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A SERMON
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"But the just shall live by his faith."
Habakkuk 2:4.

THIS text is three times employed by the apostle Paul as an argument. Read Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38. In each of these cases it runs, "The just shall live by faith." This is the old original text to which the apostle referred when he said, "As it is written, The just shall live by faith." We are not wrong in making the inspiration of the Old Testament to be as important as that of the New, for the truth of the gospel must stand or fall with that of the prophets of the old dispensation. The Bible is one and indivisible, and you cannot question the Old Testament and retain the New. Habakkuk must be inspired, or Paul writes nonsense.

Yesterday, 400 years ago [November 10, 1483], there came into this wicked world, the son of a miner, or refiner of metals, who was to do no little, towards undermining the Papacy and refining the church. The name of that baby was Martin Luther, a hero and a saint. Blessed was that day above all the days of the century which it honored, for it bestowed a blessing on all succeeding ages, through "the monk that shook the world." His brave spirit overturned the tyranny of error which had so long held nations in bondage. All human history since then has been more or less affected by the birth of that marvelous boy. He was not an absolutely perfect man, we neither endorse all that he said nor admire all that he did, but he was a man upon whose like, men's eyes shall seldom rest, a mighty judge in Israel, a kingly servant of the Lord. We ought to pray more often to God to send us men—men of God, men of power. We should pray that, according to the Lord's infinite goodness, His ascension gifts may be continued and multiplied for the perfecting of His church, for when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, and "He gave some, apostles, and some, prophets, and some, evangelists, and some, pastors and teachers." He continues to bestow these choice gifts according to the church's needs, and He would scatter them more plentifully, perhaps, if our prayers more earnestly ascended to the Lord of the harvest to thrust forth laborers into His harvest. Even as we believe in the crucified Savior for our personal salvation, we ought to believe in the ascended Savior for the perpetual enriching of the church with confessors and evangelists who shall declare the truth of God.

I wish to take my little share in commemorating Luther's birthday, and I think I can do no better than use the key of truth of by which Luther unlocked the dungeons of the human mind, and set bondaged hearts at liberty. That golden key lies in the truth briefly contained in the text before us—"The just shall live by his faith."

Are you not a little surprised to find such a clear gospel passage in Habakkuk? To discover in that ancient prophet an explicit statement which Paul can use as a ready argument against the opponents of justification by faith? It shows that the cardinal doctrine of the gospel is no new-fangled notion, assuredly it is not a novel dogma invented by Luther, nor even a truth which was first taught by Paul. This fact has been established in all ages, and therefore, we find it here, among the ancient things, a lamp to cheer the darkness which hung over Israel before the coming of the Lord.

This also proves that there has been no change as to the gospel. The gospel of Habakkuk is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. A clearer light was cast upon the truth by the giving of the Holy Spirit, but the way of salvation has in all ages been one and the same. No man has ever been saved by his good works. The way by which the just have lived has always been the way of faith. There has not been the slightest advance upon this truth, it is established and settled, always the same, like the God who uttered it. At all times, and everywhere, the gospel is and must forever be the same. "Jesus Christ the same yes-

terday, and today, and forever." We read of "the gospel" as of one, but never of two or three gospels, as of many. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but Christ's word shall never pass away.

It is also noteworthy, not only that this truth should be so old, and should continue so unchanged, but that it should possess such vitality. This one sentence, "The just shall live by his faith," produced the Reformation. Out of this one line, as from the opening of one of the Apocalyptic seals came forth all that sounding of gospel trumpets, and all that singing of gospel songs, which made a sound like the noise of many waters in the world. This one seed, forgotten and hidden away in the dark medieval times, was brought forth, dropped into the human heart, made to grow by the Spirit of God, and in the end to produce great results. This handful of corn on the top of the mountains so multiplied that the fruit thereof did shake like Lebanon, and they of the city flourished like grass of the earth. The least bit of truth, thrown anywhere, will live! Certain plants are so full of vitality, that if you only take a fragment of a leaf and place it on the soil, the leaf will take root and grow. It is utterly impossible that such vegetation should become extinct, and so it is with the truth of God—it is living and incorruptible, and therefore there is no destroying it. As long as one Bible remains, the religion of free grace will live, no, if they could burn all printed Scriptures, as long as there remained a child who remembered a single text of the Word, the truth would rise again. Even in the ashes of truth the fire is still living, and when the breath of the Lord blows upon it, the flame will burst forth gloriously. Because of this, let us be comforted in this day of blasphemy and of rebuke—comforted because though "the grass withers and the flower thereof falls away: but the word of the Lord endures forever." And this is the word by which the gospel is preached to you.

