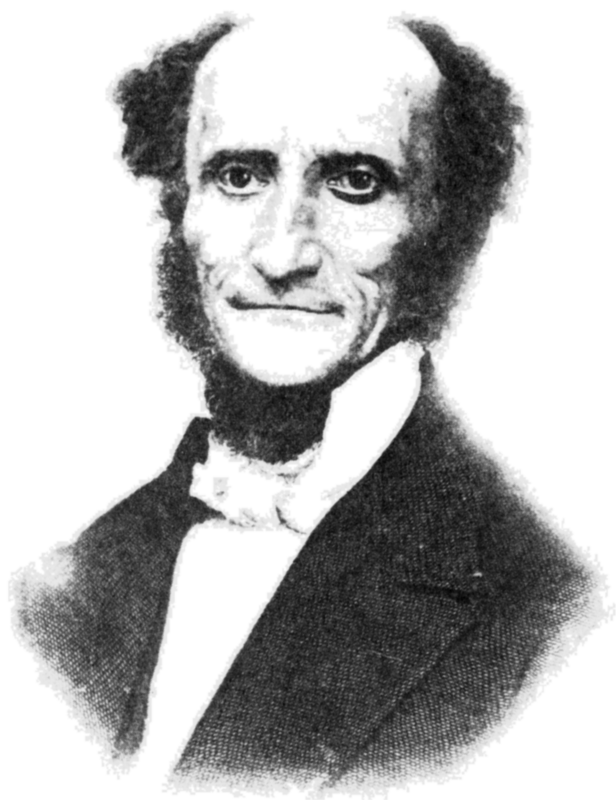


Selected Sermons



**SELECTED WRITINGS
OF C.F.W. WALTHER**

Selected Sermons

Henry J. Eggold, Translator
Aug. R. Suelflow, Series Editor



Publishing House
St. Louis

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Concordia Publishing House
3558 South Jefferson
Saint Louis, Missouri 63118

Manufactured in the United States of America

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 WP 90 89 88 87 86 85 84 83 82 81

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Walther, C. F. W. (Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm), 1811-1887.

Selected sermons.

(Selected writings of C. F. W. Walther)

1. Lutheran Church—Sermons. 2. Sermons, English—Translations from German.
3. Sermons, German—Translations into English. I. Title. II. Series: Walther, C. F. W.
(Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm), 1811-1887. Selections. English. 1981.

BX8066.W3S47213

252'.041322

81-3097

ISBN 0-570-08276-5

AACR2



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Introduction

It is an ambitious project to permit C. F. W. Walther (1811—87) to address English readers. Efforts to do so have occurred in the past from time to time. But this English edition constitutes one of the most significant contributions made to the study of the theology of Lutheranism in America within past years. The stereotype of Walther heretofore imposed upon him by those who were unable to read his German writings will now be significantly altered! It is to be regretted that a rich treasury of many other works from Walther's pen still await a future project.

Dr. Henry E. Jacobs (1844—1932), late president of Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Pa., said of Walther:

He is as orthodox as John Gerhard, but as fervent as a pietist, as correct in form as a university or court preacher, and yet as popular as Luther himself. If the Lutheran Church will bring its doctrines again to the people, it must be as faithful and as definite in its doctrine and as interesting and thoroughly adapted to the times in form, as is the case in Walther. He is a model preacher in the Lutheran Church ("Dr. Walther as a Preacher," *Lutheran Church Review*, III [October 1889], 319).

In each of the volumes a special effort was made to select the most significant and relevant materials and to have Walther speak contemporary English. We have further endeavored, wherever possible, to quote from the American Edition of *Luther's Works* and to utilize the Revised Standard Version of the Bible for Scriptural references. Quotations from the Lutheran Confessions were keyed to the Tappert edition of the *Book of Concord*. It was helpful to be able to consult some resources which Walther had in his own library.

