

JUN 12 1967

Introduction to the Reader

Hope that at least one sermon by the Reverend Philip William Otterbein (1726-1813) might be found came to fulfillment in 1962 when I found a reference to one in the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C. entitled Die Heilbringende Menschwerdung und Der Herliche Sieg Jesu Christi Ueber Den Teufel Und Tod.

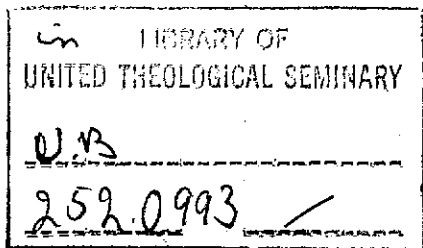
A copy of the sermon was found to be preserved as item 9471 in the Charles Evans Bibliography, as published by Christopher Saur in 1763. The Library Company of Philadelphia, Broad and Christian Streets, Philadelphia 47, Pennsylvania had copies made for me by Microsurance, Incorporated.

My former student and dear friend, Erhardt Lang, consented to translate the work. It is his translation to which you now turn. I would urge you to read his instructive letter placed at the conclusion of the translation.

It is the hope of several of us to publish a work on Otterbein in the near future. Anyone wishing to quote this work meanwhile is kindly asked to give proper recognition to those of us who found and translated the sermon. We would also appreciate word concerning any other finds on Otterbein which might be included in our proposed publication.

Arthur C. Core
United Theological Seminary
Dayton, Ohio 45406

March 22, 1965



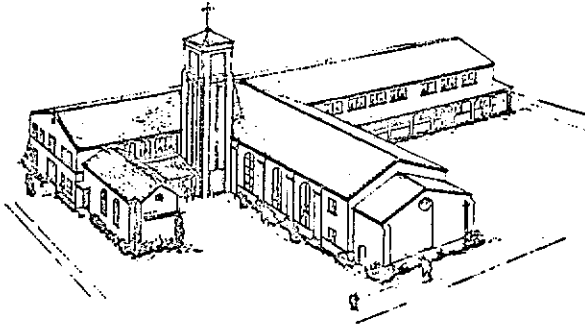
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October 18, 1963

Dr. Arthur C. Core
United Theological Seminary
1810 Harvard Blvd.
Dayton 6, Ohio

Dear Dr. Core:

Here finally is the translation! I will not proffer any more excuses for my tardiness. But here are some notes regarding the translation:

1. For biblical quotations I have used the Revised Standard Version, *in most cases.*

2. The word Heil is one of the most common German theological words. It is most accurately translated by "salvation", but not so in every case. It could be translated by "welfare", "grace", "favor", etc., and this became necessary here and there to convey the true meaning rather than the exact word. Thus I have once translated it as "blessing" for p13, tenth line from bottom in printed German copy. I could not find a dictionary justification for this, but this was the only way I could approximate the meaning contained here. "Good fortune" might possibly have been another way to say it.

3. I checked every single Scriptural reference. Some I found to be erroneous, and I made appropriate corrections. Thus: (All page numbers refer to printed German copy) On page 2, middle, Genesis 8:31 is an error. I corrected it to 8:21, as it should be. On page 4, bottom line, Colossians 1:14 is an error. I corrected it to 1:13. On page 8, sixth line from bottom, Galatians 2:19 probably should be 2:20, but I left it as is. However I think 2:20 is far more likely, especially in view of the immediately following reference to 5:24. On page 10, 16th line from bottom, Galatians 6:15-16

is most likely an error. I have corrected it to Galatians 6:14-15.

4. Occasionally I have added quotation marks where Otterbein makes direct quotes from the Scriptures, even though the printed German copy omits them, such as in the very last sentence of the sermon.

5. I have used "etc." for Otterbein's German symbol u., which denotes "and so on." Though Otterbein uses this symbol far more often than good English would permit---especially in connection to very partially quoted Scriptural passages---I have stayed with Otterbein at this point, even at the cost of a certain amount of clarity. Otterbein obviously assumes the text of Scripture in the hands of all his listeners, or readers, as the case may be.

6. I have left all paragraph divisions as they were, again at the cost of a certain amount of clarity. Additional paragraphing would help tremendously. Elimination of paragraphs in some instances would also be desirable.