Let us now examine this text, which was the means of enlightening the heart of Luther, as I shall tell you, by-and-by.

I. I shall at the outset make a brief observation upon it—A MAN WHO HAS FAITH IN GOD IS JUST. "The just shall live by his faith." The man who possesses faith in God is a just man; his faith is his life as a just man.

He is "just" in the gospel sense, namely, that having the faith which God prescribes as the way of salvation; he is by his faith justified in the sight of God. In the Old Testament (Gen. 15:6) we are told concerning Abraham that "he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness." This is the universal plan of justification. Faith lays hold upon the righteousness of God, by accepting God's plan of justifying sinners through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and thus she makes the sinner just. Faith accepts and appropriates for itself the whole system of divine righteousness which is unfolded in the person and work of the Lord Jesus. Faith rejoices to see Him coming into the world in our nature, and in that nature obeying the law of God in every jot and tittle, though not Himself under that law until He chose to put Himself there on our behalf. Faith is further pleased when she sees the Lord, who had come under the law, offering up Himself as a perfect atonement, and making a complete vindication of divine justice by His suffering and death. Faith lays hold upon the person, life, and death of the Lord Jesus as her only hope, and in the righteousness of Christ she arrays herself. She cries, "The chastisement of my peace was upon Him, and by His stripes I am healed." Now, the man who believes in God's method of making men righteous through the righteousness of Jesus, and accepts Jesus and leans upon Him, is a just man. He who makes the life and death of God's great propitiation to be his sole reliance and confidence is justified in the sight of God, and is written down among the just by the Lord Himself. His faith is imputed to him for righteousness, because his faith grasps the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. "All that believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses." This is the testimony of the inspired word, and who shall deny it?

But the believer is also just in another sense, which the outside world better appreciates, though it is not more valuable than the former. The man who believes in God becomes by that faith moved to everything that is right, and good, and true. His faith in God rectifies his mind, and makes him just. In judgment, in desire, in aspiration, in heart, he is just. His sin has been freely forgiven him, and now, in the hour of temptation, he cries, "How, then, can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" He believes in the blood-shedding which God has provided for the cleansing of sin, and being washed therein, he cannot choose to defile himself again. The love of Christ constrains him to seek after that which is true, and right, and good, and loving, and honorable in the sight of God. Having received by faith the

privilege of adoption, he strives to live as a child of God. Having obtained by faith a new life, he walks in newness of life. "Immortal principles forbid the child of God to sin." If any man lives in sin and loves it, he has not the faith of God's elect, for true faith purifies the soul. The faith which is worked in us by the Holy Spirit is the greatest sin killer under heaven. By the grace of God it affects the inmost heart, changes the desires and the affections, and makes the man a new creature in Christ Jesus. If there are on earth any who can truly be called just, they are those who are made so by faith in God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Indeed, no other men are "just" save those to whom the holy God gives the title, and of these the text says that they live by faith. Faith trusts God, and therefore loves Him, and therefore obeys Him, and therefore grows like Him. It is the root of holiness, the spring of righteousness, the life of the just.

II. Upon that observation, which is vital to the text, I dwell no longer, but advance to another which is the converse of it, namely, that A MAN WHO IS JUST HAS FAITH IN GOD. Or else, let me say, he were not just, for God deserves faith, and he who robs Him of it is not just. God is so true that to doubt Him is an injustice, He is so faithful that to distrust Him is to wrong Him—and he who does the Lord such an injustice is not a just man. A just man must first be just with the greatest of all beings. It would be idle for him to be just to his fellow creatures only, if he did a willful injustice to God, I say, he would be unworthy of the name of just. Faith is what the Lord justly deserves to receive from His creatures; it is His due that we believe in what He says, and especially in reference to the gospel. When the great love of God in Christ Jesus is set forth plainly it will be believed by the pure in heart. If the great love of Christ in dying for us is fully understood it must be believed by every honest mind. To doubt the witness of God concerning His Son is to do the sorest injustice to infinite love. He that believes not has rejected God's witness to the unspeakable gift and put from Him that which deserves man's adoring, gratitude, since it alone can satisfy the justice of God, and give peace to the conscience of man. A truly just man must, in order to the completeness of his justness, believe in God, and in all that He has revealed.

