation in a cloister, left it that he might in the wilderness serve God in peace. But in the desert one day his little water-jug overturned. He set it up, but it overturned a second time. Becoming enraged, he dashed the vessel into pieces. Then, saying within himself, *"Since I cannot find peace when alone, the defect must be in myself,"* he returned to the cloister to suffer temptations, from that time forward teaching that we must obtain the victory, not by fleeing worldly lusts, but by denying them.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

18. Paul goes on to show another thing wherein we are instructed of grace -the Christian's manner of life after ungodliness and worldly lusts are denied:

"v12b We should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world."

What an excellent general rule of life he gives us! one adapted to all conditions. He offers no occasion for sects. He introduces no differing opinions of men, as the case is with human doctrines. First, he mentions "soberness," wherein is indicated what should be the nature of man's conduct toward himself in all respects. It calls for the subjection of the body, the keeping of it well disciplined. In every place of our text where the term "soberness" is used, Paul has the Greek word "sophron," which signifies, not only soberness, but temperance in every recognition of the body, in every ministration to the flesh; in eating, drinking and

sleeping, for instance; in apparel, speech, manner and movement. Such soberness represents what is known in German as honorable living and good breeding. The sober man knows how, in all physical relations, to conduct himself temperately, discreetly and bravely; not leading a wild, shameless, unrestrained, disorderly life, lax in regard to eating, drinking, sleeping, and to speech, manner and movement. In the earlier part of the chapter, Paul devises that aged women teach the young women to be "sober-minded" and chaste.

19. Excessive eating and drinking truly does greatly impede our efforts to lead an honorable life. On the other hand, temperance contributes much to accomplish it. The moment one indulges his appetite to excess, he loses perfect control of himself; his five senses become unmanageable. Experience teaches that when the stomach is filled with meat and drink, the mouth is filled with words, the ears with the lust of hearing, the eyes with the lust of seeing. The whole system either becomes indolent, drowsy, dull, or else it grows wild and dissolute, all the members overleaping the bounds of reason and propriety, until no discipline nor moderation remains. The word in our text, therefore, is not inaptly Latinized "sobrius," "soberness." In Greek, the word "sophron" is the opposite of "asotos," just as in German "voellerei" and "maeszigkeit," "drunkenness" and "soberness," are contrasting terms. Examining the Latin "sobrius," we find it does not signify total abstinence from food and drink. "Sobrius" and "ebrius" are also contrasting terms, like the German "trunkenheit oder voellerei" and "nuechterkeit," "drunkenness or ebriety" and "soberness." *We Germans also call that individual "nuechtern," "sober,"* who, though he may have eaten and drunk, is not intoxicated, but has perfect control of himself.

20. You see now the manner of good works advocated by the apostle. He does not require us to make pilgrimages; he does not forbid certain foods; nor does he prescribe a particular garb, nor certain fast days. His teaching is not that of the class who, in obedience to human laws, separate themselves from men, basing their spirituality and goodness upon the peculiarity of their garb and diet, their manner of wearing the hair, their observance of times; who seek to become righteous by not conforming to custom in the matter of clothing, diet, occupation, seasons and movements. They are given an appropriate name in the Gospel - "pharisaei," meaning "excluded" or "separated." In Psalm 80, 13, the prophet calls them "monios," signifying "a solitary one." The name primarily is applied to a wild hog of solitary habits. We shall hereafter designate this class as "solitary." As the psalmist complains, they make terrible havoc of God's vineyard. These pharisees, or solitary ones, make great show with their traditions, their peculiar garb, their meats, days and physical attitudes. They easily draw away the multitude from the common customs of life to their ways. As Christ tells us (Mt 24, 24), even the elect can scarce resist them.

21. Let us learn here from Paul that no meats, drinks, apparel, colors, times, attitudes, are forbidden and none are prescribed. In all these things, everyone is given freedom, if only they be used in soberness, or moderation. As said before, these temporalities are not forbidden. Only the abuse of them, only excess and disorder therein, is prohibited. Where there is distinction and emphasis on such matters, there you will surely find human laws; not evangelical doctrine, not Christian liberty. Without soberness, or moderation, the ultimate

result must be dissimulation, and hypocrisy. Therefore, make use of all earthly things when and where you please, giving thanks to God. This is Paul's teaching. Only guard against excess, disorder, misuse and licentiousness relative to temporal things and you will be in the right way. Do not permit yourself to be misled by the fact that the holy fathers established orders and sects, made use of certain meats and certain apparel, and conducted themselves thus and so. Their object was not peculiar eminence - therein they would have been unholy - but their conduct was of preference, and as a means for exercising moderation. Likewise do you exercise moderation as you see fit, and maintain your freedom. Confine not yourself to manners and methods, as if godly living consisted in them. Otherwise you will be solitary and deprived of the communion of saints. Diligently guard against such narrowness. We must fast, we must watch and labor, we must wear inferior clothing, and so on; but only on occasions when the body seems to need restraint and mortification. Do not set apart a specified time and place, but exercise your self-denial as necessity requires. Then you will be fasting rightly. You will fast every day in denying worldly lusts. So the Gospel teaches, and they who follow this course are of the New Testament dispensation.

22. Secondly, Paul says we should be "righteous" in our lives. No work, however, nor particular time, is here designated as the way to righteousness. In the ways of God is universal freedom. It is left to the individual to exercise his liberty; to do right when, where and to whom occasion offers. Herein Paul gives a hint of how we should conduct ourselves toward our neighbor - righteously. We owe him that righteousness which consists in doing to him as we would have him do to us; in granting to him all we would have him grant us. We are to do our neighbor no bodily harm, no injury to his wife, children, friends, possessions, honor or anything of his. Rather we are obligated, wherever we see he needs our assistance, to aid him, to stand by him, at the risk of our bodies, our property, our honor and everything that is ours. Righteousness consists in rendering to each one his due. What a little word to comprehend so much! How few walk in this way of righteousness, though otherwise living blamelessly! We do everything else but what saving grace reveals to us as our duty to do.

23. The word "neighbor" must be construed to include even an enemy. But the way of righteousness is entirely obliterated. It is much more overgrown in neglect than the way of moderation, which itself is almost wholly untrodden and effaced because of the introduction of certain meats and apparel, certain movements and display. These things have been superabundantly, more than profusely, insinuated. We ape after set forms, and make fools of ourselves with rosaries, with ecclesiastical and feudal institutions, with hearing of masses, with festivals, with self-devised works concerning which is no divine command. O Lord God, how wide hell has opened her mouth (see Isaiah 5, 14); and how narrow has the gate of heaven become in consequence of the accursed doctrines and devices of these solitary and pharisaical persons! The prophets unwittingly paint the picture of present-day conditions. They represent hell by the wide-open mouth of a dragon, and heaven by a closed door. Oh, the wretchedness of the picture!

24. It is not necessary to inquire what outward works you can perform. Look to your neighbor. There you will find enough to do, a thousand kind offices to render. Do not suffer yourself to be misled into believing you will reach heaven by praying and attending church, by contributing to institutions and monuments, while you pass by your neighbor. If you pass him in this life, he will lie in your way in the life to come and cause you to go by the door of heaven as did the rich man who left Lazarus lying at his gate. Wo to us priests, monks, bishops and Pope! What do we preach? What teach? How we lead the pitiable multitude from the way! The blind leading the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. Such doctrines as Paul declares in the conclusion of this lesson - these are what we should teach.

25. In the third place, we are taught we must live "godly" lives. Here we are reminded of how to conduct ourselves toward God. Now we are fully instructed concerning our duty to ourselves, to our neighbors and to God. As before said, impiety signifies wickedness, ungodliness, lack of grace. Piety, on the other hand, means having faith, godliness, grace. Godly living consists in trusting God, in relying on his grace alone, regarding no work not wrought in us by him, through grace. If we are godly, we will recognize, honor, adore, praise and love God. Briefly in two words, to live godly is to fear and trust God. As it is written (Ps 147, 11), "Jehovah taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his lovingkindness." See also Ps 33, 18. To fear God is to look upon our own devices as pure ungodliness in the light of his manifest grace. These being ungodly, we are to fear God and forsake them, and thereafter guard against them. To trust in God is to have perfect confidence that he will be gracious to us, filling us with grace and godliness.

26. The individual yields to God when he gives himself wholly to God, attempting nothing of himself but permitting the Lord to work in and to rule him; when his whole concern and fear, his continual prayer and desire, are for God to withhold him from following his own works and ways, which he now recognizes as ungodly and deserving of wrath, and to rule over and work in him through grace. Thus the individual will obtain a clear conscience and will love and praise God. Observe, they are pious and filled with grace, who do not walk by reason, do not trust in human nature, but rely only on the grace of God, ever fearful lest they fall from grace into dependence upon their own reason, their self-conceit, good intentions and self-devised works. The theme of the entire one-hundred-and-nineteenth psalm is trust in God. In every one of its one hundred and seventy-six verses, David breathes the same prayer. Reliance upon God is a subject of such vital importance, and so numerous are the difficulties and dangers attending human nature and reason and human doctrine, we cannot be too much on our guard.

