

# Sermon for the Twentieth Sunday after Trinity

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*P. P. Waldenström, 1872*

**T**he kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it” (Matthew 13:44-46).

1) In this Scripture the kingdom of Christ is presented to us as a treasure and pearl, more valuable and precious than anything this world has to offer. For everything offered us in this world is nothing but vanity, whereas this treasure is eternal and imperishable. The very highest riches in this world endure but for a while; then one must relinquish them with all the privileges that they have accorded. The kingdom of God, on the other hand, is the sort of treasure which, once possessed, one need never relinquish but may retain forever. It does not consist in silver or gold or other material things, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

2) For this reason the Lord Christ would, through these parables, press home what he has said elsewhere: “Seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?”

3) In regard to this kingdom, it is evident that here there is no reference to the universal reign of God, of which we read in Psalm 103:19: “The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom

rules over all,” and in the conclusion of the prayer “Our Father”: “Thine is the kingdom and the power.” But here the reference is to that messianic kingdom, promised of God through the prophets and expected of the holy fathers, which, symbolized by the institution of the Old Covenant, should come into being with the coming of Christ. This kingdom is called the kingdom of God because it has its origin not in human ingenuity, strategy, or power, but in the grace and power of God’s eternal purpose to save the fallen human race. It is further called the kingdom of Christ because it was erected in the death and resurrection of Christ and grounded on him and his work, and not on any human wisdom, power, or piety. As it is written, “No other foundation can any man lay, than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” and again, “His kingdom shall be upon his shoulders.” In addition to which, Christ also is the Lord and King of this kingdom, as it is written, “For us there is . . . one Lord, Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 8:6), and again, “Tell ye the daughter of Zion, behold thy king cometh,” and again, “He shall be a king over the house of Jacob forever.”

4) Further, this kingdom is called a spiritual kingdom in contrast to the kingdoms of this world. For these kingdoms are concerned with material and external concerns; the kingdom of Christ, on the other hand, with the things of the soul. And, inasmuch as the physical things are temporal and corruptible, whereas the concerns of the soul are spiritual, the kingdoms that have to do with the former are also temporal and transient, while the kingdom of Christ is eternal and imperishable (Psalm 145:13). In addition, the kingdom of God is called the kingdom of heaven, or a heavenly kingdom, because heaven is its fulfillment. For, while it is also here on earth, it nevertheless exists not for this world but for heaven, is here only in commencement, is hidden under an outer manifestation of humbleness and infirmity, but will in heaven be revealed in all its undying splendor. As a net cast out from land into the sea and then drawn to shore with its catch, so the kingdom of God has gone out from heaven and returns to heaven with those whom it has gathered. For this reason we make differentiation between the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory, referring by the former to the kingdom of Christ as it appears here on earth and by the latter to the kingdom of Christ as it will be in heaven.

5) Finally, the kingdoms of this world are by their nature characterized by law and order—by the freedom and security of the life and property of their subjects—while the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost for them who belong to it.

The kingdoms of this world commend themselves to people, take root, and are established through various external laws and institutions, whereas the kingdom of God comes to us only through the gospel, which, because it proclaims the righteousness of Christ appropriated through faith without the works of the law, addresses peace to the conscience, imparting the Holy Spirit and filling the heart with joy and a glad confidence in God.

6) Thus one can see what a treasure and precious pearl this kingdom of God is in comparison to all the kingdoms of the earth and their glory. For if the kingdoms of the earth were to combine all of their strength, they could not erase a single sin or give a trembling conscience peace. They can only, with all their glory, lull sinners to sleep in their carnal security and maintain them in such a slumber. This is clearly seen by the fact that those who own most of what this world has to offer, such as riches, power, glory, etc., are the ones who slumber most securely in their sins. As also the Apostle Paul says, "Not many noble are called." But wherever the kingdom of God comes through the gospel and is accepted by the heart in faith, there sin is blotted out through the righteousness of God, which it proclaims, and one is made the child of God and the heir of heaven.