Some dream that this matter of justness only concerns the outer life, and does not touch man's beliefs. I say, not so, righteousness concerns the inner parts of a man, the central region of his manhood, and truly just men desire to be made clean in the secret parts, and in the hidden parts they would know wisdom. Is it not so? We hear it continually asserted that our understanding and beliefs constitute a province exempt from the jurisdiction of God. Is it indeed true that I may believe what I like without being accountable to God for my belief? No, my brethren, no single part of our manhood is beyond the range of the divine law. Our whole capacity as men lies under the sovereignty of Him that created us, and we are as much bound to believe aright as we are bound to act aright. In fact, our actions and our thoughts are so intertwisted and entangled that there is no dividing the one from the other. To say that the rightness of the outward life suffices is to go clean contrary to the whole tenor of the Word of God. I am as much bound to serve God with my mind as with my heart. I am as much bound to believe what God reveals as I am to do what God enjoins. Errors of judgment are as truly sins as errors of life. It is a part of our allegiance to our great Sovereign and Lord that we do yield up our understanding, our thought, and our belief to His supreme control. No man is right until he believes right. A just man must be just towards God by believing in God, and trusting Him in all that He is, and says, and does.

I see not also, my dear friends, what reason there is for a man to be just towards his fellow men when he has given up his belief in God. If it comes to a pinch, and a man can deliver himself by a piece of dishonesty, why should he not be dishonest if there is no higher law than that which his fellow men have made, no judgment seat, no Judge, and no hereafter? A few weeks ago a man deliberately killed his employer, who had offended him, and as he gave himself up to the police, he said that he was not in the least degree afraid nor ashamed of what he had done. He admitted the murder, and acknowledged that he knew the consequences very well, he expected to suffer about half-a-minute's pain upon the gallows, and then that would be the end of him, and he was quite prepared for that. He spoke and acted in consistency with his belief or his non-belief, and truly there is no form of crime but what becomes logical and legitimate if you take faith in God and the hereafter. That gone, break up your commonwealth, there is nothing to hold humanity together, for without a God the moral government of the universe has ceased, and anarchy is the natural state of things. If there is no God, and no judgment to come, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. If necessary, let us steal, lie, and kill. Why not? If there is no law, no

judgment, and no punishment for sin. I forget—nothing can be sinful, for if there is no lawgiver, there is no law, and if there is no law, then there can be no transgression. To what a chaos must all things come if faith in God is renounced? Where will the just be found when faith is banished? The logically just man is a believer in some measure or other, and he that is worthy to be called "just" in the scriptural sense, is a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is made of God unto us righteousness.

III. But now I come to the point upon which I mean to dwell. Thirdly, BY THIS FAITH THE JUST MAN SHALL LIVE.

This is at the outset *a narrow statement*. It cuts off many pretended ways of living by saying, "The just shall live *by faith."* This sentence savors of the strait gate which stands at the head of the way—the narrow way which leads into eternal life. At one blow this ends all claims of righteousness apart from one mode of life. The best men in the world can only live by faith; there is no other way of being just in the sight of God. We cannot live in righteousness by self. If we are going to trust to ourselves, or anything that comes of ourselves, we are dead while we so trust, we have not known the life of God according to the teaching of Holy Writ. You must come right out from confidence in everything that you are or hope to be. You must tear off the leprous garment of legal righteousness, and part with self in any and every form. Self-reliance as to the things of religion will be found to be self-destruction. You must rest in God as He is revealed in His Son Jesus Christ and there alone. The just shall live by faith, but those who look to the works of the law are under the curse, and cannot live before God. The same is also true of those who endeavor to live by sense or feeling. They judge God by what they see, if He is bountiful to them in providence, He is a good God, if they are poor, they have nothing good to say of Him, for they measure Him by what they feel, and taste, and see. If God works steadily to a purpose, and they can see His purpose, they commend His wisdom, but when they either cannot see the purpose, or cannot understand the way by which the Lord is working unto it, straightway they judge Him to be unwise. Living by sense turns out to be a senseless mode of life, bringing death to all comfort and hope—

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace,"

for only by such trust can a just man live.