Walther was an exceedingly involved church leader. A founding father of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, he served as its first president 1847—50 and 1864—78. He was Concordia Seminary's (St. Louis) foremost instructor from 1849 until his death in 1887, and served as its president 1850—87.

His concern for Lutheran unity is demonstrative. He conceived the "Free Conferences" in the aftermath of the confessional crisis in 1855. Later, in 1872, he was elected the first president of a new pan-Lutheran federation, the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference.

The project to translate Walther into English received support from The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in 1962, when a special committee was formed. When funds were not available, the project was transferred to Concordia Publishing House. It has now become a pioneer in publishing both Luther's and Walther's select works in English.

Walther's classic *Law and Gospel*, generally considered one of the most important books produced within American Lutheranism, deserves a volume of its own. In it we see him as theological professor, with his students gathered around him.

Another volume acquaints us with Walther the preacher. He made a great impact on his hearers, and much of his sermonic and homiletical material was published in German during his lifetime and in the years following his death. In spite of this, several thousand sermon manuscripts still remain untouched.

In a further volume we see Walther the convention essayist. None of these essays, presented to Western District conventions between 1873 and 1886, with their ever-recurring theme "To God All Glory!" have seen the English light of day until now.

Of particular importance were Walther's writings on the church, and one of our volumes brings a condensation of these. *Church and Ministry* (1852), *The Proper Form* (1863), and *The True Visible Church* (1866) give the theological foundation for the Missouri Synod's strong emphasis on the congregation and on lay involvement.

We include a volume of Walther's correspondence. It lets us see him in his intense and complex relationships with many different people. Concordia Historical Institute, with funds provided by the Aid Association for Lutherans, has in recent years transcribed several hundred original *Fraktur* letters. Only a few have been published in English heretofore, and we too can bring only a selection.

Finally we take a look at Walther the editor—one of his most important functions. Through *Lehre und Wehre* (from which we bring articles never before presented in English) and *Der Lutheraner* Walther exerted a strong influence toward orthodox Lutheranism.

The translators of this edition hope that readers and users will develop a new appreciation for this 19th-century hero of faith, but above all, that Walther, as the preceptor of Luther in America, will direct the readers to the very cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, his and our only hope.

Aug. R. Suelflow, *Series Editor*



Translator's Preface

Walther, the preacher, represents a synthesis of Orthodoxy and Pietism. He entered the scene at a time when the two forces of Orthodoxy and Pietism joined forces in opposing Rationalism. Moreover, Walther himself imbibed something of the spirit of each in his formative years.

That he was influenced by Orthodoxy, Walther would be the first to admit, and with a great deal of pride, too. Moreover, his sermons bear the marks of the influence of Orthodoxy. Walther builds his theology on the three *solas*: *sola Scriptura*, *sola gratia*, and *sola fide*.

Each of these is an affirmation of Orthodoxy and, at the same time, a repudiation of Pietism. Walther proclaimed Scripture alone as opposed to feeling; grace alone against the notion that one must himself establish a degree of contrition; faith alone against any thought of the merit of one's conduct before, in, or after conversion.

But Pietism left its mark on Walther too, for good and for ill. He learned from the Pietists to accent experience, but he purified that accent. In Pietism experience was viewed in terms of autosuggestion. Walther's experience is that of a sinner under the influence of Law and Gospel. Again, Walther never lost Pietism's concern for making religion something personal, a matter of heart and life. His sermons, though strongly didactic, are nevertheless personal, intended to awaken and strengthen faith and love in the heart. So intensely does he feel that Christianity is a matter of the personal relationship between a Christian and Christ that he at times employs mystical imagery to describe this blissful relationship. Moreover, he consistently emphasizes that the end of justification is the new life. Avoiding Pietism's weakness of mixing sanctification and justification, Walther always emphasizes that a genuine faith is active in love. Where there is no love, there is no faith; where no faith, no grace; where no grace, no salvation. A cold, intellectual affirmation can never pass for saving faith.