7) Therefore, they are truly poor who do not possess the kingdom of God. Whatever else they may own can at best only give them "peace and good days" here on earth, although experience shows that it is not the usual thing that those who possess most of power, riches, and honor are the happiest even in this life. But even if such were the case, they are nevertheless wretched, miserable, and poor. For death has no respect for their power, glory, and display, but snatches them away after a few years from all that which composed their happiness and pleasure, and places them before the judgment. And there it will not help them that they have left great riches or an honored and respected name behind them on earth, so that many bless their memory. Their end is an end with terror, with weeping and gnashing of teeth.

8) On the other hand, they are rich over all measure who have found the kingdom of God. To be sure, their lot here on earth may be difficult and hard, as the history of the kingdom of God and daily experience show us. But during it all they are possessors of such a treasure that not even the angels are able to fathom its unmeasurable greatness. For, beneath all outer infirmity and wretchedness, they bear within themselves the kingdom of God. In this they possess, as we have seen above by the word of the Apostle Paul, an eternal righteousness. This righteousness is also the essence and the foundation for the peace, joy, and bliss that

belong to the kingdom of God. For, inasmuch as it was through sin that we fell under the wrath of God and lost all the glory that was given us of God in creation, it is clear that where righteousness is renewed, there this glory must also be restored and all wrath be taken away. For, inasmuch as righteousness is the canceling of all sin, so through it must all that be nullified which followed with sin, and all that be regained which because of sin was lost.

9) But to be righteous in the sight of another is to appear to him as one who has not sinned. This can come about in two ways: either in that one never has offended him, or otherwise because the sin and the offense have been canceled, taken away, and forgiven. It is the same way with righteousness before God. Wherever anyone is free of offense toward him, there he is righteous before him, as the good angels are righteous and as our first parents were before the day of the fall. Such a righteousness can never be a matter of discussion for us, inasmuch as we already are born in sin and with sin. Therefore, no other way remains for us to righteousness but through reconciliation. That, every person knows in his conscience. Now the question remains as to the way to such reconciliation. And here, above all else, is revealed that the thoughts of God are higher than our thoughts, as heaven is higher than the earth.

10) If we take note of the heathen, who have only the light of nature in spiritual things, we find that they have the following things especially in common with what the Scriptures teach. First, they know that there is a God on whom they are dependent. Second, they know that the right relationship between them and this God is broken through sin. Third, they know that their happiness and salvation depend on the restoration of a right relationship. But from this point they go astray with their thoughts. For they know that they themselves, if anyone offends them, become bitter and full of hate against such a one and must be appeased by acts of atonement if the good relationship is to be restored, and they carry this over in their thinking about God, believing that the hindrance to their salvation lies in a certain mercilessness which because of their sin filled the heart of God, who must therefore be appeased if they are to be saved. For this reason even the heathen speak of atonement, but the kind of atonement that proceeds from man and that has as its purpose to reconcile and appease the unmerciful God.

11) Here comes now the kingdom of God in the gospel with another message, which brings to naught all human speculation and renders the wisdom of the wise foolishness, teaching (1) that through our fall no change has entered the heart of God, (2) that because of this it was no

severity or anger against man which through the fall rose up in the way of man's redemption, (3) that the change that occurred with the fall was a change in man alone, in that he became sinful and thus fell away from God and from the life which is in him, (4) that for this reason an atonement indeed is needed for man's salvation, not an act of atonement that appeases God and presents him as being once again gracious, but one that removes man's sin and makes him once again righteous, and (5) that this atonement is in Jesus Christ.

12) That through our fall into sin no change from love to wrath has entered the disposition of God towards man, we ought already to know, because the Scriptures everywhere attest that God is unchangeable. He remains the one he is, whether man rises or falls. But the Scriptures bear further witness to this by positive statements. So John says, "God is love," not only, "God loves." No indeed, he is love in all his eternal, unchangeable nature and can never cease being love without at the same time ceasing to be God. In the same way the Lord speaks of the basis for our atonement when he says, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." But if God loved the world, the lost world, so that for her salvation he offered up his own Son, then he must have loved it in spite of its fall, and then through its fall no change could have been effected in his heart.

