

Watchwords for the Warfare of Life, Part Second. Words For The Day's March. II. Special Graces



Continued from [Part Second. Words For The Day's March. I. The Leader](#)

Love, Humility, Forbearance, Gentleness, Goodness.

Love.

IT had been enough (in enumerating the fruits of the Spirit) to have said love, and no more; for love expandeth itself into all the fruits of the Spirit, when he saith, "Love is patient, courteous," &c.

Our love to our neighbors should be like a pure, chaste love between bride and bridegroom, by which all infirmities are veiled, covered, and made the best of, and only virtues looked at.

The law of Christ is the law of love. And to love is not merely to wish well one to another, but to bear one another's burdens, that is, to bear those things which are grievous unto thee, and which thou wouldst not willingly bear. Therefore Christians must have strong shoulders and powerful bones, that they may bear flesh, that is to say, the weakness of their brethren; for Paul says that they have burdens and troubles. Love is mild, patient, courteous.

How Luther bore the Burdens of others.

WHEN Doctor Sebald and his wife both died of the plague, and Dr. Martin Luther took their children home to his own house, many blamed him and said he was tempting God. "Ah!" he said, "I had fine masters who would have taught me what it is to tempt God."

Joy.

THIS is the Voice of the Bridegroom and the Bride; that is to say, sweet cogitations of Christ, wholesome exhortation, pleasant songs and psalms, praises and thanksgivings.

God loveth not heaviness and doubtfulness of spirit; He hateth discomfoting doctrine, heavy and sorrowful cogitations, and loveth cheerful hearts.

Joy and Fear.

DAVID says, "*Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice before Him with trembling.*" Let someone make this rhyme for me: "to rejoice" and "to fear."

My little son Hans can do this with me, but I cannot do it with God. For when I sit and write, or do anything, he sings a little song to me the while; and if he makes it too loud, and I tell him so, then he still sings on, but makes it softer, crowing on with a sweet little subdued voice, slyly watching me all the time. So would God have it with us, that we should be always rejoicing, yet with fear and reverence before Him.

Grace and Peace.

THESE two words, grace and peace, do contain in them the whole sum of Christianity. Grace containeth the remission of sins; peace, a quiet and joyful conscience.

When the grace and peace of God are in the heart, then is man strong, so that he can neither be cast down by adversity, nor puffed up by prosperity; but walketh on evenly, and keepeth the highway, and is able to bear and overcome all troubles, yea, even death itself; for in spirit he walketh in the paradise of grace and peace.

Humility.

LEARN OF ME.

NO one ever made himself so low and little as Christ, so that He alone has the right to say, "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart;" words which no Saint can venture to utter, nor ever more claim to himself the mastership in meekness and lowliness, All together they abide forever scholars under this Master.

The whole Gospel is nothing more than the history of this lowliest "Son of God," and of His humiliation.

BY His washing of the disciples' feet, the Lord Christ would show us that the kingdom which He was establishing should not be an outward, worldly kingdom, wherein there is respect of persons, one greater and higher than another, as in Moses' kingdom; but a kingdom wherein one should serve another by humility. "The greatest among you shall be as the youngest; and he that is chief among you as he that doth serve."

No man, if he were the gentlest and kindest in the world, could have such a gentle bearing as Christ had; for Christ is the Lamb of God, who beareth the sin of the world.

The Gentleness of Christ.

THERE is a legend of St. Peter, that he had always by him a cloth wherewith he wiped his eyes, which were often red with weeping. (And I can well believe it!) When he was asked why he wept, he said, "When he recalled that most sweet gentleness of Christ with His apostles, he could not restrain his tears." Christ must indeed have been perfect in kindness and tenderness. And even so and even such is he now daily with us, but we perceive it not.

The Silence of Christ.

CHRIST refrained from preaching and teaching until His thirtieth year, ever keeping silence, and suffering Himself not to be seen or heard in public. Throughout those years, what great and manifold impieties, idolatries, false religions, blasphemies, heresies, and schisms must He have seen. Yet He could refrain Himself until He was called to the office of the Prophet. This is much to be wondered at.

Luther Nothing in Himself.

MANY believe for my sake. But those only believe rightly who would remain steadfast in their faith, if they heard (which God forbid) that I had denied and apostatized. These believe not in Luther, but in Christ. The Word possesses them, and they possess the Word. Luther they can let go, be he a saint or a villain. God can speak as well through Balaam as through Isaiah, through Caiaphas as through Peter. Yea, He can speak by an ass.

I myself know nothing of Luther; will know nothing of him. I preach nothing of him; only of Christ. The devil may take Luther (if he can). If he leave Christ in peace, it will be well with us too.

