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# An Evaluation of the Australian Lutheran "Statement on Homosexuality"

Robert W. Schaibley  
Concordia Teachers College, River Forest, Illinois

In its 1973 Convention in New Orleans, The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod stated its conviction that homosexual behavior was "intrinsically sinful," and it urged a ministry of Law and Gospel to homosexuals. Subsequently the Synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations has made available for study a document emanating from the Lutheran Church in Australia called "Statement on Homosexuality." Since cultural and sociological changes in our country have made the question of homosexuality one of public concern, it is necessary for the Lutheran pastor to be equipped to counsel the homosexual. This paper seeks to provide equipment for a pastoral ministry to homosexuals by means of a critical evaluation of the Australian "Statement."

## I. The Moral Nature of Homosexuality

The "Statement of Homosexuality" raises the question of the moral evaluation that is to be made concerning homosexuality. However, in answering the question a dangerous confusion arises. The "Statement" offers a distinction between homosexual "propensity" and homosexual "behavior." What is the nature of this distinction? And what moral conclusions are forthcoming once the distinction is made? The Lutheran pastor needs to give close attention to these questions.

### A.

The "Statement" begins with the following understanding as to the nature of this propensity-behavior distinction:

In this statement a distinction will be drawn between *propensity*, an inclination or leaning towards, over which the individual has no control, and *behavior*, acts over which the individual is regarded as having control.

But, more precisely, what is propensity? Is this a reference to a potentiality? Or is it a reference to inward desires of the heart? If it is the former, a potentiality, then it is not an *actuality* and therefore is not properly called homosexuality. But if it is the latter, a reference to inward desires of the heart, then it must be called homosexuality in the very sense in which it is con-

demned as sinful by the Scriptures. For Jesus clearly teaches that the desires of the heart are included under the condemning and accusing finger of the Law.

Perhaps an analogy would make the point more clearly. Physicians tell us that some persons have an internal chemical balance such that, were they to consume alcohol in any significant quantity whatsoever, they would develop a physiological-chemical dependency on alcohol. We would call such a condition a potentiality for alcohol dependency or alcoholism. Yet, that condition, in and of itself, is not alcoholism, nor is the possessor of such a condition an alcoholic. Further, he does not experience an inclination or leaning toward alcohol, nor can his relationship to the consumption of alcohol be described as a "striving" or "battle" against it.

If the concept of "potentiality" is what is meant by "homosexual propensity," then the "Statement" would be correct in its conclusion that "the Church may not condemn or judge homosexual propensity." But the "Statement" would be misleading and incorrect when it asserts:

As in the case of pain and disease, the Christian homosexual should accept his homosexual propensity in obedience to God, bear his cross bravely, seek all possible professional help and pastoral aid, and in faith resist the strong temptation of rebelling and murmuring against God or of dismissing his life as pointless or senseless.

Here, clear signs point not to a potentiality, but to an actuality, complete with stress, temptation, agony, and despair. Such a homosexuality certainly falls under the same judgement which Jesus declares when he speaks on the nature of adultery (Matt. 5: 27-28). So it appears that the "Statement" understands propensity to include more than a potentiality toward homosexuality; and, thus, its conclusion is incorrect that "the Church may not condemn or judge homosexual propensity."

## B.

The reason for this mistake may well be found in an inadequate understanding of "behavior." If behavior is identified, in a legalistic manner, with the "bare act itself," then the sins of the heart, will, and mind must be lumped under "propensity," and thus the concept of "propensity" includes that which is culpable before the Law. On the other hand, another reason for this mistake on the part of the "Statement" may be found in the contemporary tendency toward limiting the concept of moral responsibility for evil to those situations where the ability is present to do the good or resist the evil.

The "Statement" suggests that "having control" over homosexuality is a measure of whether one is speaking of propensity or behavior. When viewed in connection with the conclusions of the "Statement" that the Church cannot speak against homosexual propensity, one is forced to conclude that one ought not to view homosexuality as sinful in any context where a person does not "have control" over that particular dimension of homosexuality.

But does not the Law speak to us in the totality of our sinful nature (sub-conscious as well as conscious, thoughts as well as deeds, intentions as well as actions)? And if the Law does speak in this universal sense, where is the room for the concept of "having control," as a device of removing moral responsibility or culpability? Since the "Statement" appears to incorporate into the concept of "propensity" the sub-conscious and conscious thoughts and desires of the homosexual, the homosexual propensity of which it speaks falls under the Scriptural condemnation of sins of the heart. In this case, to affirm the "Statement" would be to deny the Synod's position that homosexual behavior (which we understand to include the behavior of the heart) is "intrinsically sinful."

### C.

At this point, one might be tempted to observe that perhaps the Australian statement intends by "propensity" only the *occurrence* of homosexual thoughts, and that any entertaining of these thoughts (being a matter of our "control," in some sense) passes over into the area of "behavior." This suggestion would fit well with the observation by the "Statement" that "the varying degrees of propensity can be rated from exclusive heterosexuality through bisexuality and on to exclusive homosexuality." However, one still finds it problematic to speak of homosexual propensity as the occurrence of thoughts or "stimulation" and to affirm at the same time that "there are cases of complete unawareness of the propensity." Thus, even placing this "best construction" on the Australian statement does not yield a consistent and satisfactory tool for dealing pastorally with the homosexual.

## II. The Pastoral Approach to Homosexuality

Granting that by "propensity" one means the potential for and the varying occurrence of homosexually-oriented thoughts, and by "behavior" one means any "acts" of thought, word, or deed, the "Statement on Homosexuality" makes some, but not the best, Scriptural sense. But how does it help for pastoral practice? Can its guidelines, particularly for the counseling in

cases of "homosexual propensity" be helpful for the Lutheran pastor?

A.

Certainly one must applaud the spirit and forthrightness of the concluding paragraph in the Australian statement:

The Church, while rejecting on the one hand the movement which claims tolerance of homosexual behavior in the name of freedom of the individual and of moral progress, must also resist the popular reaction of persecution and ostracism. The Church must exhibit understanding and sympathy for the homosexual, show love and pastoral concern, being ready to give help and encouragement in whatever way possible. It must proclaim to homosexuals, as it does to all men, the judgement of God against sin, above all the forgiveness of sin for Christ's sake, and the possibility of a new life through the power of the Holy Spirit, and must assure them of complete acceptance into the people of God.

With only one exception, the Lutheran pastor can endorse this as the cornerstone of his own ministry to homosexuals. That one exception, of course, is the concern which must be expressed over the final clause, "and must assure them of complete acceptance into the people of God." According to the Scriptures, those who insist on a life of manifest and unrepentant sin must be excluded from the people of God (I Cor. 5:1-13). If we are speaking of homosexuals (whether in propensity or in behavior), only repentant homosexuals may be assured of complete acceptance into the people of God. The obdurate impenitence, for whatever reason, of a homosexual requires the separation of that person from the Church. However, that impenitence does not excuse the Church or the Lutheran pastor from the responsibility to "exhibit understanding and sympathy for the homosexual, show love and pastoral concern, being ready to give help and encouragement in whatever way possible."

B.

Perhaps the most constructive proposal of the Australian "Statement" is the injunction for the Church to offer "the possibility of a new life through the power of the Holy Spirit." However, the effect of this laudable and necessary proposal is dulled by the contents of the "Statement" itself. For it would lead the homosexual to believe three assertions which stifle Christian *hope*.

First, in a disastrous and unbiblical manner, the "Statement" claims that "there is little effective treatment for those who

would be designated as exclusive homosexuals." Such a position flatly contradicts St. Paul who says, concerning homosexuality and other "wickedness," "And such were some of you! But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" (I Cor. 6:11). The New Testament gives ample testimony to the power of God to effect *change* in the sinful life-patterns of people. This includes not only a change in relationship to God and a change in future destiny, but also a change in one's own daily life. The Church must bravely and lovingly assert that there *is* effective treatment for change in all people, including "exclusive homosexuals." There *is* the possibility of new life through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, several statements from the Australian document suggest that homosexuality needs to be seen in the context of disease. For example, we are told that "the available medical and psychological evidence must guide the Church." Again, we are encouraged to see homosexuality as part of the results of the Fall, in the same sense as we understand disease to be a result of the Fall. Finally, the "Statement" concludes: "As in the case of pain and disease, the Christian homosexual should accept his homosexual propensity in obedience to God." But is it true that homosexuality and disease can be seen in the same light? If so, then there is no sin in homosexuality, for there is no sin in being a victim of disease, such as cancer or diabetes. These diseases, while a corruption of life resulting from the Fall, are not sinful *per se*, nor does one become "wicked" when one becomes ill. Yet, St. Paul tells us that one does become wicked when one becomes a homosexual (I Cor. 6:9). On the other hand, if it is not true that homosexuality and disease can be seen in the same light, then there is absolutely no justification for suggesting that homosexuality is a "cross" or "thorn" that God asks some Christians to bear. In retrospect, such a suggestion is spiritually devastating, for it robs the homosexual of Christian *hope*, and offers in its stead only a humanistic encouragement to keep a stiff upper lip!