13) Here someone is likely to reply: To be sure, God loved the world after its fall, but this he could do because he foresaw the sacrifice of his Son, which he himself in the foreknowledge of the fall of man had purposed to make. But here that is decisive which in all spiritual concerns and questions must be the principle thing: Where is this written? And further, when God beforehand saw the fall of man and for this reason resolved to give his Son, what was it that moved him to this decision? Was it anything but his love to this same man, which he already saw lying helpless because of his fall? In truth, here behind this eternal purpose we find this once again to be fundamental: God so loved the world. And here we must end, for to ask what the basis is for the love of God is to ask why God is God. God loved because he loved, and for this reason he gave his Son.

14) From this it is clear that the obstacle to the world's salvation never has been any enmity toward the world in the heart of God. Truly the Scripture testifies that through the world's fall an obstacle was laid for its salvation, in that a wall of separation was raised between it and God. But this obstacle and this wall never consisted in that wrath toward the world took possession of the heart of God. No, there the love remained

so constant and unchanged that even upon the fall of man there followed in the fullness of time the highest expression of love, namely, the giving of the only begotten Son. From this there follows also that the reconciliation, which was effected in the giving of the Son, never has as its purpose to reconcile or appease God. For how could he be reconciled who loved, and so loved that his heart broke of compassion towards the sinner?

15) But, says someone, what happens then to all that the Scriptures say about the wrath of God? Answer: concerning the wrath of God the Scriptures speak in two ways, that is to say, partly as a wrath because of sin, partly as a wrath over the sinner. As concerns the wrath of God because of sin, we realize that this cannot be taken away through Christ. God must hate sin, as long as he is the holy God. Wrath over sin is, so to speak, the reverse of love for righteousness. For where the latter is, there must also the former be. With reference to God's wrath over the sinner, this can only be spoken of in the sense that he who remains in sin is overtaken by the wrath of God over sin. And this situation again is not changed through the death of Christ. The wages of sin for the sinner who through unbelief remains in sin is even yet today the wrath of God and death; here also the clear words of the apostle hold true: For to set the mind on the flesh is death; if you live according to the flesh, you will die; what a man sows, that shall he also reap, etc. Where sin is, there the wrath of God is also unchanged, as surely as God is a righteous God. And to be saved from this wrath comes only by being justified from sin (Romans 5:9). But, as was said, this is essentially the wrath of God over sin and not over the sinner, just as a father's wrath over his child is not a wrath over the child but over its sin, and yet nevertheless is called anger towards the child because it strikes the child that sins. But so far as the person of the child is concerned, there is in his heart only a fervent love and compassion.

16) For this reason, the Scriptures do not say in a single place that it is God who through the death of Christ has been reconciled. God's wrath over sin could not be taken away, and God's relationship to sinful man is described by the Lord Christ thus: "God so loved the world that he gave his Son." Therefore, God's love is never presented in the Scriptures as the result of the Son's sacrifice, but as the cause and basis of it. It does not say: because God gave his Son, he could once again love the world. No. Because God loved the world, for this reason he gave his Son.

17) In contrast to this, man needed to be reconciled in order to be saved, that is, his sins had to be removed so that he would not everlastingly and irremediably be overtaken by the wrath of God, which abides

over sin. And for this purpose would the giving of the Son serve, as John says: "He is the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." Therefore, we must on the other hand be on guard against the heresy that the giving of the Son was merely an expression of God's love. Scripture clearly teaches that it was an atoning sacrifice. But note: It was not God who through this sacrifice was to be reconciled, but man who through the same was to be justified, which was essential if he was to be saved. For it was on his side, in his sin, that the obstacle lay. It was man alone, and not God, who on the day of the fall fell from goodness. It was he who became the enemy of God and departed from him, and not God who became man's enemy and departed from him. No, when man departed in enmity from God, God loved him to the extent that in Christ he sought him, not in order to remove his own anger, but man's sins. For when he gave his Son, it was not in order that he might find a person on whom he could slake his anger, in order to be able to love the world, but in order to find a person through whom he could save man, his fallen child, whom he still loved.