27. The way of God does not require us to build churches and cathedrals, to make pilgrimages, to hear mass, and so on. God requires a heart moved by his grace, a life mistrustful of all ways not emanating from grace. Nothing more can one render God than such loyalty. All else is rather his gift to us. He says (Ps 50, 14-15), in effect: "Think not, O Israel, I inquire after thy gifts and offerings; for everything in heaven and earth is mine. This is the service I require of thee: to offer unto me thanksgiving and pay thy vows. Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." In other words:

Thou hast vowed that I should be thy God. Then keep this vow. Let me work; perform not thine own works. Let me help thee in thy need. For everything, look to me. Let me alone direct thy life. Then wilt thou be able to know me and my grace; to love and praise me. This is the true road to salvation. If thou doest otherwise, performing thine own works, thou wilt give thyself praise, wilt disregard me and refuse to accept me as thy God. Thou wilt prove treacherous and break thy vow.

28. Note, such obedience to God is real, divine service. For this service we need no bells nor churches, no vessels nor ornaments. Lights and candles are not necessary; neither are organs and singing, images and pictures, tables and altars. We require not bald pates nor caps, not incense nor sprinkling, not processions nor handling of the cross; neither are indulgences nor briefs essential. All these are human inventions, mere matters of taste. God does not regard them, and too often they obscure with their glitter the true service of God. Only one thing is necessary to right service - the Gospel. Let the Gospel be properly urged; through it let divine service be made known to the people. The Gospel is the true bell, the true organ, for divine service.

29. Further, Paul says we are to live as he describes "in this present world." First: the perfect life cannot be accomplished by works; our whole life, while we remain here, must be sober, righteous and godly. Christ promises (Mt 10, 22), "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." Now, there are some who, it must be admitted, occasionally accomplish good; but occasional accomplishment is not a complete life of goodness, nor does it mean endurance to the end. Second: No one can afford to leave this matter of a godly life until death, or until another world is reached. Whatever we would have in the life to come must be secured here.

30. Many depend upon purgatory, living as it pleases them to the end and expecting to profit by vigils and soulmasses after death. Truly, they will fail to receive profit therein. It were well had purgatory never been conceived of. Belief in purgatory suppresses much good, establishes many cloisters and monasteries and employs numerous priests and monks. It is a serious drawback to these three features of Christian living: soberness, righteousness and godliness. Moreover, God has not commanded, nor even mentioned, purgatory. The doctrine is wholly, or for the most part, deception; God pardon me if I am wrong. It is, to say the least, dangerous to accept, to build upon, anything not designated by God, when it is all we can do to stand in building upon the institutions of God which can never waver. The injunction of Paul to live rightly in this present world is truly a severe thrust at purgatory. He would not have us jeopardize our faith. Not that I, at this late day (when we write 1522), deny the existence of purgatory; but it is dangerous to preach it, whatever of truth there may be in the doctrine, because the Word of God, the Scriptures, make no mention of a purgatory.

31. Paul's chief reason, however, for making use of the phrase "in this present world" is to emphasize the power of God's saving grace. In the extreme wickedness of the world, the godly person is as one alone, unexampled as it were, a rose among thorns; therefore he must

endure every form of misfortune, of censure, shame and wrong. The apostle's thought is: He who would live soberly, righteously and godly must expect to meet all manner of enmity and must take up the cross. He must not allow himself to be misled, even though he has to live alone, like Lot in Sodom and Abraham in Canaan, among none but the gluttonous, the drunken, the incontinent, unrighteous, false and ungodly. His environment is world and must remain world. He has to resist and overcome the enticements of earth, censuring worldly desires. To live right in this present world, mark you, is like living soberly in a saloon, chastely in a brothel, godly in a gaiety hall, uprightly in a den of murderers. The character of the world is such as to render our earthly life difficult and distressing, until we longingly cry out for death and the day of judgment, and await them with ardent desire; as the next clause in the text indicates. Life being subject to so many evils, its only hope is in being led by grace. Human nature and reason are at a loss to direct it.

32. With these words the apostle makes the godly life clearly distinct from every other life. Here is the text that enables one to perceive how he measures up to the life of grace. Let all who presume to think they live godly, step forward and answer as to whether or no they delight in this hope, as here pictured; whether they are so prepared for the day of judgment that they await it with pleasure; whether they regard it as more than endurable, as even a blessed event to be contemplated with longing and with cheerful confidence. Is it not true that human nature ever shrinks from the judgment? Is it not true that if the advent of that day rested upon the world's pleasure in the matter, it would never come? And particularly in the case of hypocritical saints? Where, then, does human nature stand? Where reason? where the free-will so much extolled as inclined to and potent for good? Why does free-will not only flee from good but shrink from that honor to the God of salvation which the apostle here refers to as a "blessed hope" and in which hope we shall be blessed? What is to prevent the conclusion here that they who shrink from the judgment lead lives impious, blamable and devoid of grace, the evils and ungodliness of which they might, but for the approach of that day, conceal? What is more ungodly than to strive against God's will? But is not that just what the individual does who would flee from the day wherein the honor of God shall be revealed, who does not await the event with a loving and joyful heart? Mark you, then, he who desires not that day and does not with delight and with love to God await it, is not living a godly life, not though he is able even to raise the dead.

33. "Then it must be," you say, "that few lead godly lives, particularly among those solitary, spiritual ones who above all men flee death and the judgment." That is just what I have said. These separated individuals simply lead themselves and others from the true path, obliterating the ways marked out of God. Plainly we see now how little reason and nature can accomplish; they but strive against God. And we see how necessary is saving grace. For when our own works are abandoned, God comes and alone works in us, enabling us to rise from ourselves, from our ungodly conduct, to a supernatural, grace-filled, godly life. Then we not only do not fear the Day of Judgment, but cheerfully, even longingly, await it, contemplating it with joy and pleasure. This point has been further treated in the Gospel lesson for the second Sunday in Advent.

34. True godliness, you note, is not taught by human nature or mortal reason, but by the manifest grace of God. By grace are we enabled to deny worldly lusts, even to feel aversion to them, to desire liberation from them, to be dissatisfied with our manner of life in general. More than that, it creates in us a disposition essential to godliness, a disposition to entreat God with perfect confidence and to await with pleasure his coming. So should we be disposed.

35. Now, let us carefully weigh the words "blessed hope." A contrast is presented to that miserably unhappy life wherein, when we attempt to walk uprightly, we are only harassed by misfortune, danger and sin. All in this life serves but to vex, while we have every reason to be encouraged in that hope. Such is the experience of them who earnestly endeavor to live soberly, righteously and godly. The world cannot long endure this class; it soon regards them as repulsive. Paul testifies (Rom 5, 3): "We also rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh stedfastness; and stedfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope: and hope putteth not to shame." Thus our eyes remain closed to the worldly and visible, and open to the eternal and invisible. All this transformed condition is the work of grace, through the cross, which we must endure if we attempt to lead a godly life, the life the world cannot tolerate.

"And appearing of the glory."

36. Paul's word for "advent!" here is "epiphaniam," "appearing" or "manifestation." Similarly, he spoke above of the "appearance" or "manifestation" of grace. The word "advent" in the Latin, therefore, does not express all. The apostle would make a distinction between the first appearing and the last. The first appearing was attended by humility and dishonor, with intent to attract little attention and occasion no manifestation but that made in faith and through the Gospel. Christ is at present not manifest in person, but on the day of judgment he will appear in effulgent splendor, in undimmed honor; a splendor and honor eternally manifest to all creatures. The last day will be an eternal day. Upon the instant of its appearing every heart and all things will stand revealed. Such is the meaning of "the appearing of glory" mentioned, the appearance of Christ's honor. Then there will be neither preaching nor faith. To all men everything will be manifest by experience, and by sight as in a clear day. Hence Paul adds,

"Of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

Not that another and lesser God exists; but that God has reserved unto the last day the displaying of his greatness and majesty, his glory and effulgence. We behold him now in the Gospel and in faith - a narrow view of him. Here he is not great because but slightly comprehended. But in the last appearing he will permit us to behold him in his greatness and majesty.

37. The words of this verse afford comfort to all who live soberly, righteously and godly. For the apostle therein declares the coming glory, not of our enemy or judge, but of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who will at that time give us perfect happiness. For the day of that glorious appearing he will make the occasion of our liberation from this world wherein we must endure so much in the effort to lead a godly life in response to his will. In view of his coming and our great and glorious redemption, we ought firmly and cheerfully to bear up under the persecution, murders, shame and misfortunes the world effects, and to be courageous in the midst of death. With these joys before us, we ought the more stedfastly to persevere in a godly life, boldly relying upon the Saviour, Jesus Christ.

38. On the other hand, the words of this verse are terrible to the worldly-minded and wicked who are unwilling to endure, for the sake of godliness, the persecutions of the world. They prefer to make their godliness go no farther than to live without friction in the world and thus avoid incurring enmity and trouble. But the dissolute, the reckless, the obdurate, utterly disregard those words. They never give a thought to the fact of having to appear on the final day. Like frenzied animals, they run blindly and heedlessly on to the Day of Judgment and into the abyss of hell. You may ask, "How shall I obtain the godliness fitted to enable me to confidently await that day, since human nature and reason flee from a godly life and cannot accomplish it?" Observe what follows:

"Who gave himself for us."