A critical appraisal of Walther's sermons will not cause one to close his eyes to the influence of Pietism which introduced faults into Walther's preaching, namely his tinge of legalism and his occasional advice to the terrified sinner to pray for grace without directing him to the Gospel.

Summing up the twofold influence of Orthodoxy and Pietism in

Walther's preaching, it is probably safe to say that Orthodoxy provided the content for Walther's sermons and Pietism gave them their practical bent. The one gave the sermons substance and a solid basis; the other provided their direction.

As to form, Walther's sermons are more goal-centered than text-centered. The text suggests the theme for Walther, but from that moment on the theme is the master of the sermon. His sermon divisions are taken from the theme, but not necessarily from the text. As a result, Walther has sermons which are quite textual and others which use the text only as a point of departure.

As a stylist, Walther does credit to the great age of German literature. His sermons bear the marks of painstaking care in their exactness and beauty of style. But Walther's main asset is his ability to maintain unity of subject, goal, and mood. Here he demonstrates his consummate artistry.

But the chief legacy which Walther has left us is his view of the sermon as a confrontation of man by God in His justice and mercy. His sermons leave one with the unmistakable impression that one has been in the holy of holies. There he has seen God, the God of Sinai and the God of Golgotha, the God of awful justice and the God of infinite mercy.

The sermons of this volume are intended to give a panoramic view of Walther's preaching. Some, like the sermon on predestination, are strongly didactic. Others emphasize God's grace in justification and conversion, as well as the Christian's responsibility to live the new life. Sermons like the funeral sermon, the wedding address, and the Palm Sunday confirmation sermon evidence the warmth of Walther's love for people.

My thanks to my wife Madalene for typing the manuscript.

Henry J. Eggold



SERMONS FOR THE CHURCH YEAR

First Sunday in Advent, 1842

Matthew 21:1-9

The Gracious Entrance of Christ the Heavenly King into the Temple of the Human Heart

(Festklaenge, pp. 1—11)

O Jesus, in Your name we today again enter upon a new church year and with heart and mouth praise Your mercy which during the past year You have shown our souls. But where shall we seek and ask for new help and grace for the new year except from You? Ah, Lord, what would it help us to live longer if Your grace were not with us? Without Your grace our life would be a death, the earth a hell. Therefore we pray You as once Your servant Moses did: "Lead us not where Your face will not go before us." Let Your glory go before us. Send us also in the new year Your Word and Sacrament pure and clean and let it at all times be a power in us; through these means preserve in us always a repentant heart which ever realizes and feels its sin and unworthiness with remorse and pain, so that we may steadfastly comfort ourselves in Your grace. Whatever in the past year has remained in a state of sin, through Your Word transform into a state of grace in the new year. O Lord, come, come into our hearts and make Your dwelling place in our souls, also those of our children; be and remain the One who pities us in time and eternity. We hope in You, let us not be put to shame. O Lord, hear; O Lord, help and let things turn out well. Amen. Amen.

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus!

A short time ago we still hoped that on this first day of the new church year we would be in our own house of the Lord to bring to God the first

offering of our praise and thanks. Our hope was not realized; also today we have had to assemble here as guests and foreigners.

As sad as this may make us on the one hand, let us surely not in contemptuous ingratitude forget what great blessings of God we enjoy, that in spite of the delay, we have not had to interrupt our worship together. Oh, what faithfulness of our heavenly Leader it is that this shelter which belongs to others has remained friendly and open to us for so long, until the doors of our own church open to us. Oh, what would we perhaps now be if a hospitable reception from benefactors who are strangers had not made it possible for us Sunday after Sunday to unite in hearing the Word of God, in our use of the holy sacraments together, and in our common prayers? How many of us would perhaps have gone over to the world or embraced one of the enthusiastic sects! Was not the public worship held here the chief bond which held us together and bound us to the public confession of our faith? Yes, the memory of the benefits we have enjoyed here must be indelibly written and remain in our thankful hearts.