18) Otherwise God would become not our savior but the savior of God. Therefore, our Lord Jesus in his passion and suffering was not our substitute in order to take away the wrath of God, but God's representative to take away our sins, even though he is our substitute to the extent that it is our sins he bore, for us he suffered and became accursed. In his exaltation he is the representative of the Father for the sake of our justification. As it is written, God has exalted him in order to give repentance and forgiveness to Israel. When he came in the flesh, he came on God's behalf as his only begotten Son, sent of him to remove our sins; and when he returned to God, he returned in order that he might on behalf of God, as our brother, complete the work which he had received from the Father for our salvation.

19) If we take notice of the plain words of Scripture concerning the redemption of Christ, we find that it speaks only of the reconciliation of man. Thus it is written: "God hath reconciled us to himself" (2 Corinthians 5:18). "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19). "And you, who once were estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh" (Colossians 1:21f.). And in Ephesians 2:16 it is written that Christ has reconciled us to God through the cross. Also in Revelation 5:9 we read that Christ has redeemed us to God, not God to us. No, us, us, you, you—this is the concern of his work. It is we who in the blood of Christ have redemption, that is to say, forgive-

ness of sins, and not God who through the blood has been freed from his wrath. It does not say: God vented his wrath on him; not, behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the wrath of God. No, but much more: the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. Behold, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world (Isaiah 53, John 1:29). And in Romans 5 it does not say: as through the sin of one, Adam, God hath become angry, so he through the second Adam's obedience has again become gracious. But rather: "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous."

20) In short, there is not a single place in the New Testament that reverses this relationship so as to say that it is God who has been brought together with us, but everywhere it is we who have been brought together with God through the death of his Son, at a time when we were as yet at enmity with him. In Hebrews 8, where both covenants are considered, it is not said: "I shall be appeased by sinners," but rather: "I will be merciful toward their iniquities," which is immediately explained thus: "And I will remember their sins no more" (v. 12), which again is what Paul says: "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses."

21) If we now will turn to the teaching of the Old Testament in this matter, we will find neither in the one place nor the other, and least of all in the statements concerning the coming salvation through Christ, any mention of the reconciliation of God; but everywhere where atonement is spoken of, it is always a question of atonement for sin (Exodus 32:30, Leviticus 4:26, Daniel 9:24, etc.) or for sinners (Leviticus 4:20, 5:16, 6:7, Numbers 16:46, Psalm 49:8, Ezekiel 45:17) or else for something holy which through sin has become unclean (such as the sanctuary, Leviticus 16:16, or the altar, Leviticus 16:18, Ezekiel 43:22).

22) Most clearly of all, however, we see the great miracle of God's unchanging love to the world in the sacrifices, especially the atoning sacrifice. Concerning its significance—and note: its significance as a type of the sacrifice of the body of Christ—we read in Leviticus 16, first that the high priest shall make atonement for himself and for his house, and then that he shall make atonement for the holy place and for the tent of the meeting (v. 16) "because of the uncleanness of the people of Israel." Then he shall atone for the altar and hallow it from the uncleanness of the people of Israel—all with blood. When he has made an end of atoning for the holy place and the tent of meeting and the altar (v. 20), he shall present the live goat, lay both of his hands upon the head of him, and confess over him all the iniquities of the people of Israel and all their



transgressions, all their sins, and he shall put them upon the head of the goat. Then the goat shall be driven out into the wilderness and “shall bear all their iniquities upon him.” Listen. Not God’s wrath, no, but the sins of the people shall the goat remove. And what does God now say about this sacrifice? Answer: on this day shall atonement be made for you. Hear! Not my atonement, but your atonement—to cleanse you from all your sins; you shall be clean before the Lord. Hear: not so that I am appeased, but so that you may be cleansed from all your sins (v. 30). Can anything be more clearly spoken of the meaning of the atonement that is in Christ Jesus? Read also Hebrews 10:1-17.

23) This the Scripture witnesses everywhere, and never to the contrary. But behold now, such is the blindness of human nature that it never fastens in our hearts that God at the time of our fall remained unchanged in his love, that when the spirit of sonship fled from our hearts, nevertheless the spirit of fatherhood remained in his heart. It so far surpasses our natural understanding that we of necessity, because of our conscience, keep insisting that through our fall some disorder must have occurred in the heart of God. Yes, so deeply rooted in us is this view of God that, though he has shown the unchangeableness of his love toward us (Romans 5:8) and sent his Son to be an atonement for our sins, we nevertheless, when we fall into any sin, at once are fearful that the heart of God also must be full of anger towards us.