7. Otterbein, like most Germans, is very fond of lengthy sentences. These would have been almost impossible to translate into lucid English, so I have consistently divided them into shorter ones. This has required occasional additions of words, but I have been exactingly careful not to change meanings.

8. In re-reading the translated manuscript (it should probably be called a typedscript!), I have noticed that I have been inconsistent in the use of capitalizations. This is true especially of personal pronouns relating to God or Christ, and of such words as "devil" and "the Fall." *(The latter two were, I think, all corrected in the final draft.)*

9. I have done my best not to allow any of my own theological views to influence an inaccuracy in translating Otterbein. As much as possible, I have tried to render his thoughts as they were. Occasionally this has required an unliteral translation, a use of an American idiom to replace an untranslatable German idiom, or some other such maneuvering.

10. I did not translate the hymn which attaches to the sermon in the printed text, since I do not believe it derives from Otterbein. If I am wrong in this, I will be glad to work on this in the future.

If you have any other questions on the translation, I will be glad to be of help. The work was very time-consuming but fascinating. I would be happy to do additional work of this kind. At the

conclusion of the work, I was strongly inclined to share with you my theological reactions to Otterbein's sermon, but maybe there will be a chance for this in the future. One precious item was this, however: Otterbein lists "security" among the works of darkness! Bless him.

Thank you for the privilege of being given this assignment. I wouldn't have missed it for anything. I am sorry the sermon does not read more smoothly in some places, but you might be able to improve it later. Otterbein's style does not exactly lend itself to much smoothness. My apologies again for the tardiness.

Sincerely,

Ehrhardt Lang

Ehrhardt Lang

P.S. German text page numbers
are indicated in pencil
at the right side of pages.

THE SALVATION-BRINGING INCARNATION
AND GLORIOUS VICTORY OF JESUS CHRIST OVER
THE DEVIL AND DEATH

As delivered in an edifying
sermon preached by Mr. Otterbein in the
year 1760 on the text Hebrews 2: 14-15.

This sermon is now offered in
print at this entrance to the year 1763
for the purpose of profitable study and
joyful preparation toward that great
triumphant year in which all the redeemed
of the Lord shall attain to that perfect
enjoyment of Christ's victory and their
redemption.

Germantown: Printed and available at
Christoph Sauer. 1763.

TEXT:

Hebrews 2: 14-15

German
Text
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"Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to life-long bondage."

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cont'd

It is very fitting that the teaching concerning the poor sinner's redemption through Jesus Christ should be called a Gospel, or an Evangel, a message which brings salvation and joy, for by nature we are all in a desperate condition. We are without God and children of wrath. What a pity! Consequently we roam about like sheep without a shepherd, who no longer recognize a pasture, and who are exposed to the power of Satan and sin. What is surprising about this is that most of us live quite securely in this desperate condition. We are stubborn in it. But are we not in fact estranged from all of God's light and life, and without hope? It is a condition in which--if we will give it any thought--we are at once driven into a corner. That is what James is talking about in chapter 4:9. There is in this condition no way out for us. None in all of creation! Who then can stand before God's mercy without amazement? II Cor. 5:19. Have we, who wilfully became unfaithful creatures, any right to expect this? Even the evil angels, who sinned in a similar manner, are tied with the chains of darkness and await their judgment. But we are to receive salvation! Both Luke 1:68-69 and Psalm 144:3 tell us of this. And this is fittingly called an evangel, a message which brings salvation and joy.

God has shown compassion on the poor sinner. He is a savior who crushes the head of the serpent. He is a surity which rescues us from the wrath to come. This is the truth that Paul brings to us in the words here. And as we deal with these words, we will want to give our attention to two matters involved here: 1) The desperate condition of man since his fall into sin; and 2) The redemption from this desperate condition through Jesus Christ.

Paul describes the desperate condition of man since the fall by saying that mankind lies in death under the power of the devil, and that because of mankind's fear of death it is subject to lifelong bondage.