Finally, in the precise place where the Lutheran pastor can be at his best, namely, in the application of the Means of Grace to the needs of a sinner, the Australian "Statement" urges him to suggest to the homosexual that he go and pray about it! Indeed, it is true that *all* Christians should "not cease to pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit who alone can empower us to do what is right and to refuse the wrong." However, the homosexual in the midst of his predicament does not need instructions about prayer; he needs the Holy Spirit in the present moment, that he might have hope and power to pray. In short, he needs what the Lutheran pastor has been called to

give, a specific and personal application of the Means of Grace, addressed to the homosexual's life-situation. Such a ministry alone will offer "the possibility of a new life through the power of the Holy Spirit."

Consistent with the conclusion of the "Statement," the Lutheran pastor can and should offer the new life of the Spirit to the homosexual. However, this cannot be done where the possibility of change is denied. Nor can it be done where the condition of sin is confused with the condition of disease. Nor can it be done where the Means of Grace are not at the heart of pastoral ministry, encompassed in the specific application of Law and Gospel. Rather, let the pastor call for change and offer the power for it; let him clearly set forth the nature of homosexuality from the Scriptural perspective; and let him administer the Means of Grace to the needs of the sinner! In such a ministry the hope of new life in Christ is surely offered.

### C.

Many Lutherans have come to lament the current publicity, exposure, and apparent blessing which is being given to the "gay movement" in recent times. Insofar as we are being called upon to bless sin, the Church should object. The Australian "Statement" is to be commended when it calls the Church to reject "the movement which claims tolerance of homosexual behavior in the name of freedom of the individual and of moral progress." Indeed, neither popular opinion nor existential convenience but God's revealed will alone determines that which is good and that which is evil. Nevertheless, the Church also must resist the temptation to be drawn into blind discrimination and hatred against those who are homosexuals. Again, the Australian "Statement" rightly calls us "to resist the popular reaction of persecution and ostracism." The individual Christian, as well as the Church, ought to examine his own motives and perceptions as he responds to the issue of homosexuality, lest he forget that "... there is no distinction; since *all* have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

God is presenting to the Church a great challenge and opportunity. We can proclaim the Word of God in a clear and fresh manner. We can offer new hope to sinners whom God loves. We can apply the Means of Grace to another area of human need, so that sins can be forgiven and the Spirit's power employed to create new life in Christ. The situation which we face is one which was accurately described by a student at Concordia Teacher's College, River Forest, when she said: "Isn't it great! While the devil is gleefully rubbing his hands

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and saying, 'Ha ha! I've got more sin out into the world!,' God is rubbing His hands and saying, 'Ha ha! And now I can deal with that sin as never before!' "

# Observations and Reflections on the Giant Psalm

Raymond F. Surburg

Psalm 119 is outstanding in a number of ways. It is the longest of the 150 poems comprising the Book of Psalms. Its 176 verses make it the longest chapter in the Bible. Psalm 119 is two chapters removed from the middle chapter of the English Bible (which is also the shortest chapter of the Bible). It is one of thirty-four psalms which in the Hebrew have no superscription (and is therefore called an orphan psalm). One of the Dead Sea manuscripts from Cave 11 has 114 of the original 176 verses.<sup>1</sup> This unique poem has been called the "alphabet of Divine Love," "the school of truth," "the storehouse of the Holy Spirit," "the paradise of all Doctrines as well as the deep mystery of the Scriptures, where the whole moral discipline of all virtues shines brightly."<sup>2</sup>

The author of this giant among the psalms is not known. Luther and Spurgeon believed David to be its author.<sup>3</sup> Others favor Ezra<sup>4</sup> or some individual living in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.<sup>5</sup> Pieters does not believe that the author lived during the postexilic period but at a time when the author is being persecuted by "princes" (v. 161). Pieters would assign it to the period immediately before the captivity, under Manasseh or Jehoiakim or one of the wicked kings, when the ungodly party was in the ascendancy at Jerusalem.<sup>6</sup> The times of Jeremiah would be a fitting time; perhaps Jeremiah was the author or one of his disciples. Those who favor Ezra are motivated by the fact that under the latter there was a public reading of the law and a special effort by Ezra to promote its study.

Utilizing certain verses of Psalm 119 scholars have suggested that the composer was a young man (vv. 9, 99, 100, 141),<sup>7</sup> others that he was a king or a member of a royal family or household (vv. 23, 46, 161).<sup>8</sup> Two of the verses would suggest that the writer had suffered for his faith (vv. 61, 83); still others believe that his life was in jeopardy (v. 109).<sup>9</sup> From verse 126 it has been concluded that the author lived in a time of skepticism, when people ranged from double-minded men (v. 113) to individuals who were thoroughly profane, described as the wicked who "lie in wait to destroy men" (v. 95).<sup>10</sup>

In describing the life and times of the psalmist, Kidner in his commentary on this psalm has written:

The attacks on the psalmist are taking the form of derision (22), slander (described by a curiously modern



touch, as smearing him) by devious means suggests that the regime is not openly apostate; but such verses as 87 and 109 show how murderous such pressure can be. And he is young, it seems (the 'young man' of verse 9 is himself to judge from the context; see also 99f.), and sensitive to scorn (the reproach which I dread', 39); his isolation makes him low-spirited: 'small and despised' (141), drained of vitality and dried up (25, 28, 83). Like Jeremiah, another thin-skinned personality he is alternately saddened and infuriated by what he sees, reacting now with tears (136), now with hot indignation and disgust (53, 158).<sup>11</sup>

Finding himself in such a situation which involves a serious struggle to survive, the psalmist clings to the Word of God. Although the chords of the wicked ensnare him (v. 61f., 54, 147f), he like Silas and Paul rises at midnight to praise God. The observant reader is impressed by the contrasts expressed by the psalmist, who in one line is dejected and in the next utters firmness. Thus the psalmist says: "My soul languishes for thy salvation; I hope in thy word. My eyes fail with watching for thy promise; I ask, 'When wilt thou comfort me. For I have become like a wineskin in the smoke, yet I have not forgotten thy statutes?'" The psalmist is humble, for he is aware of temptations to worldliness (v. 36f.). He also recognizes the fact he ought not to stray from God's commandments, still he "has gone astray like a lost sheep and needs to be looked for and found" (v. 176).

### The Psalm as an Acrostic Poem

There are a number of psalms which employ the acrostic principle: Psalms 9, 10, 25, 24, 37, 111, 112, 145, and 119. Psalm 119 is divided into twenty-two sections, each comprised of eight verses. Each verse in section 1 (vv. 1-8) begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, aleph. The next section (vv. 9-16) has each verse beginning with the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet, beth. And thus in the twenty-two sections the author works, through the whole alphabet, from aleph to tau. This same literary device is also found in the first four chapters of Lamentations and in the poem of "The Virtuous Woman," with which the Book of Proverbs ends (31:10-31).

### The Subject of the Psalm

Luther described Psalm 119 as "The Christians' Golden Alphabet Concerning Their Praise and Love of God's Word and Its Power and Blessing."<sup>12</sup> Luther loved this psalm and knew its contents well, because as he reminds his readers "its four

divisions were sung and read daily in the churches at prime, terce, sext, and noon." But he proceeds to add "all the priests read it everyday, not knowing in the least what they read"; for "although there has been a good reason for reading this psalm above others daily, it has been of no avail; Christendom has become filled with *human* laws nevertheless, and even this psalm, contrary to its own intent, has been tied down to *human* laws."<sup>13</sup>

One single theme binds the 175 verses of Psalm 119 together—the praise of the law. The psalmist does not feel the law as a burden at all. In fact, he loves it. The law is his joy, his recreation, his diversion. In the midst of persecution and trouble, it is the study of the law that keeps him firm and on a steady course. Jonathan Edwards is reported to have said that there is no part of the Holy Scriptures where the nature and evidence of true and sincere godliness are so fully delineated as in this psalm.