The text also cuts off all idea of living by mere intellect. Too many say, "I am my own guide. I shall make doctrines for myself, and I shall shift them and shape them according to my own devices." Such a way is death to the spirit. To be abreast of the times is to be an enemy to God. The way of life is to believe what God has taught, especially to believe in Him whom God has set forth to be a propitiation for sin, for that is making God to be everything and ourselves nothing. Resting on an infallible revelation, and trusting in an omnipotent Redeemer, we have rest and peace, but on the other unsettled principle we become wandering stars, for who is appointed the blackness of darkness forever. By faith the soul can live, in all other ways we have a name to live and are dead.

The same is equally true of fancy. We often meet with a fanciful religion in which people trust to impulses, to dreams, to noises, and mystic things which they imagine they have seen, all of it is fiddle-faddle, and yet they are quite wrapped up in it. I pray that you may cast out this chaffy stuff; there is no food for the spirit in it. The life of my soul lies not in what I think, or what I fancy, or what I imagine, or what I enjoy of fine feeling, but only in that which faith apprehends to be the Word of God. We live before God by trusting a promise, depending on a person, accepting a sacrifice, wearing a righteousness, and surrendering ourselves up to God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Implicit trust in Jesus, our Lord, is the way of life, and every other way leads down to death. It is a narrowing statement, let those who call it intolerance say what they please; it will be true when they have denounced it as much as it is now.

But, secondly, this is *a very broad statement*. Much is comprehended in the saying—"The just shall live by his faith." It does not say what part of his life hangs on his believing, or what phase of his life best proves his believing, it comprehends the beginning, continuance, increase, and perfecting of spiritual life as being all by faith. Observe that the text means that the moment a man believes he begins to live in the sight of God. He trusts his God, he accepts God's revelation of Himself, he confides, reposes, leans upon his Savior, and that moment he becomes a spiritually living man, quickened with spiritual life by God the Holy Spirit. All his existence before that belief was but a form of death. When he comes to trust in God he enters upon eternal life, and is born from above. Yes, but that is not all, nor half, for if

that man is to continue living before God, if he is to hold on to his way in holiness, his perseverance must be the result of continued faith. The faith which saves is not one single act done and ended on a certain day, it is an act continued and persevered in throughout the entire life of the man. The just not only commences to live by his faith, but he continues to live by his faith, he does not begin in the Spirit and end in the flesh, nor go so far by grace, and the rest of the way by the works of the law. "The just shall live by faith," says the text in Hebrews, "but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." Faith is essential all along, every day and all the day, in all things. Our natural life begins by breathing, and it must be continued by breathing, what the breath is to the body, that is faith to the soul.

Brethren, if we are to make advances and increase in the divine life, it must still be in the same way. Our root is faith, and only through the root comes growth. Progress in grace comes not of carnal wisdom, or legal effort, or unbelief, no, the flesh brings no growth unto the spiritual life, and efforts made in unbelief rather dwarf the inner life than cause it to grow. We become no stronger by mortifications, mourning, works, or strivings, if these are apart from simple faith in God's grace, for by this one sole channel can nourishment come into the life of our spirit. The same door by which life came in at the first is that by which life continues to enter. If any man says to me, "I once lived by believing in Christ, but I have now become spiritual and sanctified, and therefore I have no longer any need to look as a sinner to the blood and righteousness of Christ," I tell that man that he has need to learn the first principles of faith. I warn him that he has drawn back from the faith, for he, who is justified by the law, or in any other way beside the righteousness of Christ, has fallen from grace, and left the only ground upon which a soul can be accepted with God. Yes, up to heaven's gate there is no staff for us to lean upon but faith in the ever-blessed Savior and His divine atonement. Between this place and glory we shall never be able to live by merits, or live by fancies, or live by intellect, we shall still have to be as children taught of God, as Israel in the desert depending wholly on the great Invisible One. Ours it is forever to look out of self, and to look above all things that are seen, for "the just shall live by his faith." It is a very broad sentence, a circle which encompasses the whole of our life which is worthy of the name. If there is any virtue, if there is any praise, if there is anything that is lovely or of good repute, we must receive it, exhibit it, and perfect it by the exercise of faith. Life in the Father's house, life in the church, life in private, life in the world, must all be in the power of faith if we are righteous men. That which is without faith is without life. Dead works cannot gratify the living God. Without faith it is impossible to please God.