Death is a loss of life, and it is so in two ways: physical death and spiritual death. When the soul leaves the body, that is physical death. Spiritual death, however, is when there is a separation from divine life, an estrangement in darkness and evil. It is a condition in which man does not know God, does not love or seek God, does not serve him, but instead lives in opposition to God as much as possible. Paul gives us a complete description of this condition in Ephesians 2:2-3. That is why he warns the believers not to walk as the heathens do, who are darkened in their understanding. So also in Ephesians 4:17-19. Therefore, whoever does not in this lifetime return to the lost light and righteousness, or to the life from God, by true repentance, will fall by way of temporal death into eternal death. He will--as our Lord says, John 3:36--not see life, but the wrath of God will abide

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on him. Furthermore, this terrible state is also in another place called the "outer darkness," Matthew 8:12, or "the second death," Revelation 2:11. In Thessalonians 1:9 Paul says that such individuals will suffer punishment and eternal destruction. All of us lie under this death since the fall. Our first parents fell away from God and thus necessarily into this death. We come from Adam, hence we lie with him in the same corruption and under the same judgment, Romans 5:12. This is clearly seen in natural death. Everyday human beings are brought to the grave. As to spiritual death, we are equally well acquainted with it, Genesis 8:21. Man's understanding is full of darkness; the will is full of wickedness and evil imaginings against God. This shows itself inwardly in a turning away of the heart from God, and outwardly in numerous works of the flesh. And this is the image of Satan that the natural man carries about, concerning which our Lord spoke, John 8:44, saying, "You are of your father, the devil." From this also arise by necessity such things as fear, restlessness, shock, and confusion of conscience, Isaiah 57:21. And if grace does not intervene against this corruption, there must further follow eternal death, eternal corruption of soul and body.

Paul blames the devil for this might and power of death. Why does he do that? Adam was made in the image of God. A blessed state this was! The understanding was filled with light, the will with holiness, so that the conscience was calm in God. The devil, who with his angels had already

fallen from God, was envious of the happiness of man and therefore tempted him to a fall similar to his own. Man listened to him and ate from the forbidden fruit. Man turned his desires away from God and began to seek his enjoyment apart from God in the creation. Thus man's freedom and happy state came to a sudden end. God withdrew from man the influences of his grace, and thus man fell into death, subject to the power of Satan. For this reason man is pictured as a prey and prisoner of Satan in Isaiah 49:25. And this on purpose, for the devil has claimed man as his own property as a consequence of man's sin and fall from God. Mankind had allowed itself to be captured by Satan, Ephesians 2:2-3. Thus it is on these grounds, and on no other grounds than these, that the power of Satan asserts itself over us. Just as in ordinary life we gain a certain right over anyone who holds some of our property--so that if he cannot pay, he can be made into a slave or cast into prison--so also Satan asserts his power over us by virtue of the sin in us. Whenever Satan cannot find any sin in us, any of his belongings, he also has no power over us. This is the way it was with our Lord Jesus Christ, John 14:30. And of what did Satan find nothing in Him? Of his evil. Thus also Satan had no rights over him. It is in proportion to our service to Satan's lusts that we are and remain in his power. This is why Christ calls sin the armor of Satan, for it gives Satan a right to and a hold on man, so that he can accuse mankind as trespassers before God and claim for us a punishment equal to his own--until a

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stronger than he comes and robs him of his armor, until a stronger than he blots out the sin and at the same time effects a destruction of Satan's rights, Luke 11:22.

Moreover God had warned man concerning death in the event that he disobeyed. Hence God is being only just when he allows man to experience his wilful fall and then delivers him over to his enemies for corruption, Jeremiah 2:19. So then this is the advantage a man has from his sin, sweet as it may taste to his flesh: he prepares with it for Satan, the arch-enemy, a full right and authority over his own soul, so that Satan can write himself a blood agreement of property every time a man sins. Hence the more a man sins against the light of his conscience, the more he appropriates to himself the kingdom of Satan. If only men could grasp this truth! For then they would fear sin much more than the devil and hell! If there is no sin, there is also no damnation; but wherever man allows room for sin in his life, there also is hell, wrath, and curse.

It is under this kind of slavery that we lie since the fall. What is more, we are dealing here with a strong slave-master. The kingdom of Satan is a mighty one. Thus, also, Satan is called a giant, a mighty one in Isaiah 49:25. Paul speaks very clearly about a dominion or power of darkness, Colossians 1:13. Man is so deep in his corruption that he does not by nature even recognize it. He has no sense of it. Though God shows it to him clearly and convincingly in his Word, man remains blind, stubborn, and unconcerned,

