

## NINTH EVENING LECTURE.

(November 21, 1884.)

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The latest statistics of ethnologists figure the present population of the earth at 1,400 millions of human beings. Not quite 400 million of these, that is, not quite one-third of the race, profess faith in Christ as the only Savior. Verily, this is an appalling state of affairs, pitiful enough to draw tears from us. However, still more appalling and lamentable is the fact that of these 400 million nominal Christians nearly one-half are still followers of the Pope, the Antichrist. The mystery surrounding these shocking and depressing conditions is such that even sincere Christians dread looking with open eyes into this abyss of indescribable misery and wretchedness.

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True, quite a number, in fact, the majority, of those who claim to be Lutherans refuse to believe that the Pope is the Antichrist and the Papacy the antichristian power. With the entire Church of the Reformation and in accord with the confessions of this Church the orthodox American Lutheran Church of our time still in full earnest maintains the position that the Pope is the Antichrist. But that is, at best, regarded as an odd fancy of narrow-minded men, who refuse to keep step with the times. If you ask why this is so, I answer that it is chiefly because people no longer know what constitutes the Antichrist and the antichristian dominion. People say: "We admit that, especially in the Middle Ages, there were many Popes who were veritable abominations and, even in the view of Romish writers, were swallowed up by hell." It is admitted that many shocking abominations are still practiced by the Papacy, but this is offset by the reminder that there is not a Church free from errors and even from Judases. It is furthermore admitted that the Papacy is propagating the most horrible heresies, but over against this the fact is stressed that even the Papacy holds strictly to the three Ecumenical Creeds. For at the opening session and solemn organization of the Council of Trent, in 1545, those three creeds were recited. Our attention is also called to the fact that the Popes believe the Bible of the Old and the New Testament to be the revealed Word of God, God to be triune, and Christ to be God and man in one person and the Savior of the world. We are told: "The papists confess, just as we do, their faith in a future resurrection of the dead, a last Judgment, before which all men will be cited, and a heaven and a hell. Far, then, from being the dominion of Antichrist," these people say, "the Papacy is rather a powerful dam shutting out the fearful deluge of unbelief that has come down on the Christian Church." People see the rule of Antichrist in pantheism, materialism, atheism, socialism, nihilism, anarchism, and other horrible isms to which the modern age has fallen heir. But why is it that from the aforementioned premises men will draw the conclusion that the Papacy is not the rule of Antichrist and the Pope not the veritable Antichrist? The chief reason is that people fail to consider what it means when the Pope claims to be the viceregent of Christ on earth and the visible head of the entire Christian Church. In order to be this, he must, of course, profess many Christian doctrines. He has to put on a mask, otherwise Antichrist could not possibly exist in the midst of the Christian Church. Moreover, he has to declare war against the enemies of all religions and against the enemies of the Christian religion to support his claim of being the viceregent of Christ. He knows that, when Christ falls, Antichrist, too, must fall. For when He falls whose viceregent the Pope

claims to be, there is an end of the viceregency. When the Pope apparently fights for Christ and the Christian Church, he fights for himself and his dominion.

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But the point of supreme importance is this: Passing by those societies which deny the Triune God and which are outside of the pale of the Christian Church, I find that the Pope is the only one in the entire Christian Church who is an outspoken enemy of the free grace of God in Christ, an enemy of the Gospel under the guise of the Christian religion and aping its institutions. We are led to a consideration of this fact by

### **Thesis V.**

*The first manner of confounding Law and Gospel is the one most easily recognized — and the grossest. It is adopted, for instance, by Papists, Socinians, and Rationalists and consists in this, that Christ is represented as a new Moses, or Lawgiver, and the Gospel turned into a doctrine of meritorious works, while at the same time those who teach that the Gospel is the message of the free grace of God in Christ are condemned and anathematized, as is done by the papists.*

I offer two testimonies to show that the papists are doing what the thesis charges. Two months before Luther's death, as you know, the Council of Trent was opened. It was to heal the mortal wounds that had been dealt the Papacy by the Reformation of Luther and rebuild the Papacy.

In its fourth session, in a preamble to a decree, the Council says: "The most holy, ecumenical, and universal Council of Trent, lawfully convened in the Holy Spirit, ... always bearing in mind to remove errors and to preserve in the Church the purity of the Gospel, viz., that which was first promised by the holy prophets in their writings, then preached with His own mouth by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and then commanded to be preached to all creatures by His apostles, both as the source of all saving truth and *a moral norm*," etc.