I beg you to notice, in the third place, what *a very unqualified statement* it is. "The just shall live by his faith." Then, if a man has but a little faith, he shall live, and if he is greatly just, he shall still live by faith. Many a just man has come no further than striving after holiness, but he is justified by his faith, his faith is trembling and struggling, and his frequent prayer is, "Lord, I believe; help You my unbelief," yet his faith has made him a just man. Sometimes he is afraid that he has no faith at all, and when he has deep depression of spirits, it is as much as he can do to keep his head above water, but even then his faith justifies him. He is like a boat upon a stormy sea, sometimes he is lifted up to heaven by flashing waves of mercy, and soon he sinks into the abyss among billows of affliction. What, then, is he a dead man? I answer; does that man truly believe God? Does He accept the record concerning the Son of God? Can he truly say, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins," and with such faith as he has does he cling only to Christ and to none beside? Then that man shall live, he shall live by his faith. If the littleness of our faith could destroy us how few, would be numbered with the living? "When the Son of man comes, shall He find faith on the earth?" Only here and there, and now and then, a Luther appears who really does believe with all his heart. The most of us are not as big as Luther's little finger, we have not so much faith in our whole soul as he had in one hair of his head. But yet even that little faith makes us live. I do not say that little faith will give us the strong, and vigorous, and lion-like life which Luther had, but we shall live. The statement makes no distinction between this and that degree of faith, but still lays it down as an unquestionable truth, "the just shall live by faith." Blessed be God, then, I shall live, for I do believe in the Lord Jesus as my Savior and my all. Do you not also believe in Him?

Yes, and is it not singular that this unqualified statement should not mention any other grace, as helping to make up the ground on which just men live? "The just shall live by his faith," but has he not love, has he not zeal, has he not patience, has he not hope, has he not humility, has he not holiness? Oh,

yes, he has all these, and he lives *in* them, but he does not live *by* them, because none of these so intimately connects him with Christ as does his faith. I will venture to use a very common figure, because it is the best I can think of. Here is a little child, a suckling. It has many necessary members, such as its eyes, its ears, its legs, its arms, its heart, and so forth, and all these are necessary to it, but the one organ by which the tiny baby lives is its mouth, by which it sucks from its mother all its nourishment. Our faith is that mouth by which we suck in fresh life from the promise of the ever-blessed God. Thus faith is that which we live by. Other graces are necessary, but faith is the life of them all. We do not undervalue love, or patience, or penitence, or humility, any more than we depreciate the eyes or the feet of the baby. Still, the means of the life of the spiritual man is that mouth by which he receives divine food from the truth revealed by the Holy Spirit in sacred Scripture. Other graces produce results from that which faith receives, but faith is the Receiver-General for the whole isle of man.

This, dear friends, to proceed a little farther, is *a very suggestive statement*, "The just shall live by his faith," because it wears so many meanings. First, the righteous man is even to exist by his faith, that is to say, the lowest form of grace in a righteous character is dependent upon faith. But, brothers and sisters, I hope you will not be so foolish as to say—"If I am but a living child of God, it is all I need." No, we wish not only to have life, but to have it more abundantly. See yonder man rescued from drowning? He is yet alive, but the only evidence of it is the fact that a mirror is somewhat bedewed by his breath. You would not be content to be alive for years in that poor fashion, would you? You ought to be grateful if you are spiritually alive even in that feeble way, but still we do not want to remain in a swooning state, we wish to be active and vigorous. Yet even for that lowest life you must have faith. For the feeblest kind of spiritual existence that can be called life at all, faith is necessary. The just who barely live, who are feeble in mind, and who are scarcely saved, are nevertheless delivered by faith. Without faith there is no heavenly life whatever.

Take the word "life" in a better sense, and the same will apply, "The just shall live by his faith." We sometimes meet with very poor persons who say to us in a pitiful tone, "Our wages are dreadfully scant." We say to them, "Do you really live upon so small a sum?" They answer, "Well, sir, you can hardly call it living, but we exist somehow." None of us would wish to live in that style if we could help it. We mean, then, by "life," some measure of enjoyment, happiness, and satisfaction. The just, when they have comfort, and joy, and peace, have them by faith. Thank God, peace of heart is our normal state, because faith is an abiding grace. We sing for joy of heart and rejoice in the Lord, and blessed be the Lord this is no novelty to us. But we have known this bliss, and still know it by faith alone. The moment faith comes in, the music strikes up; if it were gone the owls would hoot. Luther can sing a psalm in spite of the devil, but he could not have done so if he had not been a man of faith. He could defy emperors, and kings, and popes, and bishops while he took firm hold upon the strength of God, but only then. Faith is the life of life, and makes life worth living. It puts joy into the soul to believe in the great Father and His everlasting love, in the efficacious atonement of the Son, and in the indwelling of the Spirit, in resurrection, and eternal glory. Without these we are of all men most miserable. To believe these glorious truths is to live—"The just shall live by his faith."