#### Artistic or Artificial?

Scholars have given varied evaluations of this psalm.<sup>14</sup> Artur Weiser in his *The Psalms*, originally appearing in the well-known German commentary series, *Das Alte Testament Deutsch*, wrote about Psalm 119: "This psalm, the most comprehensive of all psalms, is a particularly artificial product of religious poetry. . . In accordance with the number of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet twenty-two such poems are joined together; these, however, neither show a consistent thought-sequence one with another nor represent units complete in themselves. This formal character of the psalm stifles its subject matter. This psalm is a many coloured mosaic of thoughts which are often repeated in a wearisome fashion."<sup>15</sup> Contrast this judgment with the opinion of Leupold: "In spite of these artificial restrictions the psalm has an unusual warmth and devoutness of tone."<sup>16</sup> Spurgeon wrote: "Many superficial readers have imagined that it harps upon one string and abounds in pious repetitions and redundancies; but this arises from the shallowness of the reader's own mind: those who have studied this Divine hymn and carefully noted each line of it are amazed at the variety and profundity of the thought. The more one studies it, the fresher it becomes."<sup>17</sup> The Jewish commentator Cohen introduces his remarks in the *Soncino Commentary* with this encomium: "An extraordinary declaration of the joy and help which Torah brings to those who conduct their life under its direction fills the longest of the Psalms."<sup>18</sup>

#### Types of Poetry in Psalm 119

Weiser claims that the author of Psalm 119 has included or borrowed from many different types of poetry, such as sayings

concerning blessedness (vv. 1-3) and cursing (v. 21), hymns (vv. 13f., 54, 71f., 89ff., 105, 172), thanksgivings (v. 7), confessions (vv. 31ff.), laments and supplications (vv. 8, 107, 153ff.), affirmations of trust (v. 42), and wisdom sayings (vv. 9, 99).<sup>19</sup> Rhodes, by contrast, sees only four distinct literary types reflected in this psalm. First, it is the most elaborate acrostic poem in the Bible. Second by, the psalm is a hymn of praise to God. Thirdly, it is a wisdom poem. Fourthly, it contains some characteristics of a lament.<sup>20</sup>

### Psalm 119 as a "Word of God" Psalm

There are three psalms in the Psalter that may be called "torah psalms," namely, 1, 19, and 119. Leslie has classified 19:7-14 and 119 as "hymns of the revelation of God."<sup>21</sup> According to the Old Testament, God is the author of the law, whether the word "torah" is employed in its basic sense of "instruction" or used of the ten commandments or of the Pentateuch (the Law of Moses) or as a term representing both law and gospel.

Psalm 19 speaks of two different revelations of God—the one in nature and the other in the tora. To understand properly the various synonyms utilized in Psalm 119, the reader must consult the different expressions used by David in Psalm 19:8-10. Cohen claims, "that the author was acquainted with xix. 8-10 is certain because he adopts the key-words there used; and taking them and others as his motif weaves them into a verbal fugue. It is an individual who draws so lavishly upon his resources of language to convey his love of the Torah and what a force it is in his life; but he is a spokesman of many of his coreligionists who would endorse his tribute."<sup>22</sup>

The Jewish Publication Society Version of the Old Testament translated Psalm 19:7-10 as follows:<sup>23</sup>

The law of the LORD is perfect,  
restoring the soul;  
The testimony of the LORD is sure,  
making wise the simple.

The precepts of the LORD are right,  
rejoicing the heart;  
The commandment of the LORD is pure,  
enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the LORD is clean,  
enduring forever;  
The ordinances of the LORD are true,  
they are righteous altogether.

The six key words in the Hebrew are: *torah*, 'eduth, *piqqudh*, *mitzwah*, *yir'ah*, *mishpat*. In commenting on these words Rhodes described their respective meanings as follows:

The law is known by different names: law, testimony, precepts, commandment, fear, and ordinances (vv. 7-10). Although these words as used here are virtually synonymous, they do have distinctive shades of meaning. As Torah the "law" is instruction; as testimony it is a witness to God's will of the personal God; as fear it is that which enjoins reverence for God; and as ordinance it is a group of divine judgments.<sup>24</sup>

However, scholars differ as to the number of different synonyms employed by the author of Psalm 119. Some have found as many as ten different words in the Hebrew, and this fact has led Wright to discuss Psalm 119 under the caption: "The Psalm of the 'Ten Words.'" <sup>25</sup> Perowne also speaks of ten words.<sup>26</sup> In the Hebrew Massorah to verse 122 of Psalm 119, the reader will find this statement:

Throughout the whole of the Great Alphabet (i.e., the Alphabetic Psalm, 119) there is in every verse one of the following ten expressions: DEREK (=Way), 'EDUTH (=Testimony), PIKKUDIM (=Precepts), MIZVAH (=Commandment), 'IMRATH (=Saying), TORAH (=Law), MISPAT (=Judgment), ZEDEK, ZEDEKAH, and ZADDIK (=Righteousness), HOK and HUKKAH (=Statutes), DABAR (=Word), which correspond to the Ten Commandments; except one verse, in which there is none of these: viz. verse 122.<sup>27</sup>

Leupold also agrees that ten synonyms are utilized by the psalmist belonging to the school of Ezra and Nehemiah: Law, word, saying, commandment, statute, precept, testimony, way, and path.<sup>28</sup> In expounding these terms Leupold opines that the word "torah" has a broad meaning. Thus he writes: "It apparently includes the whole wide range of what God has revealed in His Word, words of instruction, of caution, of precept, and of comfort. To tell the truth, the things that the prophets offer do not receive special treatment in our psalm; but the word law dare not be understood in the narrow sense."<sup>29</sup> Again he observes: "In each section of eight verses the majority of these appear; and though they are distinctive terms that convey the many-sidedness of the Word of God, the specific connotation of the root meaning of the Hebrew word dare not always be pressed too precisely. The use of the various terms is the author's way of securing variety of treatment of his subject."<sup>30</sup> In his *Treatise on Confession* Luther stated about Psalm 119:

And it is especially strange that each verse, from

beginning to end, prays for nearly the same thing and has the same content, that in so long a psalm one and the same matter is treated, though in different words, so many times, viz. one hundred and seventy-six times.<sup>31</sup>

The one matter and subject of this unique poem is the Word of God. In kaleidoscopic fashion the wonders and riches and effectiveness of God's Word are declared under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Twenty-two times, once for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the psalmist calls the revealed Word of God "testimony" or "testimonies," because in it God testifies for truth and against sin. Again, twenty-two times in his prayer to God the psalmist calls God's revelation "Thy commandments," and once more in verse 115, partly in the very words which Christ will speak to many "in that day," he says: "Depart from me, ye evil doers; for I will keep the commandments of my God" (cf. Matthew 7:23). "Commandments" are fundamental directions in the Word of God for our conduct, both enjoining and forbidding things. Twenty times the psalmist calls the Word "statutes" and twenty-one times "precepts," or directions and laws which derive their force from divine appointment, whether the reasons for them are apprehended or not. "Thy Word" occurs thirty-four times; "Thy Words" four times; "the Word of thy righteousness" once; "Thy Law" twenty-three times; "the Law of the Lord" and "The Law of Thy mouth" each once; "Thy judgments" nineteen times; "Thy righteous judgments" five times; "the judgments of Thy mouth" once ("judgments" being rules of conduct formed by God's judicial decisions of approval as well as condemnation); "His ways" three times; "Thy way" once; "Thine ordinance" once. In view of all these occurrences, how can anyone assert that the Bible does not claim to be the Word of God? In only one verse (122), where none of these synonyms occur, do we lack a direct assertion about God's Word. But even in verse 122 the proud are called such because they do not "fear" the Word of God. In verse 132 the designation "Thy name" may be understood to mean "the Word," since it is only in the Word that God's true name may be known.

#### The Verbs Used in Psalm 119

An interesting feature of this giant among the psalms is the abundance of verbs used by the psalmist in setting forth his attitude toward the Word of God. It should be noted that while the verb "quicken" or "revive," is found outside this psalm but three times in the Psalter (namely, Psalm 71:20; 80:18; 143:11), this same verb occurs eleven times in Psalm 119. In nine dif-

ferent verses the psalmist requests God "to quicken" him, and twice he asserts that by God's Word he has been "quickenened." The Psalmist recognizes that the Word of God has quickening power. The following are the passages that use the verb "quicken":

Quicken Thou me according to Thy word (v. 25).

Quicken Thou me in Thy way (v. 37).

Quicken me in Thy righteousness (v. 40).

Quicken me, O Lord, according unto Thy word (v. 107).

O Lord, quicken me according to Thy judgment (v. 149).

Quicken me according to Thy word (v. 154).

Quicken me according to Thy judgments (v. 156).

Quicken me, Lord, according to Thy loving-kindness (v. 159).

The writer of Psalm 119 speaks of the quickening work of the word in his soul. In verses 50 and 93 he states:

This is my comfort in my affliction; for Thy word hath quickened me (v. 50).

I will never forget Thy precepts; for with them Thou hast quickened me (v. 93).

From verse 88, "Quicken me after Thy loving-kindness; so shall I observe the testimony of Thy mouth," it is evident there is a vital connection between "quickenening" and obedience.