This preamble does not sound so awful. We hear this vermin of antichristian iniquity speaking of the Gospel as containing the doctrines of salvation. However, they add immediately that the Gospel also prescribes morals. That is the interpretation they put on the intention of Christ when He said: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Mark 16, 15. They evidently do not intend to accept the Gospel in the true sense of the word. In the meaning in which they understand it, it is, at best, a law such as Moses proclaimed. Nor do they urge upon people only the commandments of God, but much more the commandments of the Church. They do not trouble a person who has transgressed the commandments of God; but if any one transgresses the commandments of their Church, for instance, if he has eaten meat on Friday, he is tortured until he acknowledges that he has committed a mortal sin.

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In Canon 21, adopted at its sixth session, this synagog of Satan decrees: "If any one says that Christ Jesus has been given by God to men that He should be their Redeemer, in whom they are to trust, and not also their Lawgiver, whom they are to obey, let him be anathema." εὐαγγέλιον (Mat 4:23 BGT) If Christ came into the world to publish new laws to us, we should feel like saying that He might as well have stayed in heaven. Moses had already given us so perfect a Law that we could not fulfil it. Now, if Christ had given us additional laws, that would have had to drive us to despair.

The very term *Gospel* contradicts this view of the papists. We know that Christ Himself has called His Word *Gospel*; for He says in Mark 16, 15: “Go ye into all the world and preach the *Gospel* to every creature.” In order that the meaning which He connected with the word *Gospel* might be understood, He states the contents of the Gospel in these concrete terms: “He that believeth and is baptized,” etc. If the teaching of Christ were a law, it would not be an eujaggevlion, a glad tidings, but a sad tidings.

Reverting to the Old Testament, we see even there what the character of the teaching of Christ is. We read in Gen. 3, 15: “It [the Woman’s Seed] shall bruise thy head.” What is the import of these words? It is this: The Messiah, the Redeemer, the Savior is not come for the purpose of telling us what we are to do, what works we are to perform in order to escape from the terrible dominion of darkness, sin, and death. These feats the Messiah is not going to leave for us to accomplish, but He will do all that Himself. “*He shall bruise the serpent’s head,*” that means nothing else than this, that He shall destroy the kingdom of the devil. All that man has to do is to know that he has been redeemed, that he has been set free from his prison, that he has no more to do than to believe and accept this message and rejoice over it with all his heart. If the text were to read: “He shall save you,” that would not be so comforting; or if it read: “You must believe in Him,” we should be at a loss to know what is meant by this faith. This protoevangelium, this First Gospel in Genesis, was the fountain from which the believers in the Old Testament drew their comfort. It was important for them to know: “There is One coming who will not only tell us what we must do to get to heaven. No, the Messiah will do all Himself to bring us there.” Now that the rule of the devil has been destroyed, anything that I must do cannot come into consideration. If the devil’s dominion is demolished, I am free. There is nothing for me to do but to *appropriate* this to myself. That is what Scripture means when it says, “Believe.” That means, Claim as your own what Christ has acquired.

Many additional prophecies might be cited to prove the correctness of this interpretation. Let me call your attention only to one, which shows clearly what the doctrine of the Gospel really is. Jer. 31, 31–34 we read: *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which My covenant they brake, although I was an Husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my Law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.* A new covenant, then, God is going to make. Note this well. This covenant is not to be a legal covenant like the one which He established with Israel on Mount Sinai. The Messiah will not say: “You must be people of such and such character; your manner of living must be after this or that fashion; you must do such and such works.” No such doctrine will be introduced by the Messiah. He writes His Law directly into the heart, so that person living under Him is a law unto himself. He is not coerced by a force from without, but is urged from within. “For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more,” — these words state the reason for the preceding statement. They are a summary of the

Gospel of Christ: forgiveness of sin by the free grace of God, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Any one, therefore, imagining that Christ is a new Lawgiver and has brought us new laws cancels the entire Christian religion. For he removes that by which the Christian religion differs from all other religions in the world. All other religions say to man: "You must become just so and so and do such and such works if you wish to go to heaven." Over against this the Christian religion says: "You are a lost and condemned sinner; you cannot be your own Savior. But do not despair on that account. There is One who has acquired salvation for you. Christ has opened the portals to heaven to you and says to you: Come, for all things are ready. Come to the marriage of the Lamb." That is the reason, too, why Christ says: "I heal the sick, not them that are whole. I am come to seek and save that which was lost. I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Everywhere in His conversation among men we see the Lord Jesus surrounded by sinners, and behind Him stand lurking the Pharisees. Sinners, hungering and thirsting, stand round about Him. He has won their hearts. Though the divine majesty shines forth from Him, they are not afraid to approach Him; they have confidence in Him. The Pharisees utter the bitter reproach: "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." The Lord overhears the remark, and even if He had not heard it, He nevertheless would have known it. What does He do? He makes no apologies; He does not say: "I do not wish to have sinners, but only righteous people, about Me!" No, He confirms the truth of their statement, which by them was meant as a reproach, by continuing the censured action, as if He wished to say: "Yes, I want sinners about Me," and then proceeds to prove this by telling the parable of the Lost Sheep. The shepherd picks up the lost sheep, no matter how torn and bruised it is. He places it on his shoulder and, rejoicing, carries it to the sheepfold. The Lord explains His conduct also by the parable of the Lost Piece of Silver. The woman seeks her lost coin throughout the house, searching for it even in the dirt. When she has found it, she calls her friends, saying: "Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost." Lastly, the Lord adds the incomparably beautiful parable of the Prodigal Son. Practically the Lord says by telling these parables: "There you have My doctrine. I am come to seek and to save that which was lost."