So let us pray, before all things, that God may make His dear Child Jesus great in our hearts, from day to day, that with all eagerness and joy we may praise, bless, and confess *Him* before all.

Our God is the God of the low and the lowly. Power becomes strong in weakness; if we were not weak, we should be proud. It is only in weakness He can show His strength.

Humility the Secret of Unity.

TO MICHAEL DRESSEL AND THE AUGUSTINIAN CHAPTER AT NEUSTADT, 1516, 25
SEPTEMBER.

I HEAR with grief that though living in one house, you are living without peace and unity, neither are you of one heart and mind in the Lord. This miserable and useless way of living comes either from **the weakness of your humility** (emphasis mine) —for where humility is, there is peace—or from your and my fault, in that we do not entreat before the Lord who made us, that He will direct our way in His sight, and lead us in His righteousness. He errs, errs, errs, who by his own counsel presumes to direct himself, much more others. With humble prayer and devoted affection must we seek this from God.

There is peril in a life without peace, for it is without Christ, and is rather death than life.

ALL the works of God are embraced in the Magnificat (what Mary said to Elizabeth in Luke 1:46–55). If a thing exalts itself, it is nothing; and again, when it is at the lowest and lowliest, it is once more exalted. If the weak in faith did not belong to Christ, what would have become of the Apostles, whom the Lord, even after His resurrection, often had to rebuke for their unbelief. <\

Bearing one Another's Burdens.

Forgive because forgiven.

TO GEORGE SPENLEIN—I516.

FOR the rest, about which thy soul is concerned, I desire to know whether, wearied out with her own righteousness, she is learning to breathe and trust in the righteousness of Christ. For in this our age, this temptation to presumption waxes hot in many, and chiefly in those who are struggling with their whole might to be just and good.

Ignorant of the righteousness of God, which in Christ is freely and most generously bestowed upon us, they seek in themselves to do such good works that at last they may have confidence in standing before God, as if adorned with virtues and merits; which is impossible to be done.

When thou wert with us thou wert of this opinion, and in this error, and I also. But now contend against this error; not yet, however, have I overcome.

Therefore, my good brother, learn Christ, and Him crucified; learn to sing to Him, and despairing of thyself, to say to Him “Thou, Lord Jesus, art my righteousness, but I am Thy son. Thou hast taken on Thee what is mine, and Thou hast given to me what is Thine. Thou hast taken what Thou wast not, and given to me what I was not.”

Take heed lest thou aspire to such a purity as not to seem to thyself a sinner. For Christ dwells only in sinners. For this cause did He descend from heaven, where He dwells in the just, that He might also dwell in sinners,

Ruminate on that love of His, and thou shalt be conscious of most sweet consolation in thy soul.

For if by our labors and afflictions it is possible for us to reach quiet of conscience, for what did He die? Therefore, nowhere save in Him, by a confiding self-despair, wilt thou find peace; whilst thou learnest of Him, that as He has taken thee on Himself, and made thy sins His, so also has He made His righteousness thine.

If thou firmly believest this, as thou shouldst (and he who believes not is accursed), then do thou also take on thee thy undisciplined and erring

brethren, and patiently bear with them, making their sins thine own. And if thou hast anything good, let it be theirs. So teaches the apostle: *"Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God."* And again, *"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, emptied Himself."* So also thou, if thou seemest to thyself better than they, think it not robbery, or something meant for thyself alone, but *"empty thyself,"* and forget what thou art, and be as one of them, that thou mayest sustain them.

For miserable is that righteousness, which by comparison deeming others worse, will not bear with them, but meditates to fly and desert them, when by patience and prayer while present with them it might be profitable to them. This is to hide the Master's talent, and not give it, as due, to the usurers.

Therefore, if thou art a lily and a rose of Christ, since thine abode must be among thorns, seek and strive with a single heart for the welfare of others, lest by impatience and rash judgment, or by hidden pride, thou thyself become a thorn.

The kingdom of Christ is in the midst of His enemies, as saith the Psalm. Dost thou, then, imagine to thyself that thine shall be in the midst of friends?

Thus, whatever thou lackest, prostrate before the Lord Jesus, ask for it. He Himself will teach thee all things. Consider only what He has done for thee, and for all, that thou also mayest learn what is due from thee to others.

If He had willed to live only amongst the good, and to die for friends, for whom, I ask, would He have died, or with whom would He have lived?

Thus do, my brother, and pray for me, and the Lord be with thee.

WITTENBERG, 1516.