Every verse of Psalm 119 is addressed to God, except verse 1, 2, 3, 115, and 128. The psalm has been ridiculed as a cross-word play. But the theme is treated with enthusiasm, sincerity, and spiritual warmth. It is neither monotonous nor mechanical, but vital and ingenious.

### Psalm 119 and Deuteronomy

There is a Jewish tradition that the organization of the Pentateuch in five books was the inspiration for the division of the Psalter into five books. Book I comprises Psalms 1-41; Book II, Psalms 42-72; Book III, Psalms 73-89; Book IV, Psalms 90-106; and Book V, Psalms 107-150. Thus, Psalm 119 belongs to the fifth book of the Psalter. Interestingly enough, it has noticeable points of contact with the fifth volume of the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy, a book which emphasizes respect and love for the law of Yahweh.<sup>32</sup> The psalmist prays no less than five times in Psalm 119: "teach me Thy statutes" (vv. 12, 26, 64, 68, 124, 135). Five times also the psalmist asks for "understanding" in the law of God (vv. 27, 34, 73, 125, 169).

In Deuteronomy *love* as a motive for keeping God's commandments is stressed. The same appeal is made in Psalm 119, as may be seen from the following verses:

And I will delight myself in Thy commandments, which I have loved (v. 47).

My hands also will I lift up unto Thy commandments, which  
I have loved (v. 48).

O how love I Thy commandments (v. 97).

Thy word is very pure; therefore Thy servant loveth it (v.  
140).

Consider how I love Thy precepts (v. 159).

I hate and abhor lying; but Thy word do I love (v. 163).

My soul hath kept Thy testimonies; I love them exceedingly  
(v. 167).

For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven (v. 89).

### Psalm 119 and God's Objective Revelation

Psalm 119 indicates that by the time of its composition there existed a considerable body of moral teaching which was recognized to have been given by Yahweh. There was an objective written revelation, referred to in Psalm 119 as "statutes," "ordinances," "precepts," "testimonies," "ordinance," and "law." When the psalmist speaks of the "word of God" he is not speaking of some inner light like that sought by the Quakers. The author is writing about a definite, formulated, objective, written revelation of God. The word "torah" certainly could include the Mosaic law, which was turned over by Moses to his successor Joshua. Already Hosea refers to the Mosaic law, when he writes: "I wrote for him [Israel] the ten thousand things of My law, but they are accounted as a strange thing" (8:12). We, therefore, have in this psalm one of the oldest discussions of one of the great basic truths of the Hebrew and Christian religion, namely, the existence of an objective divine revelation. Psalm 119 may be said to be in the form of a meditation. Albertus Pieters has appropriately commented as follows:

The writer does not seek to prove that God has spoken; he knows that to be true and seeks to enter deeply into the religious values of it. The Psalm is not a piece of reasoning and therefore there is in it no clearly discernible progress of thought. It is a meditation in which the same idea is taken up and looked at from many angles. It was not hastily written and must not be hastily read; but if we will take our time for it and read it little by little, thinking every verse over carefully, we shall find it very precious. There is much in it to be pondered.<sup>33</sup>

### Famous Verses of Psalm 119

Dr. Thomas Manton, chaplain to Oliver Cromwell, and later to Charles II, preached on Psalm 119 no fewer than one hundred and ninety sermons, which still are extant in three large



volumes. Spurgeon in his *Treasury of David* devoted nearly four hundred pages to Psalm 119. Spurgeon quotes from William De Burgh:

It is recorded of the celebrated St. Augustine, who among his voluminous works left a Comment on the Book of Psalms, that he delayed to comment on this till he had finished the whole Psalter; and then yielded only to the long and vehement urgency of his friends, "because," he says, "as often as I essayed to think thereon it always exceeded the powers of my intent thought and utmost grasp of my faculties."<sup>34</sup>

### The Law of God a Delight, Not a Burden

The poet who composed this remarkable poem felt the divine law to be a delight and not a burden. A good title for Psalm 119 would be "The Psalm of Delight in the Law of the Lord." This spiritual attitude is one of the outstanding characteristics of the man who is born again. The unregenerate man does not give expression to the sentiments that repeatedly are met with in this psalm. An unbeliever simply cannot find delight in God's Word, for in it is the law of God which reproves him, accuses him, shames him, and makes him tremble. For the person not in fellowship with God the life of the God-fearing man seems to be a narrow life, crabbed by irksome restraint, a life without the spontaneity of joy.

While the author of Psalm 119 lived under the Old Dispensation, the Dispensation of the Law, his attitude was that of a New Testament Christian. The promise of Jeremiah 31:33 was for the New Testament era, the Messianic Age, and the writer of this psalm may be said already to live spiritually in that new age. In verse 45 he exclaims: "I shall walk at liberty, for I have sought thy precepts." This man had experienced the assertion and promise of Christ: "The truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

Here is a psalm that every Christian would do well to master thoroughly. Matthew Henry's father suggested that Christians take one verse of Psalm 119 for meditation every morning and go through the poem at least twice in a year; the result will be, said he, to "bring you in love with all the rest of the Scriptures." To this statement he added: "All grace grows as love to the word of God grows."<sup>35</sup>

### Storing the Memory with Verses from Psalm 119

Many verses from this psalm have become a customary part of the vocabulary and thinking of the pious down through the centuries. The following are some of the verses that have been memorized and treasured by many Christians:



How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth (v. 103).

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path (v. 105).

Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee (v. 119).

Thou art my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Thy word (v. 114).

I will speak of Thy testimonies before kings and will not be ashamed (v. 23).

The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver pieces (v. 72).

Open, Thou mine eyes that I might see the wondrous things in Thy law (v. 18).

Verses 9 and 105 would be excellent mottos for young people: "Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word," and "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." Concerning these two verses O. W. Wismar wrote over fifty years ago:

These two verses may also serve as a key for a proper appreciation of the beauty of this elaborate psalm. If a young man can cleanse his way by taking heed thereto according to God's Word, is not that Word, then, a most wonderful thing? Do you know of anything else wherewith a young man *can* cleanse his way? Again, is there anything else besides the Word of God of which you may truthfully say that it is a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your path? Now, that is one of the very things the psalmist is doing in this long and elaborate psalm: praising the unique and supreme excellence of the *revealed* Word."<sup>36</sup>

#### Luther and Psalm 119

We have previously mentioned that Luther called Psalm 119 "The Christians' Golden Alphabet Concerning Their Praise and Love of God's Word and Its Power and Blessing." Luther took his introductory thoughts on auricular confession from this psalm in *The Treatise of Confession, Whether the Pope Have Power to Enjoin Same*, dated June 1, 1521. While writing this work, Luther decided to append a new translation of this "giant among the psalms." But the wretched work of the printer caused the Reformer to change his mind. Later the translation was published separately. In 1527, Luther began a new Latin translation of the Bible which was to replace the faulty Vulgate, the official translation of the Roman Catholic Church. In that same year Luther published as a sample of his new proposed version a translation of Psalm 119 under the title of *Octonarius*

*David*. Two years later Luther again was found at work on this psalm, issuing an edition with explanatory notes. John Gutknecht in Nuremberg published this effort of Luther as *The Hundred and Nineteenth Psalm, A Prayer That God Would Keep Us in His Word and Not Suffer Us to Fall Away From It*. The Reformer treasured this psalm because he was thoroughly in sympathy with its sentiments and teachings.

### Outline

Some Bible commentators believe that it would be difficult to outline the contents of this psalm. Jensen is of the opinion that "there is no logical outline from stanza to stanza." His recommendation is to study each unit by itself.<sup>37</sup> As a student comes to grips with the inspired thoughts and assertions of this poem, the reader is encouraged to write out what the psalmist teaches about: (1) God, (2) the psalmist, (3) persecution, (4) cause and effect, (5) the heart, (6) meditation, (7) the believer's walk (8) instruction, (9) love, (10) holiness, (11) joy.<sup>38</sup> Yet while there may not be a logical connection or progression from one Hebrew letter to the other, still each of the sections can be treated separately as setting forth a particular thought. Yates makes the following suggestions:<sup>39</sup>

1. Aleph (1-8) The Blessing of Obedience
2. Beth (9-16) The Way of Cleansing
3. Gimel (17-24) The Delight of Experience
4. Daleth (25-32) The Strength of Understanding
5. He (33-40) The Need for Guidance
6. Vav (41-48) The Courage of Witnessing
7. Zayin (49-56) The Source of Comfort
8. Heth (57-64) The Resolution of Faithfulness
9. Teth (65-72) The Discipline of Affliction
10. Yodh (73-80) The Justice of Retribution
11. Kaph (81-88) The Hope of Darkness
12. Lamedh (89-96) The Triumph of Faith
13. Mem (97-104) The Rapture of Enlightenment
14. Nun (105-112) The Light of Life
15. Samekh (113-120) The Inspiration of Loyalty
16. Ayin (121-128) The Time of Intervention
17. Pe (129-136) The Wonder of Illumination
18. Tsadhe (137-144) The Challenge of Righteousness
19. Koph (145-152) The Assurance from Prayer
20. Resh (153-160) The Consciousness of Need
21. Shin (161-168) The Peace of Love
22. Tav (169-176) The Determination of Steadfastness

