

154. The Blessed, Pious Life.

He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again. 2 Cor. 5,15.

With exquisite sweetness our Catechism adds that we "*live under Him* [our Lord Jesus Christ] *in His kingdom and serve Him.*" Yes, this is most certainly true, that Christ's kingdom is no dead, empty, unfruitful science; no, he who is in Christ's kingdom *lives* therein. He lives under Him, under the Lord Jesus Christ, his heavenly Head and King. And he really *has* this King and Lord, who actually is his own; and he serves Him with his whole heart and life. This is most certainly true; this we believe, teach, and confess in our Lutheran Church.

Two things our Catechism here points out to us. In the first place, we should "*live under Him in His kingdom,*" that is, under the protection and reign of our Lord Jesus Christ, our heavenly King. This is the mind of a true Christian - he wishes wholly to belong to his Savior; he therefore wishes to live only according to the will of his Lord and Savior; he does not look for riches and an easy life here on earth, but his only wish is that God's will may be done in all things. It, therefore, is his intention to walk only in the ways of the Lord and to be led and guided and governed by Him in everything. Thus a Christian lives under Him, and he is certain that this his Lord and King defends, guards, and protects him in all his ways. Verily, it is a blessed life which true Christians lead already here on earth.

And while they live under Him in that manner, they also *serve Him*. Such service is rendered with the heart and with the whole outward life. Mere outward pharisaism, mere outward works of the Law, are far from being a pious Christian life. *To serve the Lord Jesus Christ*, this alone is true godliness and a real Christian life. This flows from a genuine love of the Savior, who has redeemed and saved us; it is but an offering of thankfulness, as St. John says: "We love Him because He first loved us." This love of God is shed abroad in our hearts; it is the real life of a Christian. It makes us zealous of good works.

Prayer.

Dear Lord Jesus, I heartily pray Thee that for the duties to be assumed by me Thou wouldst bestow upon me prudence, wisdom, and understanding and grant success and blessing, together with good health, so that I may not only make a good beginning, but in Thy name and by Thine aid arrive at a profitable close, thus at all times faithfully attending to my duties with a clear conscience and in Thy fear. And let me do all my work as unto Thee; not with eye-service, as a man-pleaser, but as serving Thee, doing the will of God from the heart. Amen.

O Jesus, I have promised
To serve Thee to the end;
Be Thou forever near me,
My Master and my Friend.
I shall not fear the battle
If Thou art by my side,
Nor wander from the pathway
If Thou wilt be my Guide.

This devotion is one of 318 taken from *Daily Bread* by F. E. Pasche, published by CPH in 1926, but now in the public domain. They have been copied and reformatted by Rev. Bruce G. Ley and made available for distribution by pastors and missionaries.

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