Thy Brother, MARTIN LUTHER, AUGUSTINIAN.

To the People of Wittenberg.

ON BEARING WITH THE WEAK.

CHRIST has borne our impotence in life and death. As Christ has done for us, we should do for our neighbor. He has borne our infirmities; so should we bear our neighbor's infirmities.

They have brought in these innovations in trivial things, and let faith and love go.

We have many weak brothers and sisters who dwell around us. These also must we take with us to heaven.

If Duke George and many others are angry and enraged with us, let us bear with them. It is possible that they may become better men than we are.

In these free things, we must nowhere insist; only, if our enemies insist on them as necessary things, we must resist.

Mark this emblem. The sun has light and heat. This light no kaiser nor king can quench. So also no one can quench the Word. But the heat we can flee, and go into the shade. Thus does Love, yielding to her neighbor, whenever needful.

The Incarnation the Bond between Men. 1521.

GOD has become man; nevermore, therefore, should we be enemies to any man. We should be ready to lay down life for each other. Who would hate or injure the image in body and soul of Him who is thy God?

Those who wrong us still our Neighbors.

EVERY man is my neighbor, who although he hath done me some wrong, or hurt me by any manner of way; yet notwithstanding, he hath not put off the nature of man, or ceased to be flesh and blood, and the creature of God most like unto myself. Briefly, he ceaseth not to be my neighbor. As long, then, as the nature of man remaineth, so long remaineth the commandment of love, which requireth at my hand that I should not despise mine own flesh, nor render evil for evil; but overcome evil with good, else shall love never be as Paul describeth it.

GOD forgives sins of pure grace for Christ's sake; but we must not abuse His grace and forgiveness. Our Lord God has given us many signs that sins shall be forgiven us, namely, the preaching of the Gospel, Baptism, the Sacrament, and the Holy Spirit in our heart.

Now, it is also needful that we give a sign to show that we have received forgiveness of sins. This sign is, that each of us forgive his brother his trespasses. Although, indeed, between God's forgiveness and ours there is no comparison. What are the hundred pence to the ten thousand talents?

But to this brotherly forgiveness it is essential that the brother whom I am to forgive should confess his sins; for sin which is not confessed, I cannot forgive. If my brother continues to wrong me, I must indeed suffer it, but I cannot forgive it, because he will not confess it.

Care for the Fallen.

TAKE care of this fallen brother of thine, yea, of ours. Nor do thou, averted from pity, abandon him who, subverted by impiety, abandoned thee. Let it not distress thee that ye suffer offense. To bear one another's burdens is that to which we are all called, baptized, ordained. For such has Christ been to us, such He is, such He will be forever; as it is written, "*Thou art a Priest forever.*"

Hope for the Fallen.—1516.

NO man hath so grievously fallen at any time, but he may rise again. And on the other hand, no man taketh so fast footing but he may fall. If Peter fell, I may likewise fall. If he rose again, I may also rise again.

A Child helping a Veteran.

GO to thy brother in hours of temptation. One alone is too weak to encounter the tempter. I am often glad of having even a child to speak to. This is so, in order that we may not glorify ourselves. Therefore at times I need and find help from one who has not as much theology in his whole person as I have in one finger, that I may learn what that meaneth, *"My strength is made perfect in weakness."*

OFTEN when I have lain under temptation, and have been in anguish, Philip Melancthon, or Dr. Pommer, or my own wife has comforted me with the Word of God, so that I came thereby into peace, and felt "God says this," because my brother said it.

I UNDERSTAND now that St. Paul was at times weak in faith, and when he went to Rome he was comforted when he saw that the brethren came to meet him.

Yielding for Peace sake.

IF two goats meet each other on a narrow path above a river, what will they do? They cannot turn back; they cannot pass each other; if they were to butt at each other, both would fall into the water and be drowned. What then will they do? Nature has taught them, one to lie-down, and let the other pass over it. Thus both are unhurt.

So should one man do to another; let himself be trodden under foot rather than quarrel and contend.

Toleration of Differences.

BY the Word alone I condemn. Let him who believes, believe and follow. Let him who believes not, not believe, and be dismissed. No man is to be constrained to faith and the things of faith, but to be drawn by the Word, that believing willingly, he may come spontaneously.

Cease to contend by violence for the Gospel. By the Word the world is overcome. By the Word the Church is preserved, and by the Word she is restored.

CHRISTIAN freedom is no trifle, although it may concern a trifle.

I KNOW, I know it must be that offenses come; neither is it a miracle for man to fall. The miracle is for man to rise again and stand upright. Peter fell that he might know himself to be a man. To-day also the cedars of Lebanon fall, whose tops touch the heavens. Nay (which surpasses all wonders), an angel fell in heaven, and Adam in Paradise.