Life also means strength. We say of a certain man, "What life he has in him. He is full of life, he seems always alive." Yes, the just obtain energy, force, vivacity, vigor, power, might, life—by faith. Faith bestows on believers a royal majesty. The more they can believe, the more mighty they become. This is the head that wears a crown, this is the hand that wields a scepter, this is the foot whose royal tread does shake the nations; faith in God links us with the King, the Lord God Omnipotent.

By faith, the just, live on when others die. They are not overcome by prevalent sin, or fashionable heresy, or cruel persecution, or fierce affliction, nothing can kill spiritual life while faith abides—"The just shall live by faith." Continuance and perseverance come this way. The righteous man when he is put back a while is not baffled, and when he is wounded by enemies, he is not slain. Where another man is drowned, he swims; where another man is trampled under foot, he rises and shouts victoriously—"Rejoice not over me, O my enemy. If I fall, yet I shall rise again!" In the fiery furnace of affliction he walks unharmed through faith. Yes and when his turn comes to die, and with many tears his brethren carry his ashes to the tomb, "He, being dead, yet speaks." The blood of righteous Abel cried from the ground to the Lord, and it is still crying down the ages, even to this hour. Luther's voice, through 400

years, still sounds in the ears of men, and quickens our pulses like the beat of drum in martial music, he lives; he lives because he was a man of faith.

I would sum up and illustrate this teaching by mentioning certain incidents of Luther's life. Upon the great Reformer, gospel light broke by slow degrees. It was in the monastery that, in turning over the old Bible that was chained to a pillar, he came upon this passage—"The just shall live by his faith." This heavenly sentence stuck to him, but he hardly understood all its bearings. He could not, however, find peace in his religious profession and monastic habit. Knowing no better, he persevered in so many penances, and mortifications so arduous, that sometimes he was found fainting through exhaustion. He brought himself to death's door. He must make a journey to Rome, for in Rome there is a fresh church for every day, and you may be sure to win the pardon of sins and all sorts of benedictions in these holy shrines. He dreamed of entering a city of holiness, but he found it to be a haunt of hypocrites and a den of iniquity. To his horror he heard men say that if there was a hell Rome was built on top of it, for it was the nearest approach to it that could be found in this world. But he still believed in its Pope and he went on with his penances, seeking rest, but finding none. One day he was climbing upon his knees the Sancta Scala which still stands in Rome. I have stood amazed at the bottom of this staircase, to see poor creatures go up and down on their knees in the belief that it is the very staircase that our Lord descended when He left Pilate's house, and certain steps are said to be marked with drops of blood, these the poor souls kiss most devoutly. Well, Luther was crawling up these steps one day when that same text which he had met with before in the monastery, sounded like a clap of thunder in his ears, "The just shall live by his faith." He rose from his prostration, and went down the steps never to grovel upon them again. At that time the Lord worked in him a full deliverance from superstition, and he saw that not by priests, nor priestcraft, nor penances, nor by anything that he could do, was he to live, but that he must live by his faith. Our text of this morning had set the monk at liberty, and set his soul on fire.