39. The things the apostle has been so carefully presenting are laid before you to enable you to perceive and acknowledge your helplessness, to utterly despair of your own power, that you may sincerely humble yourself and recognize your vanity, and your ungodliness, impiety and unsaved state. Note, the grace appearing through the Gospel teaches humility; and being humbled, one desires grace and is disposed to seek salvation. Wherever a humble desire for grace exists, there is open to you the door of grace. The desire cannot be without provision for its fulfilment. Peter says (I Pet 5, 5), "*God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.*" And Christ frequently in the Gospel declares: "*Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted.*"

40. So the blessed Gospel is presented to you. It permits saving grace to appear in and shine forth from you, teaching you what more is required to keep you from falling into despair. Now, the Gospel, the appearance of the light of grace, is this which the apostle here declares, namely, that Christ gave himself for us, etc. Therefore, hearken to the Gospel; open the windows of your heart and let saving grace shine forth, to enlighten and teach you. This truth, that Christ gave himself for us, is the message spoken of as proclaimed to all men. It is the explanation of what is meant by the appearing of grace.

41. Banish from your mind, then, the error into which you may have fallen, of thinking that to hear the epistles of Paul and Peter is not to hear the Gospel. Do not allow yourself to be misled by the name "epistle." All Paul writes in his epistles is pure Gospel. He says so in Romans 1, 1 and in First Corinthians 4, 15. In fact, I venture to say the Gospel is more

vividly presented in the epistles of Paul than in the four books of the evangelists. The latter detail the life and words of Christ, which were understood only after the advent of the Holy Spirit, who glorified Christ. Thus the Saviour himself testifies. Paul, though he records no account of the life of Christ, clearly explains the purpose of our Lord's coming, and shows what blessings his advent brings to us. What else is the Gospel but the message that Christ gave himself for us, to redeem us from sin, and that all who believe it will surely be saved? So we are to despair of our own efforts and cleave to Christ, relying upon him alone. Gracious, indeed, and comforting is this message, and readily welcomed by hearts despairing of their own efforts. "Evangelium," or Gospel, implies a loving, kind, gracious message, fitted to gladden and cheer a sorrowing and terrified heart.

42. Take heed to believe true what the the Gospel, declares - that Christ gave himself for you for the sake of redeeming you from all unrighteousness and of purifying you for a peculiar inheritance. It follows that, in the first place, you must believe and confess all your efforts, impure, unrighteous; and that your human nature, reason, art and free-will are ineffectual apart from Christ. Unless you so believe, you make void the Gospel; for, according to the Gospel, Christ did not give himself for the righteous and the pure. Why should he? With righteousness and purity existent, he would be giving himself in vain. It would be a senseless giving. In the second place, you must believe that Christ gave himself for you, to put away your impurity and unrighteousness and make you pure and righteous in himself. If you believe this, it will be so. Faith will accomplish it. The fact that he gave himself for you can make you pure and righteous only through faith on your part. Peter (Acts 15, 9) speaks of the cleansing of hearts by faith. Observe, Christ is not put into your hand, not given you in a coffer, not placed in your bosom nor in your mouth. He is presented to you through the Word, the Gospel; he is held up before your heart, through the ears he is offered to you, as the Being who gave himself for you - for your unrighteousness and impurity. Only with your heart can you receive him. And your heart receives when it responds to your opened mind, saying, "Yes, I believe." Thus through the medium of the Gospel Christ penetrates your heart by way of your hearing, and dwells there by your faith. Then are you pure and righteous; not by your own efforts, but in consequence of the guest received into your heart through faith. How rich and precious these blessings!

43. Now, when faith dwelling within you brings Christ into your heart, you cannot think him poor and destitute. He brings his own life, his Spirit - all he is and commands. Paul says the Spirit is given, not in response to any work of man, but for the sake of the Gospel. The Gospel brings Christ, and Christ brings the Spirit - his Spirit. Then the individual is made new; he is godly. Then all his deeds are well wrought. He is not idle; for faith is never inactive. It continually, in word and act, proclaims Christ. Thus the world is roused against Christ; it will not hear, will not tolerate, him. The result is crosses for the Christian, and crosses render life loathsome and the Day of Judgment desirable. This, mark you, explains the Gospel and the appearing of the saving grace of God.

44. How can death and the Day of Judgment terrify the heart that receives Christ? Who shall injure such a one when the great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who orders the day of

judgment, stands by with all his glory, greatness, majesty and might? He who gave himself for us, he and no other, will control that day. Assuredly he will not deny his own testimony, but will verify your faith by declaring he gave himself for your sins. And what have you to fear from sin when the judge himself owns he has taken it away by his own sacrifice? Who will accuse you? Who may judge the judge? Who exercise authority over him? His power outweighs that of all the world with its sins innumerable. Had he purchased your salvation with anything but himself, there might be great error in this doctrine. But what can terrify when he has given himself for you? He would have to condemn himself before sin could condemn the souls for whom he died.

45. Here is strong, unquestionable security. But our connection with it depends upon the steadfastness of our faith. Christ certainly will not waver. He is absolutely steadfast. We should, then, urge and enforce faith by our preaching and in our working and suffering, ever making it firm and constant. Works avail nothing here. The evil spirit will assail only our faith, well knowing that upon it depends all. How unfortunate our failure to perceive our advantage! for we ignore the Gospel with its saving grace. Wo unto you, Pope, bishops, priests and monks! Of what use are you in the churches and occupying the pulpits? Now let us analyze the words,

"That he might redeem us."

46. He gave himself to redeem - not himself, but us. Evidently, we are naturally captives. Then how can we be presumptuous and ungrateful enough to attribute so much merit to our free-will and our natural reason? If we claim there is aught in us not bound in sin, we disparage the grace whereby, according to the Gospel, we are redeemed. Who can do any good thing while captive in sin, while wholly unrighteous? Our own efforts may seem to us good, but in truth they are not; otherwise, the Gospel of Christ must be false.

"From all iniquity."

47. The word Paul uses for "iniquity" is "anomias," the specific meaning of which is, anything not conforming to the Law, whether transgression of soul or body, the former transgression being ungodliness or impiety, and the latter worldly lusts. He is careful to add the word "all," to make plain the inclusion of the sins of the body and the unrighteousness of soul wherefrom Christ has completely redeemed us. This teaching is a blow at the self-righteous and separate, who redeem themselves, and others as well, from certain forms of unrighteousness by means of the Law, or by their own reason and free-will. In reality they do avoid the outward act of transgression, being restrained by prohibitions, or fear of pain and penalty, or expectation of reward or gain. But this is only ridding of the scum of unrighteousness; the heart remains filled with ungodly, unregenerate inclination and worldly lusts, and neither body nor soul righteous. But through faith Christ redeems us from all unrighteousness. He liberates us, enabling us to live godly and heavenly, a power we had not when in the prison of unrighteousness.

”And purify unto himself.”

48. Sin is attended by two evils: First, it takes us captive. In its power we are incapable of doing good, of desiring or even recognizing good. Sin thus robs us of power, freedom and light. The second evil attendant upon sin is the natural outcome of the first: we forsake good to engage only in iniquity and impurity, tilling with hard and heavy labor the land of wicked Pharaoh in Egypt. But when, through faith, Christ comes, he liberates from the bondage of Egypt and gives power to do good. That power is our first gain.

49. Afterward, the effort of our entire lives should be to purge from body and soul unrighteous, unregenerate, and worldly conduct. Until death our lives should be nothing but purification. While it is true that faith instantly redeems from all legal guilt and sets free, yet evil desires remain in body and soul, as odor and disease cling to a dungeon. Faith occupies itself with purifying from these. Typical of this principle, Lazarus in the Gospel was raised from the dead by a single word (Jn 11, 44), but afterward the shroud and napkin had to be removed. And the half-dead man whose wounds the Samaritan bound up and whom the Samaritan carried home, had to remain in the inn until he was restored.

”A people for his own possession.”

50. The thought is of ownership - a peculiar inheritance or possession. The Scriptures term God's people his inheritance. As a landholder cultivates, nourishes and improves his inheritance, so, through the medium of our faith, Christ, whose inheritance we are, cultivates us, or impels us to daily grow better and more fruitful. Thus you see, faith liberates from sin, but more than that, it makes us Christ's inheritance, which he accepts and protects as his own. Who can injure us when we are the inheritance of the mighty God?

”Zealous of good works.”

51. As ungodliness is opposed by inheritance, so zeal or diligence in our efforts after good opposes worldly lusts. By inward godliness we become Christ's heritage, and by sober and righteous living are good works wrought. As his heritage we serve him, and by good works we serve our neighbors and ourselves; first the heritage, then the good works. For good works are not wrought without godliness, and we are taught we must be zealous - zelotaethat is, must emulate one another in doing good, or vie with one another in the effort to work universal good, disputing who was the best and who did the most good. This is the real meaning of the word ”zelotae.” Where are these now?