Yet, my beloved, we know from God's Word that nothing, not even the least thing, happens by chance. We would, therefore, certainly not judge in a Christian way if we ascribed the delay in our church dedication to blind fate, and wanted to look only at human causes. No, the God who according to His eternal wisdom guides the whole enterprise to its goal by directing each detail, God, without whose will no sparrow falls from a roof and no hair from one's head—He it is who with this delay surely has His holy and wise purposes for the salvation of our souls.

If I wanted to share with you my Christian reflections about the delay, they are these: We were not permitted today, as we hoped, to enter our own house of God so that we first might have a living, godly reminder that we are in no way worthy of this great blessing. We were not permitted to enter it today so that we could first examine ourselves and ask: Have we diligently, earnestly, humbly and believingly called upon God for the successful completion of this building project which is so important for us? Yes, just believe it, no person is more to blame for the delay than the one who has been negligent in prayer. Furthermore, we were not permitted to gather there today, as we hoped, so that we first might realize all the better what a great blessing this is, so that this good may become still more dear to us. It is also furthermore true that an unexpected delay has occurred so that we may realize well that our church building is not our work, so that the truth may once more be laid upon our heart which we considered at our cornerstone laying: "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain."

Yet, finally, my beloved, another reason above all hovers before my

soul, one which I find in the meaning of this day. Today we are celebrating the entry of Christ into Jerusalem; say, why could we not therefore with our songs to the entering King of heaven cry Hosanna in our newly built church? I think Christ wants to say to us that He wants to enter, not that stone house but rather the little church in our hearts; as St. Paul writes to the Corinthians: “For God’s temple is holy, and that temple you are.”

Oh, let us therefore, as an eternally salutary preparation for the dedication of our visible house of God, today first conduct the dedication of our hearts. May Jesus Christ to this end give us the light and power of His grace.

Text: Matthew 21:1-9

On the basis of the Gospel lesson for today, just read, consider with me:

The Gracious Entrance of Christ the Heavenly King into the Temple of the Human Heart

We shall consider:

1. *how this entrance was brought about;*
2. *who may hold himself in readiness for this entrance;*
3. *what Christ in His entrance brings with Him; and finally*
4. *how a person must festively adorn and celebrate this entrance.*

O Jesus, we are assembled here today for the last time, so we pray You now for Your last blessing. Ah, if there is one who perhaps until now has not been blessed here, lay hold of him with Your grace even in this last hour. We know that conversion is not our work but Yours—so turn us, and we shall be turned; help us, and we are helped. Even today take a great catch with the net of Your Gospel, that we all, all may be Your blessed captives. Ah, Lord, deny us not this last prayer here, for the sake of Your faithfulness. Amen.

I

My hearers, no one can someday enter the heavenly Jerusalem into whose heart Christ has not already here made His gracious entry. He Himself says: “If a man does not abide in Me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned.” And St. Paul says: “Anyone who does not have the spirit of Christ does not belong to Him.” And in another place the same apostle therefore confesses: “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” Christ’s entry into Jerusalem is a visible picture of this necessary entrance

of the heavenly King into the temple of the human heart; and our text sets forth, first of all, how that is worked and brought about.

What did the city of Jerusalem do to prompt Christ to enter it? Nothing; without the desire or the calling of its inhabitants, He came; and when some came to meet Him, he had already begun His entrance. Christ made the first arrangement when He sent His disciples to bring an ass and a colt so that riding upon them He might make His entry into the city of David.

O man, do you ask: "What shall I do that this noble guest may come also to me? What gates of honor shall I build that through them He may make His entry? How shall I make ready the house of my heart that the King of heaven may have the desire to enter it? Where is material for a bed to which I can invite the heavenly Wanderer so He can take His rest?" If you ask that, then know that if a person had to make the beginning for the entrance of Christ into his heart, it would never happen; if a person had to lay the first stone for the little church for Christ in his heart, it would forever remain unbuilt. Man has nothing with which he can prepare a suitable refuge for Christ. Before Christ comes into our heart, all our thinking is only sinful; our willing only sinful; our speaking, our doing, our beginnings are only sinful.