If you take a survey of the entire life of Jesus, you behold Him going about, not like a proud philosopher, not like a moralist, surrounded by champions of virtuous endeavor, whom He teaches how to attain the highest degree of philosophic perfection. No, He goes about seeking lost sinners and does not hesitate to tell the proud Pharisees that harlots and publicans will enter the kingdom of heaven rather than they. Thus He shows us quite plainly what His Gospel really is.

All the apostles corroborate His teaching. John says in his gospel, chap. 1, 17: *The Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.* He places the Law over against grace and truth. I need not explain what grace is. When John speaks of the "truth" that has come, he views Jesus as saying: "I teach the essence of the things which were foreshadowed in the Old Testament. The Old Testament presented emblems; I bring realities." The entire Temple-service of the Levites was figurative. Christ actually brought what was typified in the Old Testament.

In chap. 3, 17 the same apostle says: *God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.* Quite plainly the thought that Christ came into the world to proclaim a new law is barred here. Had that been His object, He would have come to judge the world. For the Law passes judgment on sinners. However, God did not send his Son to pass judgment on the world, but to save the world through Him. By the term *world* the Lord refers to mankind in its apostate and lost condition, to the lost, accursed, and condemned sinners that make up the world. To these the Savior brings this blessed doctrine: “Though You have broken every commandment of God, do not despair; I am bringing you forgiveness and salvation here and hereafter.”

In language so plain that it requires no comment the apostle states in Romans, chap. 1, 16. 17: *I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, the Just shall live by faith.*

1 Tim. 1, 15 we read: *This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.* In view of these plain passages, is it not a horrible teaching of the papists that what is called Gospel in the Scriptures according to them is nothing else than a new law?

In sundry other places of their confessions they explain their meaning more fully thus: Many laws were uttered by Christ of which Moses knew nothing; for instance, the law to love our enemies, the law not to seek private revenge, the law not to demand back what has been taken from us, etc. All these matters the papists declare to be “new laws.” This is wrong; for even Moses has said: “Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thine heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might,” Deut. 6, 5; and: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,” Lev. 19, 18. Now, Christ did not abrogate this law of Moses, but neither did He publish any new laws. He only opened up the spiritual meaning of the Law. Accordingly, He says in Matt. 5, 17: “Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.” That means that He did not come to issue new laws, but to fulfil the Law for us, so that we may share His fulfillment.

In its sixth session the Council of Trent passed this decree: “If any one says that men are made righteous solely through the imputation of the righteousness of Christ or solely through the forgiveness of sin, to the exclusion of the grace and love which by the Holy Spirit is poured out in their hearts and is inherent in them; or that the grace by which we are made righteous is nothing else than the favor of God, — let him be accursed. ... If any one says that the faith which makes men righteous is nothing else than trust in the divine mercy, which remits sin for Christ’s sake, or that it is only this trust that makes us righteous, — let him be accursed. ... If any one says that a justified person does not, by reason of the good *works* which are done by him through the grace of God and the merit of Jesus Christ, whose living member he is, truly *merit* an increase of grace, eternal life, and the actual obtainment of eternal life, provided he dies in grace, — let him be accursed.” Unless you are utterly blind and know nothing of the Christian religion, I believe that a plainer proof that the Pope is the Antichrist cannot be offered you.