”These things speak and exhort.”

52. Truly, O Lord God, it is a vital charge, this - not only to preach the principles taught in this lesson, but continually to urge, admonish and arouse the people, leading them to faith and actually good works. Though we may have taught, we must follow it up with persevering exhortation, that the Word of God may have its sway.

53. O Pope, bishops, priests and monks now flooding the Church with fables and human doctrines, let these things sink into your minds. You will have more than enough to preach if you attempt only what this text contains, provided you continually admonish the people and enforce it. It beautifully portrays the life of the Christian. Its teaching, and only this, are you to preach and enforce. God grant it! Amen.

54. Note, the office of a minister calls for two things - teaching and exhortation. We must teach the uninformed, and must admonish the already informed lest they go backward, grow indolent or fall away entirely instead of persevering against all temptations.

THE ARMOR FURNISHED BY THE TEXT

55. First, the text gives us authority to maintain that without grace no good can be wrought and all human efforts are sinful. This principle is established by Paul's statement, "*Grace hath appeared.*" Evidently, previous to the advent mentioned, no grace existed among men. If no grace existed, plainly there was only wrath. Therefore, without grace, there is in ourselves nothing but unregeneracy and wrath, instead of good.

56. Again, Paul's reference to saving grace clearly indicates that whatever is devoid of grace is already condemned and beyond the power of procuring help and salvation. Where, then, is free will? Where are human virtues, human reason and opinions? All are without saving grace, all are condemned, sinful and shameful before God, even though precious in our sight.

57. Still more impressive is the phrase "to all men." None are excepted. Manifestly, then, until recognition of the Gospel, naught but wrath ruled in all men. The apostle says (Eph 2, 3), "We were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest." Here he repels with safe armor, and stops the mouths of, all who boast of reason, works, opinions, free-will, light of nature, etc., as efficacious without grace. He makes them all corrupt, impious, ungodly and devoid of grace.

58. Further, Paul declares the grace of God appeared to "all men" to enable them to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts." Who can stand before the armor he uses? What is the inevitable conclusion but this: without the grace of God, the works of all men are ungodliness and worldly lusts? For were there godliness, or spiritual aspirations, in any individual, there would be no reason for "all men" to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; neither would the saving appearance of grace be called for in all cases. In this way, mark you, we should use the Scriptures as armor against false teachers. Not only are they for the exercise of our faith in our daily living, but for the open defense and battle of faith against the attacks of error.

59. Before the testimony of this text, all hypocrites, all ecclesiastics, must lie prostrate in defeat, no matter how much they may have fasted, prayed, watched and toiled. These exertions will avail naught; ungodliness and worldly lusts will still survive in them. Though

shame may cause them to conceal evil expression, the heart is still impure. Could our works, apparel, cloisters, fasting and prayers render us godly, the apostle might more properly have said that a prayer or a fast, a pilgrimage or an order, or something else, had appeared teaching us to be godly. But emphatically it is none of these; it is the appearing of saving grace. This, this alone, nothing else, renders us godly.

60. The danger and error of human laws, orders, sects, vows, and so on, is easily apparent. For they are not grace; they are merely works, by their false appearance leading the whole world into error, distress and misery. Under their influence, the world forgets grace and faith, and looks for godliness and happiness in these errors.

61. Again, Paul's admonition to us to look for the blessed and glorious appearing of the great God establishes the fact of another life beyond this. Plainly, it is evident that the soul is immortal; yes, that even the body must rise again. We say in the creed, "*I believe in the resurrection of the body and in the life everlasting.*"

62. Further, it may be logically inferred from Paul's language - "the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" - that Christ is true God. Clearly, then, it follows that the Being to come in glory on the judgment day is the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

63. Should one in a caviling spirit apply to the Father alone the reference here to "the great God," his theory would not hold. For this glorious appearing is shared by the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Were Christ not true God, the glory and splendor of God would not be attributed to him. Since mention is made of the splendor, the glory, the work, of "the great God and our Saviour" the latter must be God with the former. Through the mouth of Isaiah, God has more than once said, "My glory will I not give to another," and yet here he shares it with Christ. Hence Christ can be no other than God. The glory of God is his. Yet he is a person distinct from the Father.

64. Once more, a strong argument against human doctrine is afforded us in Paul's words, "These things speak and exhort." Had Paul designed anything further to be taught than the things he mentions, he surely would have said so. Our bishops and popes today think they have done enough when they permit these Paul's injunctions to be written in books and on slips of paper, enforcing them by no commands of their own; but the fact is, their own voices should be heard in constant preaching and enforcing of the Gospel. Wo unto them!

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CHRISTMAS MORNING SERVICE.

THIRD CHRISTMAS SERMON

HEBREWS 1:1-12.



First Page

Hebrews 1:1-12

God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions (at sundry times) and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; having become by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, This day have I begotten thee? and again, I will be to him a Father, And he shall be to me a Son? And when he again bringeth in the firstborn into the world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels winds, And his ministers a flame of fire but of the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; And the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity, Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee With the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the works of thy hands: They shall perish; but thou continuest: And they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a mantle shalt thou roll them up, As a garment, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, And thy years shall not fail.

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

1. This is a strong, forcible, noble epistle, preeminently and emphatically teaching the great article of faith concerning the Godhead, or the divinity of Christ. The presumption that it was not written by Paul is somewhat plausible, because the style is unusually ornamental for him. Some are of the opinion it was written by Luke; others by Apollos, whom Luke represents as “mighty in the Scriptures,” opposing the Jews. Acts 18:24 and 28. Certain it is,

no epistle enforces the Scriptures with greater power than does this. Hence it is evident the author was an eminent apostolic individual, whoever he was. Now, the object of the epistle is to establish and promote faith in the divinity of Christ, and, as already stated, scarce any portion of the Bible more strongly enforces this article of our creed. We must, therefore, confine ourselves to its words and treat it in regular order, item by item.

2. In the first place, it was the apostle's design to bring the Jews to the Christian faith. As we shall learn, he presses them so closely they cannot deny that Christ is true God. Now, if he is God and the Son of God, and if he himself has spoken unto us and suffered for us, justice necessarily demands our faith. We have much more reason to believe in him than had the fathers who in time past believed when God spoke simply through the prophets.

3. Paul contrasts the ancient preachers and disciples with those of later times. The prophets and Christ are the preachers, the fathers and ourselves the disciples. The Son, the Lord himself, speaks unto us; his servants the prophets spoke unto the fathers. If the fathers believed the servants, how much more readily would they have believed the Lord himself! And if we believe not the Lord, how much more reluctant would we have been to believe the servants! Thus he makes one condition argue for the other: our unbelief contrasted with the faith of the Fathers is an awful disgrace; again, the faith of the fathers in contrast with our unbelief is deserving of very great honor. Our disgrace is yet greater when we recall the fact that God spoke to the fathers, not only once, but at different times, and not only in one way, but in different ways; and yet they always believed; while we are not induced by their example to believe, even in one instance, the message of the Lord himself. Observe, Paul proceeds with a powerful discourse in the effort to convert the Jews, yet the attempt avails nothing.

“By divers portions (at sundry times) and in divers manners,”

4. To me the particular and unlike meaning of these two phrases is this: “By divers portions” implies the succession of many prophets, and that all prophecies were not made through one man nor at one time; “in divers manners” signifies that through each individual prophet, to say nothing of the many, God spoke in different ways at different times. For instance, at times he expressed himself in plain, definite terms; and at other times figuratively or through visions. Ezekiel portrayed the four evangelists by the four beasts. Isaiah sometimes clearly states that Christ shall be a king; at other times he alludes to him as a rod and a branch from the stem of Jesse; again, as excellent fruit of the earth.

5. Thus the prophets speak of Christ in “divers manners.” This latter phrase, moreover, may also be understood as implying that God spoke in various ways when he gave the people of Israel temporal aid. His leading them out of Egypt by Moses was one way of speaking, and his bringing them through the Red Sea another. In his directions to David concerning warfare and other matters he spoke in a still different way. Not one declaration, but divers declarations, were made. The objects accomplished differed. But faith was always the same – at all times and with every method.

6. How beautifully and gently the apostle invites and persuades the Jews when he reminds them of the fathers and the prophets, and of God himself! They had unbounded confidence in the record of these as they were in time past. But now they will not believe in God. They will not take to heart the fact of his speaking to the fathers, not once only, but often; not in one way, but in different ways. Yet they know well, and must confess that such was the case. They will not believe him now when he speaks at another time and in another way – a way he never before employed nor will again. The manner of speaking they ardently desire, will never be granted. God has never yet, not even in former time, spoken in a manner designated by them. That would be but to obstruct faith and frustrate God's design. We must leave to him the time, person and manner of speaking, and be concerned only about faith.

7. The phrase "at the end of these days" is significant. From now to the end no other manner of preaching is to be adopted. This is the last time he purposes to speak, and the last method he will employ. He has commanded – left on record – that this Word, and only this, is to be preached until the end. Paul says (1 Corinthians 11:26): "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come." He also arrests their expectation when he says "in these days;" they are not to look for other days to come. The days when he speaks for the last time and in the last manner are already at hand.