What wonder then if a reed is shaken with the wind, and the smoking flax is quenched? The Lord Jesus teach thee, and work with thee, and finish the good work.

Thankfulness.

How God gives.

IF God refused us for a time the use of His creatures; if He once withheld the sun from shining, at another time imprisoned the air, or again dried up the waters, or quenched the fire, then we would indeed eagerly give all our money, and everything we possessed, to have once more the use of these creatures.

But because He lavishes His gifts and riches on us so freely and so abundantly, we claim them as a right. Thus the unspeakably great abundance of His countless benefits hinders and darkens our faith.

Constancy of God's Gifts leading to Ingratitude.

GOD gives sun and moon and stars and elements, fire and water, air and earth, and all creatures, body and soul, and all kinds of nourishment, in fruits, grain, corn, wine, and all that is needful and useful to preserve his temporal life.

And, besides, He gives us His good Word; yes, Himself.

What return is rendered to Him? Nothing else, but that He is blasphemed, and set at naught; yea, His dear Son grievously scorned, mocked, and hung on the cross; and His servants plagued, hunted down, and slain. This is our gratitude to Him for having created, redeemed, nourished, and preserved us.

IF God were to say to the Pope, the Emperor, kings, princes, bishops, doctors, rich merchants, burghers, and farmers, "Thou shalt die this very day, unless thou give Me a hundred thousand florins," every one would say, "Yes, with all my heart, if I may only live."

But now we are such thankless creatures, that we scarce sing Him a *Deo gratias* (thank God) for the many and great benefits which we daily receive abundantly from His pure goodness and mercy.

Nevertheless, the gracious Father is not estranged by this, but is ever doing us good. If He stinted his gifts, instead of lavishing and showering them on us, we should thank Him more. For instance: if we were all born with one leg or foot, and only in our seventh year received the second leg; at fourteen one hand, at twenty a second, we might recognize more the worth of the gifts for a time withheld, and be more thankful.

WE are so shamefully perverse that we are unthankful for our present gifts and goods, and only think of little deficiencies. Let every one go home and count the gifts which he has; he will find far more gifts than deficiencies; and let him thank God for them.

To be used with Thanksgiving.

WHEN grapes, nuts, peaches, etc., were set on the table after the meal, and all were enjoying them, he said: "What does our Lord God on high, in heaven, say to our sitting here consuming His gifts? Verily for this purpose He created them, that we should use them; and He asks nothing from us but that we should acknowledge they are His gifts, and enjoy them with thanksgiving."

Two Sacrifices.

THE Scriptures point out two sacrifices which are well-pleasing to God. The first they call the sacrifice of praise, when we teach or hear God's Word with faith, and confess and spread it, and thank Him from our hearts for all the unspeakable gifts so richly given us in Christ. "He who offereth praise, he honoreth Me."

The other sacrifice is when an agonized, troubled heart takes refuge with God, seeks help from Him, and patiently waits for it. "The sacrifices of God are a troubled spirit. A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."

The Church a Choir of Praise.

GOD has created all creatures, and nourishes and preserves them freely, out of pure goodness. But the little flock, dear Christendom, says Him a *Deo Gratias* for it.

On Giving and Communicating.

EVERY Christian has the priest's office, and does priestly work.

LET us be liberal and bountiful towards all men, and that without weariness. For it is an easy thing for a man to do good once or twice, but to continue, and not to be discouraged through the ingratitude and perverseness of those to whom he hath done good, that is very hard. Therefore he doth not only exhort us to do good, but also not to be weary in doing good.

And to persuade us he addeth: "For in due season we shall reap if we faint not." As if he said, "Wait and look for the eternal harvest that is to come, and then no ingratitude or perverse dealing of men shall be able to pluck you away from well-doing; for in the harvest-time ye shall receive most plentiful increase and fruit of your seed." Thus, with most sweet words, he exhorteth the faithful to the doing of good works.

Date and Dabitur.

THERE was once a convent, which while it gave freely was rich, but when it became weary of giving it grew poor. Now, once upon a time one came to this

convent and asked an alms, but they refused him. Then the beggar inquired why they would not give anything to him for God's sake? The porter replied, "We are poor." Thereupon the beggar said, "The cause of your poverty is, that once you had two brothers in the convent, but one of these ye have cast out, and the other has secretly crept after him, and is gone too. For when Brother Date is set at naught, then *Brother Dabatur* also departs.<

Hoping for Nothing again.