How? Do you say "I can indeed pray that Christ come into my heart"?—No, O man, before Christ has already come to you, you cannot pray, for we are all by nature dead in sin. But if you begin genuinely, with heartfelt desire, to ask: "O come, my Savior!" then He has already come. The inner longing of your heart after Him is a sign that you have tasted of His grace; for that very reason you hunger and thirst after Him. If in your room you begin to cry: "Hosanna to the Son of David!" that is, "Lord, help the Son of David; let Him win also my heart for His kingdom," then Christ has already entered the door of your heart.

Yes, my beloved, not we but Christ Himself initiated His entrance; not we, Christ made the beginning; we do not seek Christ; He seeks us; we do not find Christ, He finds us. O man, you do not come to Him, but it says: "*Behold, your King is coming to you.*" Everything we ourselves want to contribute to Christ's entry is in vain. Before anyone was created and before we could ask Him, He of His own free will resolved already in eternity to dwell among us in order to save us sinners. When the fallen Adam had forsaken God and did not want to return, but fled from God, God's Son again made the beginning and followed him and called: "Adam, where are you?" Of His own free will Christ came also to miserable Bethlehem. Freely and uncommanded He finally came also to Jerusalem in the days of His last redemptive suffering. So He also comes, freely and

uncommanded, to the doors of our hearts. Ah, if Christ first came when we sought Him, He would not come to us in all eternity.

But you ask: "By what means does He come to us today without any activity on our part?" By no other means than He used once to enter the city of David; namely, He sends His apostles, that is, His holy Word and sacrament. The Word of God is always calling: "*Behold, your King is coming!*" and the holy sacraments are the visible, effective signs of His most holy presence. Whenever a person is baptized, the King of heaven enters his heart. As often as God's Word is preached, Christ makes ready to enter the souls of the hearers; the church in which the Gospel resounds is changed into a Jerusalem; every word which you there let enter your heart is a step farther which Christ takes to your hearts; as often as through the Law you are convicted of your sins and are led to despair of yourselves, the bolts fall from the closed doors of your soul; and as often as, by the preaching of grace, you are moved, softly enticed, and stimulated, Christ steps across the threshold of your being. As often as you receive the Lord's Supper, Christ enters the shelter of your heart. Therefore, whoever has the Word of God and the holy sacraments does not fail to have Christ come to him, for He comes with every word.

The failure is only that the majority do not receive Him. Christ desires nothing of us except that we just hear His Word, take it to heart, through it be persuaded of our sin and of His grace, and that we do not push Him aside. Then He will in grace unite us with Himself. Oh, what can be more fearful than this, that a person either does not hear God's Word, or if he does hear it, does not receive it with a willing heart, does not let it work in his soul, but resists the Holy Spirit! Such a person does nothing else to prevent Christ from entering his poor, sinful heart.

I fear that this has happened with many of us in the past church year: The seed of the Word fell either on the footpath of an indifferent heart; or on the stony ground of a hard, unbroken soul; or, probably most frequently, among the thorns of the riches or cares or lusts of this life. O you unfortunate people, I proclaim to you the Word of Jesus Christ according to the grace which has been given me; how will you excuse yourselves before God when you die without having Jesus in your heart? Ah, I plead with you for the sake of the blood shed for you on the cross, open not only your ears to the Word of God, but open also your hearts, that Jesus Christ may come to you and eternally, eternally make His dwelling place with you.

But dare all of us also in the new church year hold ourselves in readiness for His entrance? Let me, in the second place, answer this question.