24) But, someone asks, has not the demand of God’s righteousness been satisfied through the work of Christ? In answer to this, Scripture teaches that salvation consists in a living communion of the soul with God. But since God is righteous, no such blessed fellowship is possible for sinful man, for to the sinner the righteousness of God is no blessing but a consuming fire. If, therefore, the sinner is to come into a blessed relationship with God, then just because God is righteous, the transgressor’s sin must be taken away and he be made righteous, as God is righteous. But in order that this shall come about, Christ must be made to be sin for our sake (2 Corinthians 5:21).

25) Thus it was just because of God’s righteousness that the removal of sin became a necessary condition for man’s salvation. And for this reason it can of course be said that through the work of Christ God’s righteousness has in a certain sense been satisfied—not as a demand of God’s righteousness for vengeance toward the sinner, because God still loved him, but as a demand for the justification of the sinner as a condition for his salvation. In the unchangeable love of his fatherhood, God willed the blessedness of man; but, because he was righteous, the sinner

could not, on account of his sin, become blessed. Now, in contrast, since the Son is given, is crucified and risen, this becomes possible, not in opposition to the righteousness of God, but in truth as a necessary result of God's righteousness, that the one who trusts in Christ becomes blessed, no matter how wretched he is in himself. For in this faith he is no longer a sinner, but righteous, and this he is through Christ. For wherever righteousness abides, there the righteousness of God is nothing but favor, life, and bliss, as surely as the same righteousness of God is nothing but anger, death, and condemnation where unrighteousness abides. As surely as God is righteous, he who believes on Jesus shall be saved. So complete a redemption do we have. Paul also shows us in Romans 3:25-26 that God has put forward Christ as an expiation to show the righteousness of God, both in that under the old covenant he was indulgent towards the sins then committed and in that he now justifies him who has faith in Jesus.

26) This is the character of that which occurred in the death and resurrection of Christ, and Scripture never calls this the reconciling of God, but always the reconciling of us. It was not anything in God's heart, but something in us that needed to be altered or removed. In short, there was no contradiction between God's righteousness and his love, but the contradiction that had to be resolved if we were to be saved lay between the righteousness of God and our sin. It was the love that was in the heart of God that provided the sacrifice that was necessary, not for his reconciliation with us, but for our reconciliation with him.

27) It is in this great work of God, which he has consummated through his only begotten Son, that the kingdom of God is established here on earth. And here in this sinful vale of tears there is now heralded abroad, according to the command of God, the gospel concerning this person and his work. In his name there is now preached the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, life, and eternal blessedness, and this for sinners of every kind, of all people and all tongues. For all are invited to Christ, and everyone is free to come. Let the one who wills come! Broken down through the blood of Christ's cross is the great wall of partition between us and God. It is abolished and leveled with the ground, and now there is prepared a free and open access to the Father, yea, a bold and confident access (Ephesians 2:18, 3:12). Let the one who wills come! But to come is nothing else than in simplicity of heart to put all faith in Christ Jesus, with full confidence to trust in him as the only true Savior. For everyone who believes on him has redemption in his blood, namely, the forgiveness of sins, life, and blessedness.

28) Here it is possible for sinners, as Paul says, to exclude themselves through unbelief. And then they are lost, not because Christ was not given or because God in anger over their sins willed their destruction. No, their ruin consists in that they, despite the fact that God loved, called, and invited them, nevertheless chose to remain away from his kingdom and from the righteousness and blessedness which he in Christ prepared even for them. They are lost children over whose misfortune the Father's heart breaks and for whose recovery he has given his most precious possession, but who, despite all this, would rather remain far off in their sins, where the wrath of God and eternal death abide, than to return home to inherit eternal life.