### Conclusion

Since the Word of God is the greatest treasure given by God

to the Church, this psalm has a unique significance especially for this age of church history, when the Bible is under attack both from without and from within the Church. It is as Wismar wrote over a half century ago:

. . . . for the Church in the true sense consists of such whose attitude toward the Word is that of the psalmist. The Church can afford to lose everything else if but the Word of God remains hers. Having it, she possesses all things necessary for the life and godly work of her members; for by and by its power, grace and peace are multiplied unto her: "through the knowledge of God and Jesus, our Lord, according as His divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." 2 Peter 1, 2-4.<sup>40</sup>

As Wismar further states, if the Church does not hold to the Scriptures as given to her by the inspired penmen, the result will be chilling: "the Church is absolutely and hopelessly doomed, if she has lost the word of God. Or having been exposed to an adulterated or contaminated word, she will slowly, surely, suffer spiritual death by poisoning. Hence the two greatest crimes which can be perpetrated upon the Church are the rape and perversion of the Bible."<sup>41</sup> When studying the Bible, therefore, let us imitate the author of Psalm 119 who prayed:

Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold

Wondrous things out of Thy Law (v. 18).

And after studying God's Word, let us join the psalmist in his request:

Let my tongue sing of Thy Word,

For all Thy commandments are righteousness (v. 172).

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# Highlights of the Lutheran Reformation in Slovakia

David P. Daniel

The Pennsylvania State University, Erie, Pennsylvania

The territory of modern Slovakia, encompassing much of what was formerly upper Hungary, was, during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, a Protestant stronghold and the heartland of Slavic Lutheranism. It is one of the few Slavic regions of Europe where a substantial number of Lutherans<sup>1</sup> have maintained their theological and liturgical traditions as the heritage of the Reformation, and the Lutherans played a role in the cultural-national awakening of the Slovaks of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries far more significant than their numbers would have suggested.

Unfortunately, the history of Lutheranism and the Lutheran Reformation in Slovakia has been neglected by most historians. Even Czech historians do little more than assert that the Reformation strengthened the cultural and linguistic ties between the Czechs and the Slovaks while Hungarian historians, understandably, do not differentiate between the growth of Lutheranism in the Carpathians and the Reformation in the rest of Hungary.<sup>2</sup>

More disquieting is that only a handful of Slovaks have addressed themselves to the formal study of the Lutheran Reformation and many of these were primarily interested in indicating the relationship which they believed existed between the Czech Hussites of the fifteenth century and the Lutherans of the sixteenth century, hoping to justify the concept of a Czechoslovak people.

But this argument, that the Hussites were the direct precursors of Lutheranism in Slovakia, reflects the realities of nineteenth rather than of sixteenth century history. Based upon a widely held folk tradition which ascribed to Hussite foundation many of the oldest Lutheran congregations in Slovakia, this interpretation appeared verified by evidence which indicated that Lutheranism was most quickly and widely accepted in those counties and cities which had been under the hegemony of John Jiskra and his Hussite warriors. This interpretation, though facile and attractive to advocates of a Czechoslovak nationality, lacks concrete historical substantiation.<sup>3</sup>

Even a cursory study of the Reformation Era in Slovakia indicates that the first to accept Lutheranism were the German burghers of the cities of central and eastern Slovakia. Nevertheless, although the Reformation in Slovakia began as an

extension of and was strongly influenced by the reformers at the University of Wittenberg, by the end of the sixteenth century, Slovaks would form the majority in the Lutheran Church in Slovakia. Slovak clergy would increase their voice in the administration of the Church during the sixteenth century and would look less and less to Wittenberg for guidance and direction. It was this acculturation of Lutheranism in Slovakia which helps to explain why it was able to endure until the present while in other regions inhabited by Slavic peoples, Lutheranism died out or was retained only as the faith of Germanic peoples.

Luther's ideas were promulgated and found acceptance in Slovakia shortly after his debate with John Eck at Leipzig. Merchants from the cities of central and eastern Slovakia returned from their regular visits to the Leipzig fair with news of and pamphlets by the Wittenberg Professor. In 1520 Thomas Preisner, Pastor at Leibitz near Käsmark in Zips county of eastern Slovakia, read Luther's *Ninety-five Theses* from his pulpit.<sup>4</sup> Two years later a small congregation of Lutherans had been founded at Nové Mesto pod Siatrom.<sup>5</sup> In 1522 George Baumhenckel of Neusohl became the first student from Slovakia to enroll at the University of Wittenberg and was followed in 1523 by Thomas Matthias, also from Neusohl, and Martin Cyriacus from Leutschau.<sup>6</sup> By 1525 the citizens of Bartfeld, a major trading center in eastern Slovakia, were caught up in a debate of Luther's ideas, we were the citizens of the cities of the *montana* region of central Slovakia.<sup>7</sup>

Luther's influence was even felt within the court of Hungary. There the most prominent advocate of Luther was none other than the military tutor of Louis and the close confidant of Mary, George of Brandenburg. George seems to have accepted Luther's ideas quite early, for in 1522 he was condemned by many of the lesser Hungarian nobles, clerics, and Italians at the court as a German heretic.<sup>8</sup> A ready target for their reproaches because of his pro-Habsburg attitudes, George made no effort to conceal his views. In a letter to Luther dated 5 January 1523 George indicated how he had himself defended the German Reformer before the King.<sup>9</sup>

It was George who arranged the appointment of Conrad Cordatus, later active in Slovakia and Germany, as the court chaplain of Mary. But the fiery and intemperate attack Cordatus made upon the Pope, the Papal Legate to Hungary, and the cardinals after the publication of *Decet Romanum* led to his dismissal and brief imprisonment.<sup>10</sup> He was replaced by John Henckel from Leutschau who, though an advocate of reform, was much more in sympathy with the views of Erasmus than with those of Luther. Except for a brief sojourn in Kaschau in

1526, Henckel served the Queen until 1530 when she departed Hungary to assume the Regency of the Netherlands.<sup>11</sup>

Mary herself was attacked for tolerating Lutheranism because she sought to reduce the tensions between her brother Ferdinand and the evangelicals<sup>12</sup> and because Luther dedicated to her his exposition of four penitential psalms of 1526.<sup>13</sup> Although Mary never expressly accepted the ideas of Luther, neither did she explicitly repudiate him. Even as late as 1530, despite all of her protestations to Ferdinand that she did not tolerate heretics in her retinue, she still indicated an interest in Luther and his doctrine when she was at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530.<sup>14</sup> She would not define her own religious convictions with precision but seems to have sympathized more with the ideas of Erasmus.

Because of its attraction for the Germans in the court of Hungary and in the cities of Slovakia, Lutheranism was viewed as a very real threat to the kingdom by the lesser Magyar nobility and the Roman Catholic hierarchy. On 24 April 1523 the Diet accepted an anti-Lutheran proposal drawn up by Cardinal Cajetan and endorsed by Stephen Werböczy stating that "all Lutherans and those favoring them shall have their property confiscated and themselves be punished as heretics and foes of the most holy Virgin Mary."<sup>15</sup> Various royal governors also tried to stamp out the evangelical movement but without any real success, and in 1525 the Diet once again felt compelled to decree that all Lutherans should be purged from the land by both the secular and the ecclesiastical authorities.<sup>16</sup>

These laws must be understood, however, in light of the many problems confronting Hungary in 1525; the rivalries among the nobility, the conflict between the nobles and the monarchy, the fear of Habsburg influence and of the advance of the Turkish armies in southern Hungary and especially the financial difficulties facing the nation. Hoping to alleviate these problems, Werböczy and the lesser nobility sought to assume the direction of the mines of central Slovakia, largely controlled by the Fugger-Thurzo company. Angered by the German domination of the cities of Slovakia, which were vital to the economic well-being of the nation, the increasingly xenophobic lesser Magyar nobility took advantage of the revolt of the miners in the *montana* region, which broke out in 1525, to attack this German influence by identifying it with the doctrines emanating from Wittenberg.<sup>17</sup>