II

The entrance of Christ into Jerusalem was, as we heard, a picture of His entrance into the human heart. Of the former we are told: "*This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying 'Tell the daughter of Zion, Behold, your King is coming to you, humble, and mounted on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of an ass.'*" The prophet Zechariah says: "*Tell the daughter of Zion.*" "The daughter of Zion" refers, to be sure, in the first place to the Israelite church. Zion was a mountain, on which was built not only David's castle but, at its side, also the temple. Because the Israelites honored this place as their spiritual home and embraced it with a love like that for a mother, they were all called the daughter of Zion. Christendom now in the New Testament is also called that; its Zion is the church, which it embraces with a daughter's love as its spiritual mother.

If we consider more closely the place cited in the prophet, we find that under the phrase "daughter of Zion" more is to be understood than Christendom. For Zechariah says immediately following: "And He shall command peace to the nations; His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth."

From this we see that the daughter of Zion includes all people of all times, zones, and lands, for whom the King of heaven came into this world. Evangelical preachers are to call to all of these: "*Behold, your King is coming.*" Without a doubt it was for this very reason that Christ chose the Eastertide for His entry, when an astounding throng of Jews and heathen were gathered in Jerusalem. We hear also in the Gospel of John that heathen Greeks took notice and laid before an apostle the request: "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." For no other reason Christ now did not enter in an unnoticed, quiet manner but with a great sensation, so that no one would be left who had not heard about Him, so that young and old, poor and rich, the high and the lowly would notice Him and ask: "Who is He?" so that they could hear the answer: "*Behold, your King is coming to you.*"

See from this, my beloved, the divine instruction we evangelical preachers have. Whoever asks us today or throughout the whole year: "Who should hold himself in readiness for the entrance of the King of heaven? to whom does He come?" we should always answer: "*Behold, your King is coming to you.*" Yes, to you, O man, who ask. Yes, if today I could approach each one of you, I would, unasked, say to each one of you: "See, my brother, see, my sister, today your King comes also to you; He wants to enter also your heart. Oh, open it! Do not say: "I am not worthy to have Him come under my roof." Indeed, you are not worthy, but it is your King's will to come into the lowly, dark, unclean hut of your heart. Oh, only believe it; then He gladly is and remains the Guest of your soul.

But you who harbor in your heart the wealth, the vanities, the honors, the lusts of the world, ah, sin, ah, Satan, you who until now have granted no place to your King, do not say also today: "I have no room for Jesus." How? Would you rather let the ruler of darkness live in you than the King of heaven? Oh, throw them out, those shameful guests, and say: "Come in, O blessed of the Lord, why do You stand outside?" [Here Walther inserts a hymn verse.]

Yet, my friends, is it something so precious to have this Guest in your hearts? Yes, yes; hear therefore, in the third place, what Christ in His entrance brings with Him.

III

In our text we read: "*He comes to you, humble.*" From this the daughter of Zion is to observe: Although Christ is the great King of heaven, yet there is nothing frightening, nothing fearful, nothing threatening about Him when He is on the way to our hearts; He does not come in the splendor and majesty of His righteousness and holiness. When He entered Jerusalem, He did not come riding on a snorting cavalry horse, not with armed soldiers, not with powerful artillery, as a frightening world conqueror, but meek, full of love, humble, riding upon an ass, accompanied by His dear disciples, escorted by the simple people and surrounded by a group of children; in such a loving way He also draws near to the gate of our poor, sinful heart.

And what does He bring? First of all, He says: "*Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find an ass tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to Me.*" Here we see how Christ finds us all when He comes, namely, bound with the bands of sin, death, and God's disfavor. Christ's advent in our souls releases us from all these; He brings us forgiveness of all our guilt and freedom from God's wrath and all His punishments. When Christ enters, everything damning leaves, and lovingly, like the morning sun, God's fatherly countenance rises over us.

Yet, the gift of Christ is twofold: First He gives us freedom from evil, and then He gives us Himself. The person in whom Jesus dwells can then say: "What belongs to Jesus belongs also to me; His righteousness is mine, His holiness is mine, His life is mine, His suffering and death are mine, His sonship is mine, His glory, His salvation, His heaven are mine. Hallelujah!"