"In His Son."

8. Here Paul begins to extol Christ, the last teacher, speaker and apostle: with forcible and well-grounded Scriptural evidence he shows Christ as the real Son of God and Lord over all. We must first learn to truly understand the character of Christ, that he exists in a twofold nature – divine and human. This is a point where many err. Sometimes it is to manufacture fables from his words. Men apply to the divine nature the sayings really uttered with reference to his humanity; thus are they deluded by certain passages of Scripture. It is of the utmost importance first to determine which of the statements concerning Christ pertain to his divine nature and which to his human side. This settled, all else will be easily plain.

9. But first we must answer the inquiry liable to be made, "If the voice of God today is the last message, why is it said that Elijah and Enoch shall come, opposing Antichrist?" I answer: Concerning the advent of Elijah, I hold that he will not come in a physical manner. [As to the coming of Elijah I am suspended between heaven and earth, but I am inclined to believe it will not take place bodily. However, I will not contend hard against the other view. Each may believe or not believe it, as he likes. Editions, A, C, D, E.] I well know St. Augustine has somewhere said, "The advent of Elijah and of Antichrist is firmly fixed in the belief of all Christians." But I also know there is no statement of Scripture to substantiate his assertion. Malachi's prophecy concerning the coming of Elijah (Malachi 4:5) the angel Gabriel makes refer to John the Baptist (Luke 1:17), and Christ does the same even more explicitly where he says (Mark 9:13): "But I say unto you, that Elijah is come, and they have also done unto him whatsoever they would, even as it is written of him." Now, if John is the Elijah of the prophecy, as the Lord here says he was, the prediction of Malachi is

already fulfilled. And there is nothing more prophesied concerning the coming of Elijah. The statement the Lord made just previously to the one quoted, "*Elijah indeed cometh first, and restoreth all things,*" may be fairly interpreted to mean that Christ, referring to the office of John, practically says: "*Yes, I well know Elijah must first come and restore all things, but he has already come and accomplished it.*"

10. This view is demanded by the fact that immediately after his reference to the coming and office of Elijah, Christ speaks of his own sufferings: "It is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at naught." If this prophecy concerning Christ was to be fulfilled after the coming of Elijah, then certainly Elijah must have already come. I know of nothing more to expect concerning the coming of Elijah unless it might be that his spirit will be manifest again in the power of the Word of God, as now seems probable. For I have no longer any doubt that the Pope, with the Turks, is Antichrist, whatever you may believe.

11. To return to Christ: We assert it is essential firmly to believe Christ true God and true man; and that the Scriptures – including Christ's own words – sometimes have reference to the divine nature of Christ and at other times to his human nature. For instance, the declaration (John 8:58), "Before Abraham was born, I am," relates to his divinity; but the statement (Matthew 20:23), "To sit on my right hand, and on my left hand, is not mine to give," recognizes his humanity, which could not help itself even on the cross. Yet some expounders have desired here to show their great skill by abstruse interpretations made to oppose the here tics. It is his human nature that says: "The Father is greater than I." John 14:28. Also: "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings." Matthew 23:37. Again, the passage (Mark 13:32) reading, "Of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father," has reference to the man Christ.

12. The explanation which some have made, "The Son knew not; that is, he did not choose to reveal," is superfluous. What is the advantage of that addition? The humanity of Christ, like that of any other holy mortal man, did not, at every moment, consider and utter, did not desire and note, how some made him a man with almighty power; they improperly combine the two natures and their operation. As he did not always see, hear and feel all things, so likewise he did not at every moment contemplate in his heart every matter; he recognized things as God moved him to do, as he brought them before him. Being filled with grace and wisdom, he was able to judge and to teach as occasion demanded; the Godhead, who alone sees and knows all things, was personally present in him. Finally: All reference in the Scriptures to the humiliation and exaltation of Christ must be understood of the man; for the divine nature can neither be humiliated nor exalted.

"Whom he appointed heir of all things."

13. These words refer to Christ's human nature. We must believe in his supremacy in that respect as well as in his divinity. All creatures are subservient to the man Christ. As God, he

creates all As man, he creates nothing, yet all creation is subject to him. David says (Psalm 8:6), *“Thou hast put all things under his feet.”*

14. Christ is our Lord and our God. As God, he creates us; as Lord, we serve him and he rules over us. The apostle refers to him in this epistle as true God, and also Lord over all. Though having two different natures, he is one person. What Christ does and suffers, essentially God does and suffers. In this case only one nature is involved. To illustrate: I speak of a “wounded man” when but a single limb is injured. The soul is not wounded, nor is the body as a whole; only a part of the body. But I speak as! do because body and soul constitute one person. Now, as I must recognize a difference between body and soul when I speak, so must I recognize the two natures of Christ. Again: It is not a misstatement if in the night I say I have no knowledge of the sun, when at the same time! have a thorough mental knowledge of it; for I have no physical vision. Similarly, Christ knows nothing concerning the last day, and at the same time has full knowledge of it.

“Through whom also he made the worlds.”

15. Observe, by this same Son who in his human nature is “appointed heir of all things” – by him as God, the worlds were made. He is but one person, yet with two natures of unlike operation. There is one Christ, of two natures. The terms Paul here employs are in recognition of Christ’s highest nature. Now, the apostle plainly speaks of the Son who is appointed heir when he says that by him the world is made. If everything is made by him, he could not himself have been created. Consequently, it is plain that he is true God. For anything not created and yet existing must be God, Again, whatsoever is made must be a creature and cannot be God; for it does not exist of itself but derives its existence from its Creator. Now, all things are made by Christ, and he is not created. Hence he must have his existence from himself; not from any creature nor any creator.

16. Furthermore, if he is a Son he is not alone, his existence necessitates a Father. Through the Son God made the world, but God cannot himself be that Son. Consequently there must be two distinct persons, the Father and the Son, yet (because) the divine nature is only one; for there cannot be more than one God. Conclusively, then, Christ with the Father is true God. In one divine substance with him, he is Creator and Maker of the world. The only difference is, one is the Son and the other the Father. And Christ is not created by the Father, as the world was created; essentially he was begotten in eternity. Nor is he inferior to the Father. He is the same in every respect except that he is begotten of the Father, and the Father not begotten of him.

17. If these things are beyond the grasp of our reason, reason must surrender as a captive to these and like Scripture words, and believe. Could we comprehend this mystery by human reason, there would be no faith. Clearly enough, the words, “Through whom also he made the worlds,” make mentions of two Beings. And it is not less clear that the uncreated one through whom all things were made, also must be God. Just how this can be, the Scriptures do not teach. It must be received by faith. The Scriptures speak after this fashion: “The

world is created through Christ, by the Father, in the Holy Spirit”; and though the meaning is not wholly clear, and easy of comprehension, there is good reason for the language. It is employed more by way of intimation than explanation – to imply that the Father derives not his substance from the Son, but the Son from the Father; and that the latter is the first original person in the Godhead. In the statement that the Father made the world through Christ, not Christ through the Father, the intent is to teach the Father’s title to the first person; he from whom, through Christ, all things have existence. John speaks in the same way (John 1:3), “All things were made through him.” And Paul again (Colossians 1:16), “All things have been created through him, and unto him;” and (Romans 11:36), “For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things.

18. Note the aptness of the language where Christ is termed an “heir,” in reference to his humanity. For who should be more entitled to inherit the estate of God than his Son? He with the Father created it – created all creatures. But Christ is man and Son, and because of his Sonship he inherits; in both natures is he Son. But as to the origin of the apostle’s particular language, we shall learn that in the Gospel.

“Who being the effulgence [brightness] of his glory and the very image of his substance [person].”

19. Paul uses these figures to express with all possible clearness the fact that Christ is a person distinct from the Father, yet one, real, true God. But the German and Latin words are not just equivalent to the Greek terms employed by the apostle. The apostle speaks of Christ as the effulgence proceeding from the glory of the Father. Just as the illumination of the morning sun, the sun’s vital substance, is not a part of the effulgence, but the whole effulgence of the whole sun, proceeding from the sun and yet inherent in it. By the figure, “the effulgence of his glory,” is conveyed as in a word the birth of the Son, the unity of his nature and the Father’s, and the distinction of the persons. Christ, without limit of time, is eternally begotten of the Father, and ever proceeds, with that unweariedness represented by the sun in the morning rather than at midday or evening. But Christ is not the person of the Father, as the effulgence is not the sun. He is with and in the Father; not existing before nor after, but co-eternal with him and a part of him, as the effulgence is with and a part of the sun.

20. The apostle terms the Father’s effulgence “Doxa,” (glory) properly implying honor or glory. Therefore the divine nature is unqualified glory and honor, having all in itself and deriving nothing from another. It has the right to boast of and glory in itself. Now, Paul says Christ is complete light, the full effulgence of God’s honor. That is, he too has in himself the unlimited Godhead and has equal right with the Father to boast and glory. The only exception is, he derives his authority from the Father and not the Father from him. He is the effulgence proceeding from the paternal honor, he is God begotten and not God begetting, yet God complete and perfect as the Father is.