I Corinthians 2:14. Some have even mocked, secretly if not openly, as if God were telling them lies. What a terrible blindness! This is nothing but the power of darkness which keeps man captive. What concern does the natural man have for warning, threatening, or promise? None at all, so that the Lord is forced to complain about it, Jeremiah 6:8,9,10. How many there are who sin inspite of their conscience, inspite of their convictions! The heart is by nature so hard that it cannot be softened by either warning or pleading, Law or Gospel--if grace is not added. All this, plus the numerous wilful sins in which many walk inspite of knowledge to the contrary, frequently inspite of severe fears of conscience, testifies to the fact of Satan's might. It is this might which for such a long time has been leading--and is leading--man about according to its designs and fetters, II Timothy 2:26. This continues until the stronger One overcomes him, Luke 11:22, until the kingdom of Satan is destroyed by Christ through true repentance. This returns the soul to its longing for God as its highest good. The soul is reintroduced to freedom. But the process may now not be an easy one, for man has through much willful sinning fastened the kingdom of Satan quite strongly to himself. It is no wonder that even the thought of this condition envelopes us with the greatest kind of fear if we have any feelings for God left. The kingdom of Satan is a terrible kingdom, a kingdom of darkness. Paul says:

"Those who through fear of death were subject to life-long bondage." This fear is of two kinds, slave-like fear and childlike fear. The fear which is slave-like arises from the expectation of punishment. Everything that such a person does, he does as if forced, for he seeks to avoid a punishment. Childlike fear, however, arises out of love and conviction. Thus all things done by this person are done enthusiastically and willingly. Hence childlike fear is something very wonderful. However, even a slave-like fear is better than no fear at all. In other words, it is better that a man still has some fear before God, even a slave-like fear, so that it makes him shun evil, than that without any fear he becomes completely hardened and lives merely according to his heart's delight. This would in fact be the highest degree of evil, if things have gone this far with any man. This is the judgment of divine abandonment. All men still have some fear before God if they have not hushed their conscience through some means. This is true especially when death and its subsequent judgment come to mind, Acts 24:25. "You must die. You must face the judgment!" This is a terrible message for the unconverted man, Daniel 5:6. And no wonder! The death of the godless brings their glory to an end. Misery begins, Luke 16:23. What an unfortunate exchange! Isaiah 33:14. Thus James says in his letter, 5:1-6, "Weep ye rich." That is also the reason why many a wretched person, once God has awakened his conscience, bows outwardly like Ahab, but only

because he feels forced to do so on account of a slave-like fear, in which, however, his heart remains unbroken. Thus also, as soon as he seems to have found air again, he once more hardens his heart after the manner of Pharaoh. Many indeed live as if they had no fear, but they only appear so. Many of these carry about with themselves a gnawing conscience quite in the midst of all their worldly glory. And if a man has gone so far in his wilful sinning that he no longer has any feelings concerning God and eternity, then he is in an even worse state. Such are the "vessels of wrath" which have been prepared for damnation, Romans 9:22. It is a judgment that follows upon willful despising of grace. Hebrews 6:7-8.

Paul here is referring especially to the ancient observances. These were slave-like observances. The Jews were bound by certain times, places, and circumstances for their worship. The entire Law was a veritable yoke for the Jewish nation, a nearly unbearable load. The very minutest trespass was punishable by death, Hebrews 10. Often it is God himself who carries out some of the most severe judgments on the trespassers of the Law, such as upon Nadak and Abihu, upon the men of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, among others. That is also the reason why every divine revelation seemed like a terrible thing to them. We see this in the case of Manoah, Judges 13:22. So we see that they lived in constant slave-like fear of death and that their worship was usually a forced task. They had to keep the ceremonial law

even to the minutest circumstances, else they would have to die. Even believers under the Law were not free from this slave-like fear. No wonder! Christ was not yet. Hence their sins were not yet erased, which was a fact constantly brought to mind through the sacrifices. The way to holiness, the way to the new creation, had not yet been revealed. Thus at that time even the believers knew little about eternal life. It was for this reason that they clung so tenaciously to the earthly Canaan. For the same reason they also greatly feared death. We have a good example of this in the case of King Hezekiah, who although he had an upright heart before God nevertheless feared death. Isaiah 38:3. This is in fact always the case with man as long as he is standing under the Law, or as long as he has not yet found God as his God in the new creation. There is no difference: death always seems a terrible thing to him. If there is no new creation, there is no peace with God, hence also no joy or confidence toward God. But just as all fear arises from our sin, so also it ceases with the blotting out of the same. And that happens through Jesus Christ.