This was not difficult to accomplish. Many of the leading burghers of Neusohl, a center of the revolt, and of the other six major cities of the *montana* region, had gone over to Lutheranism during the 1520's. In Neusohl Valentin Schneider, who had been elected magistrate in 1521, and his brother-in-law, Heinrich Kindlinger, the curator of the churches of the



city, converted to Lutheranism. It was their not so secret intention to call Simon Bernhard Kech, a follower of Luther, as a preacher for the city churches. But the city pastor, Nicolaus of Zeeben, strongly opposed this maneuver, arguing that the attempt by the magistrates to name a cleric to a position subordinate to his own, without his approval, was an illegal interference in the rights and responsibilities of the city pastor. Nicolaus appealed to both the Queen and the hierarchy, the latter responding quickly in favor of Nicolaus and sending a commission to the city on 4 April 1524 to root out and destroy Lutheran books.<sup>18</sup> Not to be thwarted by the opposition of Nicolaus, after Kech requested to be excused from his earlier acceptance of the call because of the dispute, the magistrates resorted to the convention of inviting evangelical preachers to work in the city for specific terms and honorariums. Among these were Conrad Cordatus, John Kryssling and Dominikus Hoffmann. Even the hesitant Kech delivered a series of sermons in Neusohl in the winter of 1526.<sup>19</sup>

This tactic only served to prolong the struggle and led to its involvement in the revolt of the miners. For once the revolt broke out, Nicolaus charged that the reformist preachers had stirred up the workers. While Kryssling and Cordatus were imprisoned briefly, they were found innocent of any connection with the uprising, and Nicolaus, who had hoped to strengthen his hand, found that he had lost most of his support. Upon his death in 1529, the council of Neusohl selected Stephen Spetinger as the first Lutheran city pastor.<sup>20</sup> The dispute in Neusohl was not confined to theology but involved jurisdictional issues. The heat of the controversy was fired by the increasing desire of the lay leaders of the community to gain a greater voice in the administration of the churches in the city than they had previously exercised, justifying their actions by an appeal to their traditional prerogatives as embodied in their civic charters of privilege.

Evangelical clerics were also aided and protected by some of the most powerful families of Hungary living in Slovakia, who joined the Lutheran movement during the first half century of the Reformation. Among them were the Thurzo, Illésházy, Török, Ballassi, Dragfi, Kostka, Révay, Perényi, and Nádasdy families. All of them tolerated evangelical reformers in their territories, most of them called protestant clerics to serve the chapels on their estates, and some of them, including Thomas Nádasdy, Francis Révay, and Peter Perenyi, corresponded directly with Melancthon and Luther, seeking advice in theological and ecclesiastical matters.<sup>21</sup>

As magistrates and magnates went over to the new faith, the Roman Catholic hierarchy, which had suffered severe losses at



the battle of Mohács in 1526 and in the subsequent disorders of the Turkish occupation of most of Hungary, could not inhibit the growth of Lutheranism in Slovakia. The paucity of leaders within the Roman Catholic Church allowed the reformers in Slovakia to work within the old ecclesiastical organization to bring about the reform of liturgy and doctrine. As they took over the administration of the churches at the municipal and district levels, the reformers encountered little effective opposition and thus felt no need to organize outside the existing structures until the end of the century.

This was the pattern of reform throughout Slovakia and can be seen clearly in the eastern counties and cities. In Bartfeld, Esias Lang and Michael Radaschius were early supporters of reform, as was Matthew Ramaschi, pastor at Zeeben, who corresponded regularly with the Wittenberg reformers.<sup>22</sup> Even George Moeller, the Senior of the Fraternity of the pastors of the twenty-four Zips cities, one of the most important pastoral conferences in Slovakia, eventually went over to Lutheranism despite his earlier attempts to halt its spread in Leutschau.<sup>23</sup> In 1544 he called Bartholomaeus Bogner of Eperies to come to Leutschau as Deacon in order to preach in the spirit of Luther, while Moeller himself addressed the need to establish a continuing basis of financial support for the evangelical churches and schools.

In central Slovakia Stefan Spetinger, Bartholomaeus Frank, and Raphael Steger were the propagators of Lutheranism in Neusohl,<sup>24</sup> while Andreas Jacobaeus and Stanislaus Koskossinus did the same in Altsohl. In western Slovakia, where the magnates were particularly active in fostering the growth of Lutheranism, Slovak clergy were quite prominent in the Lutheran movement, including Caspar Kolarik, Jaroslav Urbanovic, and Michael Marcellus or Marček in Arwa county, and Basilius Modonius, Paul de Hunicov, and George Bohemicus in Trentschin.<sup>25</sup>

The rectors of the city and village schools of Slovakia were also active in the reform movement. The schools, which came increasingly under the control of lay patrons, were one of the most effective agencies for the propagation of Lutheranism in Slovakia. The magistrates or magnates would name the rectors, confirm the curriculum and orders or discipline for both teachers and pupils, and adjudicate disputes.<sup>26</sup> Continuing the pedagogical traditions of northern humanism and merging them with Lutheran doctrine, the evangelical schools of Slovakia attracted the sons of the magnates and the burghers.

Most significant were the schools located at Kásmark, Eperies, Neusohl, Leutschau and Bartfeld. Under Leonhard Stöckel, a former student and life-long friend of Luther and Melanchthon,

the Humanist School at Bartfeld attained such fame that its curriculum served as a model for many of the other schools of Slovakia.<sup>27</sup>

Many of the pastors and rectors patterned their activity after the model of the reformers at Wittenberg as they had learned to know them during their sojourn at the University. Although the universities at Vienna, Cracow, and Padua still drew substantial numbers of students from Hungary, as did the University at Prague, the overwhelming majority of the evangelicals from Slovakia sought a Wittenberg education. By the time of Melanchthon's death in 1560 some 442 students from Hungary had enrolled at Wittenberg, and by the end of the century the number reached 1018.<sup>28</sup> Frequently aided by stipends and subsidies from patrons at home, the students absorbed the teachings of Luther and Melanchthon, the latter being especially solicitous of the welfare of the students from Hungary.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, since the approval of the bishops, who were still Roman Catholic, was required for ordination at home, many of these students went to Wittenberg not only to complete their education but to be ordained there. It seems that many viewed their ordination at Wittenberg as bestowing upon their ministry the authority and blessing of the *alma mater* of Lutheranism.

Since many of the lay patrons of the reformation movements in Slovakia were primarily concerned with moral and liturgical reform, it is not too surprising that a specifically Lutheran movement was slow to develop. Almost all who advocated reform were called Lutherans by their enemies, irrespective of the doctrine they preached. The theological particularization which was evident quite early in Germany and Switzerland developed much more slowly in Slovakia. Nevertheless, there had been, even during the early years of the evangelical reform movement in Slovakia, some egregious theological debates between the radical Anabaptists and the more moderate reformers in eastern Slovakia. Andreas Fischer from Kremnitz advocated Anabaptist and then Sabbatarian and Judaizing views in the cities of Zips county during the 1530's, achieving some success among the lower classes in the cities.<sup>30</sup> An even greater challenge to Lutheranism was that of Calvinism, which became increasingly popular among the Magyars. Presaged by Matthias Biro Dévay who, after returning to Hungary from Wittenberg, inclined more and more to the doctrinal formulations of the Helvetic Reformation, many of the Magyars, even those who attended Wittenberg, would accept first Philippist and then distinctly Calvinist doctrine.<sup>31</sup>

At Wittenberg, the Magyar students formed a specific nation, the Hungarian *Coetus*, limited to those whose mother

tongue was Hungarian. Throughout its history, no German or Slovak from Slovakia ever joined the *Coetus*; and thus there emerged at Wittenberg a distinction between the Magyars, on the one hand, and the Germans and the Slovaks, on the other. This differentiation was not confined to ethnic or linguistic differences but became increasingly theological. At first characterized by the moderation of Melanchthon in doctrine, to whom the Magyars were especially attracted, the members of the *Coetus* would adhere more and more to purely Helvetic teachings after Melanchthon's death. After attacks were made upon it by the Archduke August of Saxony in the 1570's, only a handful of members remained in the organization and most of the Magyars sought out the universities of Switzerland and the Rhineland to complete their education.<sup>32</sup> The process which began at Wittenberg continued in Hungary as the students returned home. The theological and ethnic differentiation began to split apart the evangelical movement and was accentuated by the need to define the evangelical faith as a result of the defeat of the Smalcaldic League at Mühlberg in 1547, the repudiation of protestant ideas at the first sessions of the Council of Trent, the renewal of Catholicism, and the passage of the first anti-protestant laws by the Hungarian Diet since 1525.

At Pressburg in 1548 the Diet approved an article ordering the expulsion of Anabaptists and Sacramentarians from the kingdom was approved.<sup>33</sup> Fearing the influence of Anabaptism and other more radical theologies, the Lutheran party had joined with the Roman Catholic party to enact this law. But the Catholic hierarchy, with the support of the King, immediately began to interpret the law as meaning that all "innovators" in religious matters, including Lutherans, should be expelled. In response to this very obvious threat, the Lutherans of Slovakia, and subsequently the Magyar Calvinists, sought to define their faith and to defend themselves by disavowing the Anabaptist views proscribed by the law of 1548.