A PERSON was once excusing himself by saying "he would gladly help and serve people, and do them good, but their ingratitude repelled him."

Then Dr. Martin Luther said, "Benefits and kindnesses should be conferred secretly, not with a view to fame; quietly and without seeking our own enjoyment, for God's sake, and for our neighbor's good."

THERE are three kinds of alms: first, that we give something towards the maintenance of the office of the preacher. Secondly, to relieve our poor friends and kindred. Thirdly, to help strangers, and those who live near us, or any who need our aid, and cannot live without the help of others.

THE noble Word brings naturally with it a burning hunger and an insatiable thirst, so that we cannot be satisfied even if thousands believe in it, but still long that no human creature may lack it.

Such a thirst suffers us not to rest, but impels us to speak (as David says, "I believed, therefore have I spoken." And St. Paul, "We having received the same spirit of faith, therefore we also speak"), until we would press the whole world to our hearts, and incorporate every one with us, and make, if possible, one Bread and one Body of all.

But not only does this thirst fall short of its longings; men still it with gall and vinegar, as with Christ on the cross.

Such a thirst had St. Paul when he wished that "every one were even as he, except these bonds;" when he wished to be "banished from Christ for his brethren's sake."

Such a thirst for the salvation of your brethren have ye now received, sure token of a faith sound at the root. What remains then but that ye also must await the vinegar and the gall? That is, calumny, shame, persecution, as the reward of this your Christian speaking.

How Luther gave.

TO HIS WIFE, ON A SERVANT LEAVING THEIR SERVICE.

SINCE Johannes is going away, I will do all I can that he may leave me well cared for. For thou knowest how faithfully and diligently he has served, and truly demeaned himself humbly, according to the Gospel, and has done and suffered all things.

Therefore think how often we have given gifts to good-for-nothing people, and

to ungrateful students, on whom all was wasted; so look around thee now, and see that such a good fellow lacks nothing; for thou knowest it will be well spent and pleasing to God.

I know well there is but little to spare; but I would gladly give him ten florins if I had them. Less than five florins thou must not give him, for he has no stock of clothes. What thou canst give more, give, I pray thee. The common fund might present something for my sake to such a servant of mine, seeing that I have to keep my servants at my own cost, for the service and use of their church. But as they will. At all events be thou sure not to fail, as long as there is a silver tankard left. Think how thou canst provide it. God will surely give us more; that I know.

AGAIN, "To him who gives willingly it shall be given." Therefore, dear Kathe, when we have no more money, we must give the silver tankards (a form of drinkware consisting of a large, roughly cylindrical, drinking cup with a single handle).

DOCTOR MARTIN LUTHER went once, with Dr. Jonas, Master Veit Dietrich, and others of his guests, to walk in the little town of Tessen, There Doctor Martin Luther gave alms to the poor. Then Dr. Jonas also gave something, and said, "Who knows when God will repay me?" Thereupon Dr. Martin Luther said, laughing, "Just as if God had not first given it to you. Freely and simply should we give, from mere love, willingly."

Luther's Theology in his Seal.

TO LAZARUS SPENGLER.

SINCE you wish to know about the device for my seal, I will send you my first thoughts, which I would have my seal express, as a sign and token of my theology.

First, there shall be a cross, black, in a heart which shall have its natural color, that thereby I may remind myself that faith in the Crucified saves us. For if a man believes from the heart he is justified.

But although it is a *black cross*, because it mortifies, and must also cause pain, yet it leaves the heart its own color; that is, destroying not its nature; not killing, but preserving alive. For the just shall live by faith, but by the faith of the Crucified.

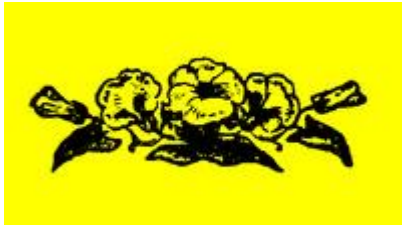
Moreover, this heart shall be set in the midst of a white rose, to show that faith gives joy, consolation, and peace, and sets the heart as in a white festive rose. Yet not as the world gives peace and joy; therefore shall the rose be white, and not red. For white is the color of angels and of spirits.

The rose is set in a sky-blue field; because such joy in the spirit and in faith is a beginning of the heavenly future joy—is indeed enfolded therein, and embraced by hope, but not yet manifest.

And in this field shall be a golden ring, because this blessedness endures eternally in heaven, and has no end, and is precious above all joy and all

riches, as gold is the highest and most precious of metals.

Christ, our dear Lord, be with your spirit until that life. Amen.



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