Paul indicates this in what follows: "Since therefore the children..." etc. Paul is speaking of the Lord Jesus. This is clear from the foregoing. And when he says that he partook of our flesh and blood, he is describing the incarnation. Adam had already received the promise of this shortly after the fall, Genesis 3:15. Finally, in the fullness of time, Christ came into the world, Galatians 4:4. The Word became flesh, John 1:14. Christ actually assumed

human nature from the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary, the seed of woman, the Son of Man. A deep humiliation! The Son of God not only becomes man, but he takes upon himself the form of a servant, Philippians 2:7. Yet all this happened in an unusual manner, Luke 1:35. Christ was born without sin. I Peter 2:22. This was necessary, according to Hebrews 7:26. But why does the Son of God become man? Paul says:

"That through death he might..." etc. The Gospels give us a detailed account of the death of Jesus Christ. Christ died a violent and very agonizing death on the cross. For this he had promised himself already in eternity, for the sake of poor sinners. This death had not only been prophesied by the prophets, but also pre-imagined in the sacrifices and ceremonies of the Law. This all happened for our good. It was for the sake of our sin that Christ sweated blood. Out of love for us Christ offered his soul as a guilt offering. What a great effort our sins have cost him! We have been expensively purchased. But just as painful as all these sufferings were to our Savior, so great also was the salvation that came from it for the poor sinner.

Paul says, "That through death he might destroy him who has the power..." etc. That was the purpose for the sufferings of Jesus Christ. I John 3:8. To this was directed the promise in Paradise, Genesis 3:15. And Christ has fully carried out this promise through his death, II

Timothy 1:10. This happened especially in the cross, Colossians 2:14-15. In that cross Christ became a poison for death and a destruction for hell. Hosea 13:14. Hence Paul can cry out joyfully, I Corinthians 15:55-57, "Death, where is thy sting?" O precious death! Daniel 9:24. This death brings nothing but salvation. God is now reconciled, and the way into the Holy of Holies is prepared. Paul expresses this very simply in his word of praise, Ephesians 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ..." etc.

And yet, with all of that, the matter of our salvation is still not fully concluded. It is a pity that we nearly always seek the salvation of Christ and his death outside of ourselves. People generally imagine Christ has accomplished all things on the cross, and salvation is now a certainty regardless of one's manner of life. After all, they say, Christ has paid, and at death we shall fully lay aside our sin. But these are erroneous thoughts concerning the death and redemption of Jesus, and no one could be more mistaken. It is a teaching from hell itself, which makes Christ into a mere cover for sin and builds a kingdom for the devil. Christ has not even nearly concluded his work of salvation on the cross. It is true, our mediator Christ did accomplish all that his heavenly Father had assigned him to do in and through his humanity, as well as all things prophesied of him by the prophets and Moses. But if Christ accomplished everything, why then does the devil still have his kingdom in all of us ever since birth? We see this very clearly: Our choices and aims of the heart are evil from

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nature. Ignorance, stubbornness against God, and impurity, these all are the kingdom of Satan in us. But where in this condition do we see any salvation or redemption? In the degree to which a man is subject to the power of Satan and sin, to that degree also he is subject to wrath, curse, and damnation. He is in all respects in an unhappy situation. Hence, whoever builds his salvation on Christ in a way that is merely outside himself, so that all the while he remains in his sin, is building on a foundation of sand. No matter what such a person may know or hope about salvation and redemption, it will be merely a dream and empty imagination. But has not Christ given his life for our redemption? This remains true. It is true that Christ has through his death paid the redemption price for our sins and also reconciled God to us. With regard to God our salvation is fully accomplished. And when Christ also reconciles us to God, then redemption is fully accomplished on our side as well. Note carefully whether you have understood this. Christ has through that which he accomplished outside of ourselves merely laid the groundwork for our salvation. In this manner he reconciled the heavenly Father to us through his death. But at the same time he also gave a picture of that which he must do in us, that he must destroy the kingdom of Satan in us just as he has destroyed this kingdom outside of us. Christ has through his suffering given us himself as an example, I Peter 2:21. Paul also speaks with clear words concerning a conforming to his death, Philipians 3:10. This is also why Christ

himself demands of us to bear the cross after him. And here is really the great mystery, Christ in us. II Corinthians 13:5. By this is meant that Christ will do that in us which he has done outside of us, for he also crushes the head of the serpent inside of us and thus leads sin into death. Paul glories in this, Galatians 2:19, and this is true of all believers, Galatians 5:24. It is only then that Christ and his death can profit us, when in this manner he comes home in us. It is on the basis of conformity with his death that we receive the crown, James 1:12. Life depends on this, Romans 6:8; if we share the same agony with Christ, it follows we shall also share the same glory, Romans 8:17.