No sooner did he believe this than he began to live in the sense of being active. A gentleman named Tetzel was going about all over Germany selling the forgiveness of sins for so much ready cash. No matter what your offense, as soon as your money touched the bottom of the box your sins were gone. Luther heard of this, grew indignant, and exclaimed, "I will make a hole in his drum," which assuredly he did, and in several other drums. The nailing up of his theses on the church door was a sure way of silencing the indulgence music. Luther proclaimed pardon of sin by faith in Christ without money and without price, and the Pope's indulgences were soon objects of derision. Luther lived by his faith, and therefore he who otherwise might have been quiet, denounced error as furiously as a lion roars upon his prey. The faith that was in him filled him with intense life, and he plunged into war with the enemy. After a while they summoned him to Augsburg, and to Augsburg he went, though his friends advised him not to go. They summoned him, as a heretic, to answer for himself at the Diet of Worms, and everybody bade him stay away, for he would be sure to be burned. But he felt it necessary that the testimony should be borne, and so in a wagon he went from village to village and town to town, preaching as he went, the poor people came out to shake hands with the man who was standing up for Christ and the gospel at the risk of his life. You remember, how he stood before that august assembly, and though he knew as far as human power went that his defense would cost him his life, for he would, probably, be committed to the flames like John Huss, yet he played the man for the Lord his God. That day in the German Diet, Luther did a work for which ten thousand times ten thousand mothers' children have blessed his name, and blessed yet more the name of the Lord his God. To put him out of harm's way for a while a prudent friend took him prisoner, and kept him out of the strife in the castle of Wartburg. There he had a good time of it, resting, studying, translating, making music, and preparing himself for the future which was to be so eventful. He did all that a man can do who is outside of the fray, but "the just shall live by his faith," and Luther could not be buried alive in ease, he must be getting on with his life-work. He sends word to his friends that he who was coming would soon be with them, and all of a sudden he appeared at Wittenberg. The prince meant to have kept him in retirement somewhat longer, but Luther must live, and when the Elector feared that he could not protect him, Luther wrote him, "I come under far higher protection than yours; no, I hold that I am more likely to protect your Grace than your Grace to protect me. He who has the strongest faith is the best Protector." Luther had learned to be independent of all men, for he cast himself upon his God. He had the entire world against him, and yet he lived right merri-

ly. If the Pope excommunicated him, he burned the bull, if the Emperor threatened him he rejoiced, because he remembered the words of the Lord, "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together. He that sits in the heavens shall laugh." When they said to him, "Where will you find shelter if the Elector does not protect you," he answered, "Under the broad shield of God."

Luther could not be still, he must speak, and write and thunder, and oh, with what confidence he spoke! Doubts about God and Scripture he abhorred. Melancthon says he was not dogmatic. I rather differ from Melancthon there, and reckon Luther to be the chief of dogmatists. He called Melancthon the "soft treader," and I wonder what we should have done if Luther had been Melancthon, and had trod softly, too. The times needed a firmly assured leader, and faith made Luther all that for years, notwithstanding his many sorrows and infirmities. He was a Titan, a giant, a man of splendid mental caliber and strong physique, but yet his main life and force lay in his faith. He suffered much in exercises of the mind and through diseases of body, and these might well have occasioned a display of weakness, but that weakness did not appear, for when he believed, he was as sure of what he believed as of his own existence, and therefore he was strong. If every angel in heaven had passed before him and each one had assured him of the truth of God, he would not have thanked them for their testimony, for he believed God without the witness of either angels or men. He thought the word of divine testimony to be surer than anything that seraphim could say.

This man was forced to live by his faith, for he was a man of stormy soul, and only faith could speak peace to him. Those stirring excitements of his brought on him afterwards fearful depressions of spirit, and then he needed faith in God. If you read a spiritual life of him you will find that it was hard work sometimes for him to keep his soul alive. Being a man of like passions with us, and full of imperfections, he was at times as desponding and despairing as the weakest among us; and the swelling grief within him threatened to burst his mighty heart. Both he and John Calvin frequently sighed for the rest of heaven, for they loved not the strife in which they dwelt, but would have been glad peacefully to feed the flock of God on earth and then to enter into rest. These men dwelt with God in holy boldness of believing prayer, or they could not have lived at all.

Luther's faith laid hold upon the cross of our Lord, and would not be stirred from it. He believed in the forgiveness of sins, and could not afford to doubt it. He cast anchor upon Holy Scripture, and rejected all the inventions of clerics and all the traditions of the fathers. He was assured of the truth of the gospel, and never doubted but what it would prevail though earth and hell were leagued against it. When he came to die his old enemy assailed him fiercely, but when they asked him if he held the same faith his, "Yes" was positive enough. They needed not to have asked him, they might have been sure of that. And now today the truth proclaimed by Luther continues to be preached, and will be till our Lord Himself shall come. Then the holy city shall need no candle, neither light of the sun, because the Lord Himself shall be the light of His people. But till then we must shine with gospel light to our utmost. Brethren, let us stand to it that as Luther lived by faith even so will we, and may God the Holy Spirit work in us more of that faith. Amen and Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—GALATIONS 3.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—46 (VER. 2), 690, 533.

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