Everywhere the papists set up the cross and make the sign of the cross; but that is sheer hypocrisy. They have the cross, but without its meaning in connection with Christ. Again and again we read that

they call upon Mary to keep the ship of Peter from perishing. they do not readily say: “Jesus is our Fortress, our Rock,” etc. Verily, the worst sects in the Christian Church are less harmful than the Pope. For all sects without exception admit that the only way in which a person may be saved is by faith in the grace of God in Christ Jesus. All sects, by their teaching, obscure the Gospel, but they do not, as the Pope does, anathematize and curse it. Inasmuch as all sects allow this thesis, that salvation is by the grace of God, through faith in Christ Jesus, to stand, they are incomparably superior to the Papacy. They are corrupted churches, but the Papacy is a false Church. Just as counterfeit money is no money, so the papal Church, being a false Church, is no Church. Compared with the corrupted sectarian churches, the papacy is a non-church, a denial of the Church of Christ. I am not speaking of the Roman Catholic, but of the papistic Church, the Church which submits to the Pope, accepts his decrees, and repeats his anathemas. This Church is the one which history knows as the *ecclesia maligna*, the malign, pernicious Church, and the synagog of Satan.

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However, the objection is raised: Does not Christ say, Matt. 11, 28–30: “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly of heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For *My yoke is easy, and My burden is light*”? Here we have it that Christ, too, lays a burden on His followers. Yea, the Romanists claim this yoke and burden of Christ, which they interpret to mean self-abnegation and cross-bearing, is much more grievous than the Law of Moses. Moses, they say, prohibited only gross outward acts. They think that the remark of Christ, “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time,” refers to Moses. What Christ really means to say is this: “Your elders have taught you by their traditions that you were keeping the Law when you refrain from the gross acts prohibited by the Law.” And then He proceeds to expound the true meaning of the Law.

Regarding this matter, *Luther* writes in his *Glosses on the Gospel of Matthew* (St. L. Ed. VII, 143): “Those are greatly in error who interpret ‘the yoke of Christ’ in this passage [Matt. 11, 29. 30] to mean the so-called evangelical law, that is, commands issued by Christ.” In the opinion of Romanists the Gospel and the evangelical law are synonymous. They also term it “the new law” (*nova lex*). *Luther* proceeds: “In expounding this text, the Sophists have been at great pains to show that the yoke of Christ is easier than the yoke of Moses, spite of their belief that Moses has prohibited merely the external act while Christ lays His injunction even on every useless word that men speak and on their whole heart.” By their contention that the yoke of Moses had been easier for the reason stated, the Sophists to whom *Luther* refers meant to prove that in the Old Testament people were saved by the Law because that was not hard to keep. The law in the Gospel, they say, is easy only in so far as it has abolished circumcision and the ceremonial ordinances. But the yoke and the burden of which Christ speaks is nothing else than the cross which His followers bear from love of Him.

*Luther* continues: “Finally, these blind people arrived at the conclusion that the Law and the Gospel were related to one another like the *excedentia* to the *excessa* [that which exceeds something to that which is exceeded], namely, this way: the Law is easier than the Gospel because it lays its injunctions, not on the heart, but on the hand, or the gross external act. On the other hand, the Gospel is easier than the Law in this respect, that it has done away with circumcision and the Mosaic ceremonies. That is

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indeed a blindness befitting people who despise the Gospel and refuse to read it. This is what they should have taught: The power of Christ is marvelous in His saints; for by faith in the hearts of these men, Christ changes death into laughter, punishment into joy, and hell into heaven. For those who believe in Him laugh to scorn all those ills which worldly and carnal minds dread and flee and abominate. *That* is what Christ calls a pleasant yoke and a light burden, namely, to bear the cross joyfully, even as Paul did, who says: ‘We glory in tribulations also.’ Rom. 5, 3.”

The moment a person through genuine repentance attains to a living faith, he has become a blessed man: he has arrived at the very gate of heaven. When death comes, the doors are opened, and he enters. But since it is dangerous for a Christian to pass his days in ease in this present life, the Savior has taken the precaution of putting the cross upon him. Whenever a Christian professes his faith by word and deed, people become hostile to him. Even where this enmity is not manifested publicly, it is still noticeable and vexes him not a little. How many have had to lay down their lives for Christ! But how light is the burden of Christ compared with that of the Law! Feeling the burden of the Law, a person will groan: “Oh, I am the most miserable of men!” It makes him despondent and fills him with despair.

Some spend their lives subject neither to the Law nor to the Gospel. Well, they live like animals. But, alas for them when their eyes are opened after death! A Christian is able to rejoice in the hope that God will deliver him from the misery and suffering of this life. He can even here sing hallelujahs. The examples of the martyrs shows this. They did not go weeping and wailing to their execution, but met their martyr’s fate with joy and exultation. In them the words of Christ were fulfilled: “My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”

I pray God that my addressing these talks to you may not be labor misspent. Do apply what I say to yourselves. To advance you in your Christianity is the paramount object of these evening lectures.