But can a man know whether Christ has killed the sin in him? As surely as he lives! A heart unbroken, security, and a worldly outlook, etc., these are all works of darkness--the kingdom of Satan in us. When a man continues to walk after the lusts of his heart while yet claiming to have the redemption through Christ, he is terribly blind, in fact obstinate. Yet someone may say that he is very sorry for his sin, but that though he seeks to do the good, the evil nevertheless clings to him. All such excuses mean nothing to God. Even the devil thinks about God and trembles. What is gained if a man weeps over his sin a hundred times and yet continues to sin another hundred times. This kind of repentance is described by Peter, II Peter 2:20. If there is no true change of heart, there is also no true redemption.

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But how can one attain to this? It is the work of God. No one can come to the Son until the Father draws him. As soon as the Spirit of God opens the eyes of a man so that he realizes his wretched condition, he will join up with the Prodigal Son and say, "Father, I have sinned." Man cannot lose the world and sin until he recognizes by the light of God that through it all he has brought himself into a misfortune. If by the grace of God a man is brought so far as to despair on himself and his doings, he sits down with Mary at the feet of Jesus and weeps. Hence it is easy to see whether the Holy Spirit has his work in a man: It is when a man with agony of heart recognizes and feels his inner corruption; when such a recognition brings about a broken heart, ashamed and humble before God; when one becomes an enemy of sin and turns his back on the world; when one begins to hunger for Jesus, and when such an attitude continues and grows, Hebrews 3:14. Whoever here fights under the discipline of the Holy Spirit is led to victory finally by grace. And this is the work of redemption, Christ in us. The marks by which it can be recognized are a loss of the desire or tendency toward sin, a ceasing of sin itself, Romans 6:6 and 18. The fruits of it are holiness, Romans 6:22, a new human being, Colossians 3:10-14, and a process of life which goes on steadfastly toward perfection, II Corinthians 3:18.

And this is the purpose of redemption, Titus 2:14.
If nothing impure can enter the New Jerusalem, Revelation 21:27,

then no impure unregenerated sinner has any hope. God has been reconciled to us on his side through Jesus. When grace puts to death the carnal mind which lives in us by nature, then we are also reconciled with God on our side. Moreover, just as it is impossible for a doctor to cure a sick person if he has not first killed the evil that has caused the sickness and pain, so it is impossible for Christ to save a single soul from hell if he has not destroyed the sin which brings about the hell. And does not the power of Satan over us base itself on the sin and evil in us? This is undeniable. But it is correspondingly true also that the power of Satan over us ceases when the sin in us has ceased.

But is it possible for a man to come to a complete victory over sin through Jesus Christ? (Answer:) Who is mightier, Christ or the devil? In the Gospel we are given all kinds of divine strength for life and godliness. Titus 2:11-12. Notice this in the example of Paul, Romans 8:2. Hence he can say in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ..." etc. Thus it is an obvious error to imagine one cannot in this earthly life be freed from sin. It is true one cannot attain to this in one week or in one's sleep. If anything does cost, then certainly this does, in terms of determination and effort. That is also why we only seldom meet such men in Christ in our time. Yet if we on this account consider it impossible, we would be denying Christ and speaking in favor of the kingdom of darkness.

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To such people the words of Christ were directed, Matthew 22:29, "You do not know the power of God." This is the kind of lack of faith that misses out on Canaan, Numbers 13 and 14. But when Christ has destroyed the power of someone's enemies, that person can say he has been redeemed. This is what Paul says is, in the last analysis, the reason for and result of the death of Christ: "and deliver all those who..." etc. To the extent that Christ rids us of our sin, to that extent also we are redeemed through Him. And wherever sin ceases in us, damnation also ceases, Romans 8:1. Thus to be born again, Christ in us, is nothing to sneer at, as reason may tell us. No, there is no greater mercy that the Lord Jesus can show than to wash the sinner of his sins in his blood--regardless how drastic the experience may have to be for the old man, Galatians 6:14-15. Fear can no longer have any place, Romans 8:15, and a joy in God appears instead, Romans 14:17, a certain care-free spirit towards God, I John 3:21-22. One begins to serve God with enthusiasm, Psalm 110:3. In Luke 1:74-75 Zacharias says, "in order that he might save us from our enemies, that we might serve God without fear." Death is now no longer such a terrible thing, I Corinthians 15:57. Paul says, "I have a desire to depart and be with Christ," Philippians 1:23--and no wonder, for he had a dwelling and resting place in heaven. II Corinthians 5:1; Revelation 14:13. Nevertheless, Paul speaks first of the destruction of the power of Satan and then of redemption. The one precedes,