21. The Scriptures, you will observe, do not so speak of the saints, though they are also an honor to God; that is, they were created for his honor. But Paul says Christ is the brightness of the paternal honor; the words force the conclusion that the brightness constitutes the Father's honor, else it would not be the effulgence of his honor. But what shall I say by way of explanation? These words are more easily understood by the heart than explained by tongue or pen. They are in themselves clearer than any commentary renders them, and in proportion as they are explained are they obscured. The substance of the clause is this: the whole Godhead is in Christ, and to him as to God all honor is due; yet he does not derive his Godhood from himself, but from the Father. The apostle implies two persons but one God; for the Holy Spirit is not mentioned here. When we have advanced far enough to comprehend two persons existent in one God, we will readily believe in the third person.

22. In the other figure the apostle styles Christ an image or sign of the substance of God. Despite its clearness I still claim the privilege of speaking plainly and clearly. An image created after the likeness of a person is not an image of the substance or nature of that person. It is not a being; it is mere stone or wood. It is an image formed from stone or wood substance in the likeness of man. But if I could handle the substance of the person as the potter handles clay and make therewith an image of the individual which should also perfectly contain his substance or nature, that would, as you perceive, be an essential image, or a likeness of the human substance. But such would be a creature. An image necessarily is constructed from a different substance than the thing imaged, and differs in nature. Here the Son is such an image of the Father substance, that the Father's substance is the image itself. If we may so express it, the image is made from the Father's substance. The image is not only like the Father resembling him, but fully contains his whole substance and nature; as it may be said of "the effulgence of his glory," that the effulgence is constituted of the glory, and not only like it but embodying it perfectly, making the effulgence and the glory identical.

23. Now notice, as I say an image of man is formed of wood or stone, so I say Christ is a divine image: as truly as the former is but a material image, so truly is the latter God. Paul calls Christ the image of the living and invisible God. In the wooden image, this perfection is lacking. Though a wooden image, it is not an image of the wood but of an individual; it does not represent the wood, but the individual. Though the individual be faithfully reproduced in the wood, yet he himself is not wood; his substance is something different from the substance imaging him. In all cases the image differs in substance from the person imaged. It is impossible to furnish an image actually the substance of the individual. But in this verse we have an image and one imaged who are identical in substance, except that the Father is not an image. The Father is not fashioned from nor like the Son; but the Son from the Father, and is like the Father, in one simple, truly divine substance with him.

24. Such perfection is also wanting in the sun and its effulgence. The sun has its own splendor, and the same is true of its effulgence, but the effulgence derives its splendor from the sun. But in the figure before us, effulgence is splendor; of the splendor, if we may so speak, the effulgence is constituted. The splendor is essentially and perfectly the effulgence

itself, with this difference that the effulgence has not its origin in itself but in the paternal splendor.

25. You will notice the verse is even now clearer than the explanation. “The image of his substance,” “the effulgence of his glory” – these Paul’s sayings are clear enough. The tongue should be silent here to allow the heart to reflect. The Hebrew mode of speaking is thus: “Pauperes sanctorum, i. pauperes sancti; Virtus Dei, i. virtus Deus; Sic, character substantiae, 1 character substantia, subsistens et impsemet Deus; Sic, splendor gloriae, i. splendor gloria ipsa.” Latin scholars may easily comprehend this, but for the Germans and the common people it suffices to call the likeness made from gold an image of gold. Similarly, they are to call Christ an image of God the Father because he is wholly of God in character, and there is no God beside him, though at the same time his Godhead and image have origin from the Father as the first person; but the two are one God. This is not true of creatures. The golden image represents not a golden nature, but the wholly different nature of the individual. Though it is a golden image, it does not image the nature of gold. Another image is necessary to represent the nature of gold; as, for instance, a golden color, or something else not truly gold. But in our text the image is also the substance of the imaged, and no other image is requisite than its own substance. It is faith that is called for here and not keen speculation. The words are clear enough; they are positive and forcible. He who will not in them recognize the divinity of Christ, will not recognize it in any way. Christ is not here termed a common image in the ordinary sense of the word; the word used is “Character” – an image more characteristic than a portrait or any other likeness. Again, he is called “Apaugasma” – an actual brightness resembling nothing but the glory from which it proceeds.

“And upholding all things by the word of his power.”

26. For a third time Christ is represented as God. First, it is stated that the worlds were made by him; second, he is called the brightness and the image of God; and here he upholds all things. If he upholds all, he is not himself upheld. He is supreme, hence he must be God. To uphold all things is to support and maintain them. Not only are all things made by him, as stated in the preceding verse, but they are perpetuated and preserved by him. As Paul says in Colossians 1:17: “In him all things consist.” The word “upholding” is well chosen. Christ neither coerces nor restrains nor disturbs the peace; he gently sustains, permitting all creatures to enjoy his tender goodness. As it is written in the Wisdom of Solomon, Song of Solomon 8:1: *“Wisdom reacheth from one end to another mightily; and sweetly doth she order all things.”*

27. I am not fully decided as to the intent of the phrase “by the word of his power.” Were these the words of uninspired man, I would think the writer in error; for Christ is himself the Word, as the Gospel teaches, and acts in obedience to no word. Did they refer to the person of the Father, it would be perfect harmony with the Scripture teaching; for the Father made all things through his Word and upholds them in that Word. As said in Psalm 33:6,

“By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made.”

28. I withhold my view to give place to another and better one. I merely venture the opinion that the apostle's purpose in this manner of speaking may be to emphasize the unity of the persons in one Godhead. Since they are one God, we may understand here reference to the Father; God's action is the action of each of the three persons. God upholds all things by his Word; Christ, or the Word here mentioned, is really God.

29. There are other places in the Scriptures where we have a sudden change of person. For instance, Psalm 2:6-7: "*Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will tell of the decree: Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my Son.*" There the first verse represents the Father speaking concerning the Son: and the second verse, the Son concerning the Father. The reason for the sudden change of persons in this brief passage is, the two persons are one God. It may be that when our text declares that one is the image of God, the reference is to Christ; and that when it states one upholds all things by his word, reference is to the Father, no designation being made because the two are one God without distinction.

30. If this is not a satisfactory conclusion, we might regard the expression in this light: we might understand the term "word" as having somewhat the significance of an event or act. For instance, in the Gospel (Luke 2:15) we read of the shepherds saying: "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing [word – event] that is come to pass" – let us see the event which has taken place there. So, in this phrase declaring Christ upholds all things by the word of his power, we might understand "by the act of his power." By the operation of his power are all things preserved; and all existence and power are derived not from the things themselves but from the active power of God. Further, power and the Word are not to be divorced; they are identical. We may say of an efficient word that its nature and substance are the operating power. Now, each may adopt the view to him most plausible.

"When he had by himself made purification of our sins."

31. Here the apostle touches upon the Gospel proper. Whatever we may be taught concerning Christ is without significance to ourselves until we learn we are the beneficiaries of the doctrine. What would be the advantage to us of preaching were it designed alone for Christ's benefit? The fact is, these words concern only us; they have to do with our salvation. Let us, then, joyfully listen. The language is incomparably beautiful, telling that the supreme Christ, the heir of all things, the effulgence of God's glory and the image of his substance; who upholds all things, not by extraneous power, not with assistance, but by his own power, his own act; who, in short, is all in all – that he has come to serve us, has poured out his love for us and made purification for our sins.

32. The apostle says "our," "our sins;" not his own sin, not the sins of unbelievers. Purification is not for, and cannot profit, him who does not believe. Nor did Christ effect the cleansing by our free-will, our reason or power, our works, our contrition or repentance, these all being worthless in the sight of God, he effects it by himself. And how? By taking our sins upon himself on the holy cross, as Isaiah 53:6 tells us.

33. But even this answer does not sufficiently explain how he cleanses us “by himself.” To go further: When we accept him, when we believe he has purified us, he dwells within us because of, and by, our faith, daily continuing to cleanse us by his own operation; and nothing apart from Christ in any way contributes to the purification of our sins. Note, he does not dwell in us, nor work our cleansing through himself, by any other way than in and through our faith.

34. Hearken, then, ye deceivers of the world and blind leaders of the blind; ye Pope, ye bishops, priests, monks, learned and idle talkers; who teach the purification of sins by human achievements, and that satisfaction for sins may be made by men; who issue indulgences and vend devised purifications of sins. Listen to the teaching here: Purification of sins is not effected by human effort, but solely in Christ and through himself. Christ is communicated to us, not through any work of ours, but through faith alone, as Paul teaches in Ephesians 3:17 that “Christ dwells in your hearts through faith.” Plainly, then, the purification of sins is faith, and he who believes that Christ has purged his sins, unquestionably is cleansed through that faith and in no other way. Appropriate, then, is Peter’s expression in Acts 15:9, “*cleasing their hearts by faith.*”

35. Having once possessed faith, and purification being effected in us by Christ, we are then to perform good works, hating our sins and repenting of them. Under these conditions our works are really good. Before faith is present, they avail naught; rather they induce false confidence and trust. So heinous an evil are our sins, and so enormous is the cost of their purification, it was necessary that one exalted as we here read Christ was, must intervene to purge them by himself. What could the poor, vain attempts of us who are creatures, and besides sinful, feeble, corrupt creatures, accomplish where the demand was of such magnitude? One might as reasonably presume to burn heaven and earth with an extinguished brand. Our sins can be expiated only by a price commensurate with the God they offend.

“Sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; having become by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they.”

36. This statement refers to the human nature of Christ wherein he effected the purification of our sins; at the same time it is true the cleansing was an achievement of the Son of God. We must not, in making distinction of natures, try to make a distinction of persons. Again, we may truly say the Son of God sits on the right hand of the Majesty, though the passage is to be accepted only in the human sense, for in his divine nature he is himself the only Majesty, in unity with the Father, upon whose right hand he sits. But we will abandon these comments which but obscure, and keep to the clearer language of the text.

37. To “sit on the right hand of the Majesty” certainly implies a likeness to that Majesty. Wherever it is said that Christ sits at the right hand of God, there is fundamentally established his title to true God; for no one but God himself is like God. So, to say that the man Christ sits on the right hand of God is equivalent to saying he is true God. Psalm 110:1

declares, "Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand." That is, Jehovah said to Christ the man: Be like me; in other words, Thou shalt be recognized not simply as man but as God. It is with this thought the apostle cites the psalmist. Again, it is written (Psalm 8:6), "Thou hast put all things under his feet." That is, Thou hast made him equal with thyself. Not that Christ was not God until all things were put under his feet. But his humanity was not yet God and equal with God. For as soon as he began to be man, he began to be God. The Scriptures refer to Christ in terms more appropriately significant than we are accustomed to use. So far at times is the person lost sight of in the nature, or the natures so strongly distinguished, few rightly comprehend the words. I have myself frequently erred in passages of this character, attributing to the nature that which concerns the person, and vice versa. In Philippians 2:6-8 we read: "Who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man." This passage, however, is obscure.

38. To return to our text: Note, the apostle now begins to cite the Old Testament for Scripture testimony that Christ is God. Up to this time he has given us his own views and used his own language, based on his interpretations of Scripture. He has told us Christ is far superior to the angels for he has become God and has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. His whole design is to show the man Christ, becoming God, being recognized and glorified as God.

"For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?"

39. This quotation is from the Second Psalm (Psalm 2). To make plainer the apostle's allusion to Christ, we cite the entire Psalm, as follows: *"Why do the nations rage, and the peoples meditate a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against Jehovah, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh: the Lord will have them in derision. Then will he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure: Yet I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will tell of the decree: Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Now therefore be wise, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve Jehovah with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way, for his wrath will soon be kindled. Blessed are all they that take refuge in him."*

40. We see plainly, the reference here is to Christ, against whom raged the Jews, with Pilate, Herod and the chief priests. To Christ, God says, "*Thou art my Son.*"

41. The Jews endeavor to evade this passage of the apostle by introducing wild interpretations. Unable to deny that the Psalm refers to a coming king and anointed one – or Christ, as "anointed" implies – they assert the allusion is to David, who was also a Christ. For they term all kings "messiahs" or "christs" – anointed ones. But their position will not hold. David never inherited the heathen, nor did his kingdom extend to the uttermost parts of the earth, as recorded of the king mentioned in the Psalm. Again, in no instance in the Scriptures is it said to any man, "*Thou art my Son.*"

42. Even when the Jews do admit the Psalm's allusion to the Messiah they resort to two evasions. They maintain he is yet to come, that Jesus Christ is not the Messiah. Further, that despite being called the Son of God, he is not God. For, they say, it is written of the children of God in general (Psalm 82:6): "I said, Ye are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High"; and many times in the Scriptures the saints are called the children of God (Genesis 6:2; Psalm 89:27; Matthew 5:45; 1 John 3:2); Paul, too, in various places calls us children of God, and we in return call him Father, as in the Lord's Prayer.

43. How shall we reply to them? Shall we leave the apostle unsustained, as if he had not given good, clear Scripture proof? To do so would be unjust. In the first place, we have the testimony of experience that Jesus is he of whom the Psalm speaks; in Christ the prophecy is fulfilled and become history. He was persecuted by kings and rulers. They sought to destroy him and only brought derision upon themselves in the attempt. They were themselves destroyed, as the Psalm says. Throughout the world Christ is recognized Lord. No king, before nor since, has ruled or can rule in equal extent. Now, if in Christ the Psalm is fulfilled, it cannot be made to refer to any other.

44. Admitting the saints are called "gods" and "the children of God," the apostle's reasoning based on the fact that nowhere is it said to any angel, much less to any man, "Thou art my Son," sufficiently proves that Christ is God. He must be peculiarly God's Son, having a relation unshared by men and angels. The fact that God does not include him among other sons but especially distinguishes him, indicates his superiority. He cannot be superior to angels without being true God, for angels are the highest order of beings.

45. Further, God begets all other children through some agency. For instance, James 1:18: "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth." Angels are not begotten, but are created. The Son, however, God did not create; he begot him through himself. He says: "I, myself – by myself I have begotten thee this day." Such language is not employed with reference to any other. This personal bringing forth of a single Being embraces a natural birth. True, God says of Solomon (1 Chronicles 22:10), "He shall be my son;" but he does not make to him the personal declaration, "*Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*" David begat Solomon, but the one referred to was begotten by God alone.

46. Again, God says “this day;” that is, in eternity. Natural birth cannot be effected in a day, as witness the human species as well as the animals. To specify concerning this particular birth, God adds “this day.” He begets his Son instantaneously – eternally; begetting and bringing forth are simultaneous. God does not say, “I begat thee a year ago;” it is now – “Thou art my Son, I have begotten thee.” Essentially, then, it is a transcendental birth, a birth of an exalted nature and incomprehensible to man.

47. According to Hosea 11:1, God says he called his son out of Egypt. This verse, like the Psalm, implies the Son of God. The Jews assert the reference is to the people of Israel, but Matthew (Matthew 2:15) applies it to Christ. But however this may be, nowhere in the Scriptures do we find it said to any man, not even to a renowned king, “Thou art my Son.” Much less do we find where God says to any man, “I myself have begotten thee – this day have I begotten.” Hence it is plainly evident from the Psalm that Jesus is the Christ and the true, natural Son of God

48. Mark you, so much emphasis does the apostle lay upon Scriptural authority, we are under no obligation to accept anything the Bible does not assert. Were not this true, his argument, “Unto which of the angels said he at any time,” etc., would not be conclusive. The Jews might say, “Notwithstanding God did not in the Scriptures make such assertion to the angels, he may have otherwise asserted it; for the Scriptures do not record everything.” Now, if in the purpose of God we are under no obligation to accept anything not presented in the Scriptures, we are also to reject all doctrines not taught therein.

49. This conclusion operates against the presumption of the Pope and his followers, who shamelessly assert we must accept more than the Scriptures present. They claim it is not conclusive reasoning to say of a certain thing, “It is not in the Scriptures, therefore it is not authentic.” They oppose the apostle’s teaching even to greater extent than do the Jews, introducing their councils, teachers and high schools. Beware of their error. Be certain you have full Scripture authority for all you accept. Of whatever is not in the Scriptures, ask as does the apostle here, “*When did God ever assert it?*”

“And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son.”

50. The Papists also impair the force of this passage. Apparently the purpose of their teaching is but to weaken the point of the Scriptures. They assert the verse has two meanings: first, it refers to Solomon as a figure of Christ; second, to Christ directly. But to admit the Scriptures to be of uncertain meaning would be immediately to make them not conclusive. The Jews might maintain that reference is to Solomon primarily. Then the apostle apparently would be overthrown and would establish nothing. So we should firmly hold that Christ alone is here spoken of, even as the preceding verse presents a Son peculiar and above all other sons. If the word was not spoken to angels, much less was it to Solomon. The apostle says this Son has obtained a more excellent name than the angels; therefore, by no means can the reference be to Solomon.

51. We are not to be content merely to accept the apostle's statement; we are under obligation to show how he clearly and conclusively establishes his position. Know, then, he cites 2 Samuel 7:14 and Psalm 89:26. The books named are prophetic. In the passages adduced the reference is to Christ alone; not to Solomon. But in 1 Chronicles 22:10, a historical book, reference is had to Solomon alone: "He shall be my son, and I will be his father." Even the Jews admit the true Christ is alluded to in Psalm 89:26-27: "He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. I also will make him my first-born, the highest of the kings of the earth." Likewise is the reference to Christ in verse 6: "Who among the sons of the mighty is like unto Jehovah [the Lord]?" The meaning is: Among the sons of God is one who is God, and no one is like unto the Lord.