Attempts to define the theology of the evangelicals had taken place in 1545 at Erdöd and one year later at the Synod of Eperies. At the latter, where discussions focused primarily upon ceremonies and feast days, the representatives of the five royal free cities of eastern Slovakia, Eperies, Zeeben, Bartfeld, Kásmark, and Leutschau, declared their adherence to both the Augsburg Confession and the *Loci Communes* of Melanchthon.<sup>34</sup> After the passage of the law of 1548, the need for a definition of the evangelical faith became even more pressing. Believing themselves entitled to the same toleration which had been extended to their co-religionists in the Empire, the Lutherans of Slovakia would, after 1548, seek to make their adherence to the *Augustana* even clearer by drawing up three

confessions of faith: the *Confessio Pentapolitana* authored by Leonhard Stöckel in 1548 and accepted by the five royal free cities of eastern Slovakia; the *Confessio Montana* of 1558 which was largely the work of Ulrich Cubicularius of Schemnitz and accepted by the seven free cities of central Slovakia; and the *Confessio Scepusiana* prepared by Valentin Megander and Cyriak Koch using the *Montana* as their model and approved by the *Contubernia* of the pastors of twenty-four Zips cities in 1569. Although each of these confessions was a response to a specific threat to the independence of the evangelicals in each region by the Catholic hierarchy, they all conformed to the doctrines of the *Augustana* while expressing these doctrines in moderate, almost conciliatory language. Clearly repudiating the views of the Anabaptists, these confessions also stressed the true catholicity which the Lutherans believed characterized their views.<sup>35</sup>

At the same time, the Magyar Calvinists were defining their doctrinal stance and, while attempts were made to reconcile the differences between the two parties, they were to no avail. By the last quarter of the sixteenth century each party, Lutheran and Calvinist, had so defined their own theology through confessions of faith as to make reconciliation impossible. The process of definition of dogma led to the differentiation of the evangelical Reformation in Hungary into two distinct groups and to the perpetuation of the separation between the Calvinist Magyars and the Lutherans of Slovakia.

These confessions did differentiate between the Lutherans of Slovakia and the Magyar Calvinists as well as the Anabaptists but did not eliminate another major threat to the Lutherans in Slovakia, that of dissension within their own ranks. The very moderation of language and brevity, which characterized all three of the confessions accepted by Lutherans within Slovakia, allowed for a variety of interpretation. After 1580, attempts to have the Formula of Concord accepted as the normative statement of Lutheran theology for the Lutherans of Slovakia resulted in a generation of debate. On the one hand, many German Lutherans of the central and eastern cities of Slovakia were reluctant to accept the very precise doctrinal definitions which had been incorporated into the Formula of Concord and accepted by the orthodox Lutherans in Germany. On the other hand, the clergy of Slovak ancestry, often supported by the leading magnates of Slovakia, and seeking a greater voice in the administration of the Church in which Slovaks were now numerically the majority, became the ardent advocates of the Formula.

It could have been expected that the controversies leading to the formulation and acceptance of the Formula of Concord

would be echoed in Slovakia. For many of the issues treated in the Formula had already emerged in the cities of Slovakia. In 1551 Matthias Lauterwald, Pastor at Eperies, accepted and proclaimed an Helvetic interpretation of the Lord's Supper and a synergistic interpretation of the doctrine of salvation. Michael Radaschinus and Leonhard Stöckel both chastized Lauterwald, who had been influenced by Osiander and the other Königsberg theologians. This dispute eventually involved the town councils of Bartfeld and Eperies, who appealed to the faculty of Wittenberg for a decision in the case. On 30 October 1554 Melanchthon wrote to the magistrates of Eperies indicating that, if Lauterwald persisted in his views, they had the right to dismiss him from his post.<sup>36</sup> Even before Lauterwald, both Andreas Fischer and George Leudischer from Leutschau had preached doctrines more radical than those generally accepted as Lutheran; while, during the second third of the sixteenth century, Francis Stancarus of Poland, who also labored in Transylvania, and Francis David of eastern Hungary, proclaimed even more radical Unitarian doctrines. These radical theologians had had some influence in eastern Slovakia and this region had also been the center of the moderate Philippist Lutherans. It is quite understandable, therefore, that the Formula provoked hostility among the clerics in eastern Slovakia.

The first attempt to have the Formula accepted as a normative theological statement was made in central Slovakia. George Melzer, from Neusohl, advocated its acceptance at the Synod of Kremnica in March 1580. Many of the other clergy at the Synod were reluctant to accept the Formula and, as tempers flared, Matthias Eberhard, the Senior of the district, worked out a compromise which led to a reiteration, by the clergy, of the theology of the *Confessio Montana*.<sup>37</sup> In eastern Slovakia, Gaspar Kreutzer and Albert Grawer of Kaschau, who had come to Slovakia from Germany, took up the advocacy of the Formula while Anton Platner of Leutschau became its most outspoken critic and was joined by John Mylius, Sebastian Lam, and Sebastian Ambrosius, all of whom were considered Philippist, in opposing its adoption.<sup>38</sup>

The controversy over the Formula of Concord focused largely on the definition of the *communicatio idiomatum* and its implications for the theology of the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. It seems that few, if any, who adhered to Lutheranism in Slovakia, denied the real presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper. But it is also obvious that there were many who were reluctant to define the precise manner by which the bread and the wine communicated the Body and Blood of Christ to the believer. While many of the

clergy were Philippists, most did not consider themselves anything but Lutherans, as can be seen in the frequent and clear repudiations of Calvinist, Zwinglian, and Anabaptist views. It seems most logical, therefore, to conclude that they were reluctant to accept the Formula of Concord because it might have been considered a new confession of faith which could have endangered their own position within the nation.

The Lutherans of Slovakia had consistently defended their right to follow their own religious faith and practice by citing their allegiance to and conformity with the Augsburg Confession recognized in the Empire and also by the rights devolving from their charters and patents of privileges to appoint pastors and rectors. By formally accepting the Formula, they could open themselves to the charge of having adopted a new, non-recognized confession and thus lose what was already a tenuous claim to toleration, a situation which appeared to be happening in Bohemia after the acceptance of the *Confessio Bohemica* of 1575. The threat was made all the more real when Bishop George Bornemissa, whose authority extended to eastern Slovakia, warned that any cleric accepting the Formula in his territory would be considered as having dishonored Christ and would be appropriately punished.<sup>39</sup>

During the 1590's, however, the changing political situation made it necessary for the Lutherans to establish both theological unity and organizational independence. The organization of the Lutheran congregations apart from the old structures and the acceptance of the Formula of Concord might have taken much longer had the political situation remained stable. But during the 1590's the various regions of Slovakia were being threatened by a reinvigorated, post-Tridentine Catholic hierarchy and the absolutist pretensions of Rudolf II and Matthias, who challenged both the traditional political and religious liberties and prerogatives of the cities and nobles. In the face of these threats, the lay leaders came to the foreground as advocates of the Formula of Concord. It was at this juncture of events that the clergy of Slovak ancestry also emerged to assume more prominent roles of leadership within the Lutheran community in Slovakia. In eastern Slovakia, Severinus Scultety, Pastor at Bartfeld, sought to have the Formula recognized by the eastern cities and finally attained his goal at the Synod of Leutschau in 1596.<sup>40</sup> In western Slovakia, Eliáš Lani, a former instructor at the evangelical school at Stráža and the chaplain and advisor to the Lutheran magnate and later Palatine of Hungary, George Thurzo, gained the acceptance of the Formula at Sankt Martin in Thurutz in 1608.<sup>41</sup>

As the debate over the Formula continued, all of Hungary was thrown into an uproar by the attack of the Turks in 1591 and by the renewal of the conflict between the Habsburgs and



the nobles of Transylvanian Hungary. For fifteen years the destructive struggles raged on until the peace of Vienna and of Sztitva Török in 1606. Largely due to the successes of the Calvinist nobleman, Stephen Bocskay, articles recognizing the religious privileges of the nobles were incorporated into the Treaty of Vienna. These were subsequently confirmed, clarified, and extended to the cities by the articles approved at the Diet of 1608.<sup>42</sup> Taken together, the *Pacificatio Viennensis* and the decisions of the Diet of 1608 laid the legal foundations for the existence of Protestantism in all of Hungary. All nobles and cities were to enjoy the free practice and exercise of their religion. Public offices, civil and military, were likewise to be open to all qualified candidates irrespective of their religious persuasion. Moreover, each Protestant group—that is, the Lutherans, Calvinists, and Unitarians—was allowed to establish its own separate ecclesiastical organization.<sup>43</sup>