the other follows. If there is no sin in us, there can also be no danger of death or devil outside of us. Yet no soul can attain to this unless it has first agonized under the power of death. For the heavy-laden there will be rest; for the prisoners, acquittal. Whoever does not know about this and yet boasts of a redemption is deceived. Any such persuasion is not from God. Now the question, whether anyone among us may claim redemption through Christ in truth and certainty of heart (as some of us are doing), depends therefore on this: Where in us has Christ destroyed the power of death? This deserves our serious attention. Whoever wishes to be wise, let him give heed. Unconverted, under the power of darkness, without God and Christ--that is a terribly wretched condition. O that you might be wise and would know the things that make for your peace! If there is no Christ in us, there is also no Christ for us. Notice: Why does a curse like that of Adam lie upon us? It is because we, like him, have sinned, Romans 5:12. If the Fall of Adam had remained outside of us, it would not have harmed us. But since the corruption has been transmitted to us in and through birth, we are together with Adam subject to the same judgment. We are children of wrath by nature, without God and without hope. Hence Christ and His death do not profit us unless Christ comes inside us and destroys the kingdom of sin, penetrating us spirit, soul, and body with his light and life. We must be renewed by him in such a way that he gains an importance in us, which alone can bring us the rest, peace,

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salvation, and happiness from and in God. And that really is something!--a true redemption--when Christ redeems the heart from a love for the world and the creature, thus taking away not only the sin, but the curse as well. It is a rock foundation upon which the soul--after it has now come to a true appreciation of the death of Jesus Christ--can build its salvation with confidence and certainty. On the other hand, if one has availed himself only of an external Christ, one may know much about him and talk of him and even depend firmly upon his work, but be building merely upon sand. By such an approach it is impossible for the heart ever to come to a true peace and rest before God.

And who knows of this from experience? The question is not whether one has heard or learned something about Christ and his death, or whether one can talk about it, but whether one has experienced the death of Jesus Christ in the putting to death and riddance of the old man. Does Christ reside and live in us? The kingdom of Satan is darkness, carelessness, various kinds of mischief, as well as obstinacy. But the kingdom of Jesus Christ is enlightenment, a broken heart on account of sin, a rejection of the world, a seeking after heavenly things, a peace and joy in and with God. If we are still without a broken heart, if a man still lives for sin, if the heart still clings to the lust of the world, there is still no redemption. It is a pity that we always build our salvation on a Christ outside of ourselves. What a frightening blindness! To have Satan's

kingdom in one's soul--which shows itself in a blindness, a turning away of the heart from God, an uninterest and despising for God and prayer, not to mention many other obvious works of the flesh in which many live--and yet to boast about and take comfort in a redemption through Christ! A true about-face from the world to God, a heart truly distressed over its sin, is an unknown thing to such a person. Where does one see anything of godly sorrow, anything of God and Christ in us, anything of a godly attitude? If one tells these people anything about this, it sounds quite ridiculous to them. And if one or another of them do know something about it, it is merely from hearsay, or from books, but not from the Holy Spirit. Everything is dead when it comes to talking about God and godly things, so that one only rarely sees a true earnestness in Christianity, the kind that wrestles and fights for the kingdom of God. Everywhere there is plenty of peace, rest, and confidence. For if a man has even a slight sense of God and truth, it would have to be a miracle if the thought of his wretchedness did not break his heart. But this is what makes our condition so despairingly bad and incurable, that despite all such knowledge the heart yet remains dead and without feeling. No truth almost makes a greater impression. Blind is the person who does not at once realize it when God has removed the lampstand of his Gospel from his place.