52. Though the passages in 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles are in harmony, yet such are the circumstances forming the setting in the first passage, the word cannot be understood to refer to Solomon. The two texts must be two different declarations to David, one concerning Christ and one concerning Solomon. In the first instance (Psalm 7:12), God says to David: "*When thy days are fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, that shall proceed out of thy bowels.*"

53. Now, Solomon was not set up king subsequent to David's death, but while David yet lived. 1 Kings 1:30ff. David well knew the declaration was made concerning Christ. It is for that reason he expressed heartfelt praise to God, saying (2 Samuel 7:19): "O Lord Jehovah, thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come." While he himself lived, David ordained Solomon his successor. He says (Chronicles 22:8-10): "The word of Jehovah came to me saying... A son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest... He shall build a house for my name;" not thou who "hast shed blood abundantly." In the passage from Samuel nothing is said about the shedding of blood. There God says he will build a house for David. Further argument for the idea advanced is found in the fact that in 2 Samuel 7:14-15 God freely unqualifiedly promises: "If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men; but my lovingkindness shall not depart from him." He freely promises his grace for the things so bitterly bewailed in Psalm 89.

54. As Psalm 132:12 shows, the promise made concerning Solomon is made only upon the condition, "If thy children will keep my covenant," etc. This David indicates in 1 Kings 2:4, and God makes it known to Solomon in the following chapter, verse 14. The passage from Samuel, then, should be understood particularly to refer to Christ, but not that from Chronicles. This is clearly and conclusively proven. "*And when he again bringeth in the firstborn into the world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.*"

55. Here we have cited a third passage from Psalm 97 (Psalm 97:7), which clearly speaks of the kingdom of God, whereof Christ in the Gospel teaches. In this kingdom Christ reigns; he is Lord. It had its beginning after his ascension and is completed through the preaching of the Gospel; for it plainly alludes to preaching. It reads: "Jehovah reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad. Clouds and darkness are round about him [that is,

he reigns in faith concealed]: righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his adversaries round about. His lightnings lightened the world [these are his miracles]: the earth saw and trembled. The mountains [the great rulers, and the proud] melted like wax at the presence of Jehovah, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The heavens [the apostles] declare his righteousness [faith], and all the peoples have seen his glory [for the Gospel is everywhere preached]. Let all them be put to shame that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods. Zion heard and was glad and the daughters of Judah rejoiced, because of thy judgments,” etc. [Edition A gives the whole of Psalm 97].

56. Experience and its fulfillment explain this Psalm. It was completely fulfilled in Christ. He is preached in all the world and reigns in the kingdom of God, which is not true of any other king. The apostle prefaces his quotation with the words, “And again, when he bringeth in the first- begotten into the world,” meaning that in the Psalm the Spirit speaks of the second coming of Christ into the world through the Gospel. He came first in bodily form. Through the instrumentality of his crucifiers he was driven out in death. But afterward, in his resurrection and in the Word, he reentered the world and now reigns with authority. Nevermore will he die nor be driven out. It is of this second entrance the Psalm speaks.

57. The author of the epistle practically says. *“I grant God has other sons, but it is the first-born son whom he brings into the world a king and whom the angels worship, which the angels would not do, nor would be commanded to do, were he not true God.”*

58. True, we read of David and many others being worshiped, but not by angels. No angel ever yet adored any but God. This passage proves that he whom angels reverence must be God. For since even men worship on earth only what is superior to themselves, and with angels only God is superior, that king whom ministers herald in the world and angels worship must be God. That the apostle does not cite the whole Psalm literally is of no significance. The language of the Psalm is: “Worship him, all ye gods,” while the apostle says, “Let all the angels of God worship him.” The meaning, however, is the same. The thought is of future action – the angels shall worship him. If so, he must be God. The angels are his, though he is himself man. Note, however, in the Hebrew the passage reads: “Worship him, all ye ‘Elohim’; that is, all ye gods. The term is given to angels, and to saints in general, because they are the children of God. *“And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels winds [spirits], and his ministers a flame of fire.”*

59. The apostle’s intent here is to show that in the Scriptures the angels are not spoken of in terms that make possible a reference to them in the statements, “Thou art my Son,” “He shall be my Son,” “All the angels shall worship him.” They are simply appointed messengers sent forth of God into the world. Although to them he has committed much, he does not constitute any among them Lord; they are characterized as wind and a flame of fire. He terms them “spirits,” “winds” and “a flame of fire” because in such form do they execute his

bidding, moving with the ease and swiftness of the wind, and having the brilliance of lightning or a flame of fire, as much Scriptural evidence testifies. Yet no one of them is withal Lord of the world and heralded everywhere in the manner the king here mentioned is proclaimed Lord over all things. Even the Jews must confess that.

“But of the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; and the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.”

60. This fourth quotation is from Psalm 45:6-7. To me it most clearly and forcibly proves Christ to be God. Even the Jews cannot oppose that interpretation. Let us consider: In the first place, it is universally acknowledged the Psalm refers to Christ, even were we to grant he is yet to come, as the Jews erroneously presume. In the second place, the first sentence, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,” necessarily relates to the true God to whom throne and government belong. Though saints are sometimes termed “gods,” as we learned from Psalm 82:1, yet government and throne are the prerogative of none but the one true and actual God. Is not this indisputably plain? So, then, this God upon the throne who reigns eternally is our true God.

61. Then the succeeding sentence is spoken of the same God: “Thou hast loved uprightness... therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee...above thy fellows.” What is implied? That the God upon the everlasting throne, who reigns eternally, is anointed by his God above all his fellows. He who here anoints must certainly be the true God; and also the anointed must be actual God because of his throne and eternal reign. Now, God does not anoint himself; the anointed is subordinate to the one anointing. “To anoint” here implies, to infuse the Holy Spirit, with his graces; something to be exercised only upon a creature.

62. Note that indisputably the first part of the passage makes the king in question true God, and the latter part true man. In his humanity he has fellows, for he is the head of all believers, and they are partakers of the Spirit he possesses abundantly and above all others. But in his divinity he has no fellows; for there is only one God – one God but not one person. The passage forces the conclusion that there are two persons, one who reigns and another who anoints and whose divinity will not admit of his being himself anointed. Hence we must conclude the King is the Son of God; his title is ascribed because he is God. His eternal throne is the kingdom introduced after Christ’s ascension. Yet he has fellows, is anointed, and deservedly anointed because he loves righteousness; things wholly characteristic of actual man.

63. The rod or scepter of the Son’s kingdom is the Gospel. It is a scepter of uprightness because aggressive for the right and taking a straight course. This declaration stands opposed to human doctrines, which abound in intricacies and perplexities and yet contribute nothing to salvation. It is another reminder that we are to accept nothing in all Christendom but the

scepter of Christ's kingdom, He would have his kingdom ruled by no other scepter than that righteous one, the Gospel.

64. It is necessary to use the word "God" twice in the latter part of the verse – "God, thy God" – because our language has but one word for that meaning. The Hebrew tongue has many, employing here these two, "Elohim" and "Elohe."

65. In the Old Testament are many similar passages, mysteriously used but unquestionably conclusive upon this matter; for instance, Genesis 19:24: "Jehovah rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Jehovah out of heaven," What can it mean – "Jehovah... from Jehovah," – but that two persons are indicated, the Father and the Son? Again (Zechariah 3:2), "Jehovah said unto Satan, Jehovah rebuke thee, O Satan." Observe here, God himself speaks of another God. And again, in Psalm 68, where frequent mention is made of God, it is stated (Psalm 68:18): "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led away captives." With respect to ascension, however, reference is only to the man Christ. Again, in the same Psalm (Psalm 68:28) we have, "Thy God hath commanded thy strength." Further, it says God commands the power of God. And there are many similar passages.

"And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands; they shall perish; but thou continuest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a mantle shalt thou roll them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."

66. How this quotation testifies that Christ is God is riot at once apparent. As written, it easily seems to refer to God as one person. But we must take into consideration the entire Psalm. The Psalm speaks of the future kingdom of God, direction of which the Scriptures assign to Christ. Among the various passages concerning Christ's kingdom is a portion of this last- cited Psalm (Psalm 102:12-16): "But thou, O Jehovah, wilt abide for ever; and thy memorial name unto all generations. Thou wilt arise, and have mercy upon Zion; for it is time to have pity upon her, yea, the set time is come. For thy servants [the apostles] take pleasure in her stones, and have pity upon her dust. [That is, through the Gospel. Reference is to Christ, whose servants the apostles are, bringing the stones of Zion the elect – to grace, through their preaching. Such servants no earthly king ever had.] So the nations shall fear the name of

Jehovah, and all the kings of the earth thy glory. For Jehovah hath built up Zion; he hath appeared in his glory."

67. The Psalm concludes with, "And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth," etc. The psalmist's evident conclusion is: The King whose servants have favored the stones of Zion, who is proclaimed worldwide and commands the fear of the heathen and all the kings of the earth, is the God who created the earth and is in him. self unchangeable. No earthly king has ever been proclaimed among all the heathen as Christ has been proclaimed. Christ, then, is true God and true man. What further comment the subject demands I leave for keener minds.

68. So we see this whole epistle lesson is simply armor to clearly maintain the article of faith that Christ is God, and Lord over all things even in his humanity. We note with amazement the perfect clearness of the Scripture teaching and that the defect is in ourselves, unperceived. Well does Luke speak (Luke 24:32) of Christ's opening the understanding of the disciples to comprehend the Scriptures. It was not the Scriptures he opened, but their understanding; the former is plain, but our eyes are not fully open.

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