29) On the other hand, where the preaching of the gospel is embraced by the sinner, so that he in his heart believes and trusts therein, and in this faith, together with the prodigal son, arises and returns to his Father to confess his sins and "to reconcile himself with him," there he is sure to see how unchangeable is the heart of his father, how buried in forgetfulness are his sins, how broken down and destroyed are all the walls, gates, locks, and bolts because of which he formerly thought himself shut out from the Father's house. Indeed, then may he in his heart well say, Why did I not return before? And when I did come to my senses, why did I not run at once straight to my Father's open arms instead of pursuing such circuitous ways, groaning, cringing, and laboring with the works of the law to break down the wall of partition, which already was broken down; to open the gate which already was open; to appease the paternal heart, concerning whose wrath I had such fantasies although it was already overflowing with compassion for me, the unworthy and lost child? It is impossible to describe the blessedness of such a return, the sinner's glorious embarrassment and the joy of the Father and of his angels, the foulness of the sin and the purity of the robe of righteousness, the sinner's confession and the kiss of forgiveness, the unworthiness and the Father's embrace; in short, the prodigal son in such a circumstance that he suddenly finds himself justified by grace, pure grace, and so free from accusation that his sins are held no more against him forever. Truly, this is riches, this and nothing else.

30) And here the sinner may now abide forever without expense, believe without charge, and be God's beloved child for free, unalterably justified without cost through the action of another, in the midst of the feeling of his own unworthiness. And for how long? As long as he wills. And on what conditions? On this condition only: that he does not spurn such grace, but remains and dwells in simple faith with all his sins at

the cross of Jesus. But what if he sins? Then his sin is blotted out. But if he falls? Then the kingdom of God nevertheless stands. But if he departs in unbelief? Then the gate still remains open. But if he does not return? Then the heart of God breaks. But if he nevertheless stays away? Then he is lost. But if he will return? Then the Father will hasten to him, fall upon his neck and kiss him, and remember his sins against him no more.

31) Of such a character is this treasure that is called the kingdom of God. Consider then how pitiable they are who make it their aim to win that which belongs to this world, rather than to seek this treasure and this precious pearl! They journey through time with toil and trouble, dig themselves wells that give no water, are without God, without peace, without the true joy, the slaves of sin and of this world for a time, and the children of doom forever. And yet such a precious ransom was given also for them.

32) On the other hand, no one can describe how happy they are who, with our predecessors in the Scripture, let everything go that would hinder them and who, above all, seek the kingdom of God. On them there rests this abiding righteousness, as we have already said and as one cannot say too often, despite all their sins. Through this righteousness they have peace with God (Romans 5:1) and are set free from all wrath and judgment. For how could there be any wrath where perfect righteousness abides? As also Isaiah says: "The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (Isaiah 32:17). Through this righteousness they are God's elect children and heirs, and they shall never perish, but have everlasting life. Through this righteousness the Spirit of God abides in their hearts, helping their infirmity and making intercession for them with groanings that cannot be uttered (Romans 8:26), creating and maintaining within them a new holy and heavenly spirit through which they are engaged in the constant occupation of laying aside the old person and walking in newness of life, drawing their hearts more and more to heaven, filling them with joy in the certain hope of bliss—in brief, more and more preparing them for the glories of heaven, for which in Christ Jesus they are chosen of God and which through the righteousness of faith are their sure possession (Romans 4:13). And through such a work of the Spirit on their behalf, all must work together for the same purpose (Romans 8:28), even the troubles and tribulations that yet assail them (Romans 5:3ff., 2 Corinthians 4:17).

33) What a treasure is this not? Rejoice, then, always, all ye who have found the same. And you who stand and wonder where it is to be found,

you who have toiled and found nothing, why do you ascend to heaven to bring Christ down, or descend into the depths to bring Christ up from the dead? Is not the word nigh thee, the word of faith, the holy gospel? Search here—in this field! There is the treasure to be found, and the one who catches sight of the same has the right to take it for naught. But you who are loath to let go the world, your lusts and besetting sins, O that you might know to what your peace belongs! Why do you sow unto the flesh? What reward have you of that? The end of all this is death.

O Lord God, to thee be praise, that thou didst in thine only Son establish a kingdom on earth as a refuge for lost sinners. O Lord Jesus, to thee be praise for thy precious blood, which has erected for us this kingdom. O Holy Spirit, awaken in our hearts such a burning desire for this that nothing may hinder us from seeking first thy kingdom and its righteousness. Amen.