What will happen when we finally face death and the judgment--when the blood which now calls for forgiveness will then call for vengeance? What treasures of wrath one

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stores up for himself for eternity by such reckless abuse of the goodness of God! For the sake of God, take note. Listen to me. If you want to be heard by God, why are you so unconcerned, why so stubborn? Perhaps you think, "That doesn't apply to us." Very well then: Are you converted? Has Jesus delivered you from sin? Are you convinced on the basis of living experience of the work of grace in you? What then is a broken heart? What does it mean to die with Jesus and how does one do it? Have you sat--and how long have you sat--weeping with Mary at the feet of Jesus? Which sin in you has been put to death by Jesus? Does Christ and his Spirit live and dwell in you? What good thing has grace wrought in you? If you know nothing about this, you are not converted, as surely as God lives. There is a cost involved before one can come to peace with God. The new birth and its process does not happen without much pain. But so great also is ⁵the change brought about by grace in conversion. What the nominal Christian has merely from books and hearsay, merely in his mind and in pictures, this the true Christian has from God in truth and in strength. Consequently if these things are yet strange to you, then your Christianity is merely appearance, imagination, shadow tricks. What is more, if self-love, pride, or whatever else it may be, still dwells in you, and rules in you, it is very evident that you still belong into the kingdom of the devil. Are you so blind that you cannot grasp this? Hear, God says it: Darkness remains darkness. And even if you consider

yourselves redeemed in this condition, God and Jesus will never recognize you as such.

But is there any hope for the unconverted man? No, God's Spirit denies this to him. Unconverted--a child of wrath--a curse--an unsaved worm in hell--all of these things express the same thing. Your wretchedness is undescribably great; you are definitely going to be lost. What does your heart say to that? Is there anything more detestable under the sun than a cursed man who has no part in God, who has no Jesus? Do you want to live like that and die like that? Don't you shudder at the thought? You are left with a God who is a ravenous fire, an eternally glowing ember.

What then is the best thing to do? It is clearly indicated for you: Repent and believe the Gospel; search the Scriptures. There is no other way. Abraham, Peter, and others walked in this way. And the whole Word of God urges self-denial, inner renewal, and holiness. Do you want Jesus to rid you of your sin? Then first allow your hearts to break down in true repentance. Do you someday want to live with Christ? Then do now die with Him to sin. You must travel this way if on that day you want to find mercy. But if you nevertheless continue in your old doings, you are showing me thereby that you still belong under the vials of wrath.

But alas! Who is really able for this? In God there are escapes even from the very midst of death. The Gospel demands, but it also gives that which it demands. What were the Corinthians and the Ephesians before their conversion? Did not the devil also have his work in them?

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They were like us children of wrath by very nature. And did any greater enemy of Jesus Christ ever live on earth than Paul before his conversion? But how suddenly his heart was changed by grace! That is what Jesus still wants to do in us. Whoever today will acknowledge his wretchedness and hunger after him, and surrender himself to him who is the physician of his soul, upon him he will have mercy, "for he will abundantly pardon." Isaiah 55:7. Of course this takes effort. But what can be more detestable than to be without God? Do you dare lift your face to heaven with confidence so long as you still do not have a reconciled God? When will your laughing turn to weeping?--your joy into sorrow?

To be a redeemed one of the Lord, what a wonderful blessing! What a joy there will be when God sends the message to one or another of you, saying your names are written down in the book of life! It is the way of repentance that can lead you to this. Come then to the One who can help you. Jesus has already saved many such wretched sinners. He knows what to do in each case. Matthew 11:5. If your salvation means anything to you, join up with the prodigal son, for Jesus is waiting for you. The garment of salvation is already prepared. All is ready. Come. "Therefore if anyone thirst, let him come, and whoever wishes, let him take of the water of life freely."

And whoever does stand in grace, let him be constantly on guard. Fear, concern, a steady distrust of ourselves, and a worry that one may still be a long way back and may

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eventually fall short--these are ways which may guard us against pride, backsliding, and encourage an earnestness in Christianity, Philippians 3:12,14. Whoever clings to grace and stays close to Jesus, and whoever rushes to God with persistent faith-filled prayer, will keep on going. Growth is a mark of the state of grace and stabilizes the heart.

The higher a degree of godly life a man reaches in this time, the firmer will be his hope for the future. He will become carefree and joyful toward God. The more holy here, the more glorious there. Blessed are they who keep His commandments, "that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates." Amen. So be it.

END OF THE SERMON