Therefore St. Paul says: "Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God.—Who shall bring any charge against God's

elect? It is God who justifies; who is to condemn? Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us?"

Oh, how blessed, therefore, is the person who does not forget his baptism but who considers it valuable and dear above all else and who in faith daily comforts himself therewith! For in baptism Christ held His triumphal procession over sin, death, devil, and hell in our hearts. Oh, how blessed is the person who gladly hears God's Word and who permits himself to be corrected, enlightened, awakened, and comforted by it! For if a person keeps the Word in his heart, he also has Christ in his heart, and with Him grace, righteousness, life, and salvation. And whoever in life lets Christ dwell with him will not in death be forsaken by Him. If the believer lies on his last sickbed, he can also conquer the fear of death; for his faith calls to him, also into his breaking heart: "'Behold, your King is coming to you!' Rejoice; now He is receiving you into His heavenly kingdom."

But, my beloved, shall a Christian only take, and give nothing?—In the fourth place, let me say a few things about how a person should festively adorn and celebrate Christ's entrance.

IV

The heart of a Christian should be a continuously open road where Christ lives and walks; therefore his whole life should be a continuous endeavor festively to adorn the way of his Savior with thanksgiving and voluntary love.

It is true, we cannot do anything in order that Christ come to us, He comes voluntarily through His Word and sacrament and makes us dead people alive, us prisoners free, us sinners righteous. But after He has come to us, we should openly show to the world through a new life that we have a holy, important, heavenly guest in our hearts.

Our Gospel shows us what we should do. The disciples and the people took off their garments and spread them on the way. So a believing Christian should take off the old, spotted garment of the flesh; he should no longer walk according to the old lusts, according to the old wishes, according to the old evil thoughts of his sinful heart, but should say from the heart [*The Lutheran Hymnal*, 347:5]:

Sinful life, thy bonds I sever,
Leave thee now forever.

But the crowd also cut down branches and strewed them in the way. So a believing Christian should spread out everywhere the fruits of the tree of his faith. Through his good works and new life, through his love to God and all men, through his humility, through his meekness, through his

heavenly mindedness, through his denial of everything worldly, through his patience under the cross, through his firm hope in trouble—through all this a Christian should show that Christ dwells in him.

Finally, the people and with them even the children cried: "*Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!*" My beloved, this is not only a chant of praise but also a wish for good fortune. "Hosanna!" means, "O Lord, help!" So the people cried out to God that He would help His Anointed, that His kingdom would continue to spread. So also a Christian should show that Christ has taken up residence in him not only in this, that his mouth is always full of praise and thanks for the grace he has received, but also in this, that he longs and pleads and entreats that Christ's kingdom may win more and more blessed citizens, that more and more may come to know the heavenly King of grace, accept Him, and through Him be saved.

Now, my beloved, you all want to be considered as people in whom not the spirit of the world but Christ dwells; but who can think it of those in whose life one cannot see that they festively adorn and celebrate Christ's entrance? Is Christ's triumphal entry there where one still wears the old garments of a worldly life and has not cast them at the feet of Christ? Can Christ have made His way there where one sees no palm branches of good works and a new life in love and humility? where one adorns not Christ's way but one's own? where one offers oneself not to Christ but to the world? Can the Savior already have come there where one hears no Hosanna cry of believing thankoffering and intercession? Ah, you who until now have still blocked Christ's entrance and until now have despised His grace, accept Him today, yet today!

But you who would want no other guest in your hearts but Christ, do not trouble yourselves whether He has come also to you; your unworthiness and your misery do not hold Him back from you but draw Him to you. Yes, He is with you. Just look at Him with the eyes of faith and joyfully praise His goodness. Here Christ still hides Himself in a poor, lowly form. But be comforted; hold to His holy Word. Then one day when He appears in His glory you will enter with Him through the open doors of heaven. Amen.