Under the patronage of George Thurzo, who was elected Palatine in 1609, the Lutherans of western Slovakia took advantage of these laws to organize themselves at the Synod of Sillein in March 1610. A presbyterial structure, independent of the Catholic hierarchy, was retained and the responsibility for administering the churches was laid upon the *seniors* who were to be assisted by inspectors. Three *seniorats* for central and western Slovakia were established, each of them administered by a Slovak *senior*. Three inspectors were also selected, two for the German speaking congregations and one for the Magyar congregations. Each *senior*, moreover, was to take an oath of office which included the statement that "in my public and private life I will teach and foster no other doctrine but that which is found in the prophetic and apostolic writings which are embodied in the confession presented in Augsburg to Emperor Charles V in 1530 and which is found in the Formula of Concord."<sup>44</sup> The Synod of Sillein thus not only created an independent ecclesiastical organization for the Lutherans of central and western Slovakia; it also ended the controversy over the acceptance of the Formula of Concord. It was not until 22 January 1614, however, that the Lutherans of eastern Slovakia were able to create a similar *seniorat* system of ecclesiastical administration at the Synod of Kirchdrauf. Held under the patronage of Christoph Thurzo, the Synod followed the pattern established at Sillein, even to the acceptance of the Formula of Concord as the theological norm for the two *seniorats* created by the Synod.<sup>45</sup>

These synods placed the responsibility of administering the Lutheran churches of Slovakia largely in the hands of the clergy. It was this structure which helped the Lutherans maintain their existence even after most of the magnates

returned to Catholicism during the counter-Reformation and the churches of the cities were restored, often by force, to the control of the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

Equally vital to the continuance of Lutheranism in Slovakia was that the majority of the members of the some nine hundred Lutheran congregations were Slovaks. Lutheranism had not remained merely a German religion but was acculturated by the native Slovak population. It was a process that was not completed, however, until the middle of the seventeenth century with the publication of the *Cithara Sanctorum* or *Harp of the Saints* by George Tranoscius.<sup>46</sup> Born in Silesia and having studied at the University of Wittenberg prior to settling in Slovakia where he died in 1637, George Tranoscius prepared the *Cithara Sanctorum* to serve as a hymnbook, prayerbook, and service book all in one. Written in the *kraličina* or the language of the Czech Kralice Bible, which served as the literary language of the Slovaks, it encapsulated in song and verse the spirit and substance of the Lutheran Reformation. The leading monument of Slovak literature and culture of the Reformation movement, it was the final step in the acculturation of the Lutheran Reformation in Slovakia.

Although Lutheranism was first accepted by the German burghers of the cities of upper Hungary or Slovakia, its gradual acculturation by the Slovak population helps to explain why Lutheranism maintained itself in Slovakia. In contrast to other regions of eastern Europe inhabited by Slavs where Lutheranism remained merely a "German" religion or was accepted primarily by the higher nobility for distinctly political purposes, in Slovakia Lutheranism gained the allegiance of a broad spectrum of the native population. The spread of Lutheranism into Slovakia is thus a unique episode in the history of the Lutheran Reformation. Among all the Slavic peoples, only the Slovaks retained their allegiance to Lutheranism and only in Slovakia did Lutheranism remain a powerful cultural force.

#### FOOTNOTES

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1. In 1973 there were about 450,000 baptized members in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia which had 326 parishes and 14 districts. In the United States there are two Lutheran bodies which have their roots in Synods founded by Slovak Lutheran immigrants: the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (within the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod) with 19,953 baptized members and 58



- congregations and the Zion Lutheran Synod (of the Lutheran Church in America) with 13,326 baptized members and 40 congregations.
2. For the only survey of the historiography of the Lutheran Reformation in Slovakia in English see David P. Daniel, "The Lutheran Reformation in Slovakia, 1517-1618," Diss. The Pennsylvania State University 1972, pp. 1-78.
3. There is no evidence of any direct ties between the Hussites of the fifteenth century and the sixteenth century Lutherans, although the latter did have ties to the contemporary Hussites in Bohemia. Definitive studies on the question have been produced by Branislav Varsík, *Husiti a reformácia na slovensku do žilinskej synody* (Bratislava, 1932) and *Husitské revolučné hnutie a Slovensku* (Bratislava, 1965).
4. Alžbeta Göllnerová, "Počátky reformace v Banské Bystrici," *Bratislava IV* (1930), p. 583.
5. Branislav Varsík, "Prvá evanjelická cirkev na Slovensku?" *Bratislava II* (1928), pp. 70-73.
6. Johann Borbis, *Die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche Ungarns* (Nördlingen, 1861), pp. 29-30; J. P. Tomasik, *Andenken an die 300-jährige Jubelfeier der evangelischen Gemeinde in der k. Freistadt Leutschau* (Leutschau, 1844), pp. 17-18.
7. Ján Kvačala, *Dejiny reformácie na Slovensku* (Lipt. Sv. Mikuláš, 1935), p. 46; Bartolomej Krpelec, *Bardejov a jeho okolie dávno a dnes* (Bardejov, 1935), pp. 40-41.
8. Louis Neustadt, *Markgraf Georg von Brandenburg als Erzieher an der Ungarischen Hofe* (Breslau, 1883), pp. 19-29, 40-44.
9. WA Br. III, p. 568.
10. Deszö Wiczian, "Beiträge zu Leben und Tätigkeit Conrad Cordatus," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte LV* (1964), p. 219-221; Jane de Jongh, *Mary of Hungary, Second Regent of the Netherlands* (London, 1958), pp. 85-86; Adalbert Hudak, "Der Hofprediger Johannes Henckel und seine Beziehungen zu Erasmus von Rotterdam," *Kirche im Osten II* (1959), p. 108.
11. Gustav Bauch, "Dr. Johann Henckel, der Hofprediger der Königin Maria von Ungarn," *Ungarische Revue IV* (1884), pp. 599-600; Lajos Nyikos, "Erasmus und der böhmisch-ungarische Königshof," *Zwingliana VII* (1937), pp. 356-368.
12. CR II, p. 178.
13. WA, XIX, pp. 542-615.
14. CR II, p. 233; WA Br. V, pp. 510-511; Ján Kvačala, "Kralovom Maria a jej účasť v dejoch reformácie," *Viera a Veda I* (1930), pp. 102-105.
15. *Corpus Juris Hungarica*, I (Budae, 1884), Article 54, 1523.
16. *Ibid.*, Article 54, 1525.
17. For an account of the miners revolt see Günther Frhr. von Probszt, *Die niederungarischen Bergstädte: Ihre Entwicklung und wirtschaftliche Bedeutung bis zum Übergang an das Haus Habsburg, 1546* (München, 1966); also "Die sozialen Ursachen des ungarischen Bergarbeiteraufstandes von 1525-1526," *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung X* (1961), pp. 1-25; and especially Peter Ratkoš, *Povstanie baníkov na Slovensku roku 1525-1526* (Bratislava, 1963).
18. Gustav Hamman, "Magister Nicolaus von Sabinov: Ein Beitrag über den Humanismus und die frühe Reformation in der Slowakei," *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung XVI* (1967), pp. 25-40.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 38; Göllnerová, pp. 587-590.
20. Hamman, pp. 42-43.
21. Kvačala, *Dejiny*, pp. 51-52.
22. Andreas Fabo, *Codex evangelicorum utriusque confessionis in Hungaria et Transylvania diplomaticus* (Pesthini, 1869), pp. 13-16.

23. Tomasik, pp. 24-35.
24. Arnold Ipolyi, *Geschichte der Stadt Neusohl: Eine kulturgeschichtliche Skizze*, II (Wien, 1875), pp. 118-119.
25. Borbis, pp. 12-13.
26. The best study of the organization of the schools during the Reformation Era in Slovakia is Peter Vajcik, *Skolstvo, študijne a školské poriadky na Slovensku v 16. storočí* (Bratislava, 1955).
27. Mihály Bucsay, *Geschichte des Protestantismus in Ungarn* (Stuttgart, 1959), pp. 33-34; Mathias Szlavik, *Die Reformation in Ungarn* (Halle, 1884), pp. 20-23.
28. Géza Szabo, *Geschichte des ungarischen Coetus an der Universität Wittenberg, 1555-1613* (Halle, 1941), pp. 15-16.
29. Ladislaus Strop, "Ungarn und Melanchthon," *Deutschevangelische Blätter*, N.F. III (1903), pp. 727-746; Adalbert Hudak, "Melanchthon und die Slowakei," in Desider Alexy, ed., *Roland Steinacker: Ein Leben für Kirche und Volk, Festschrift zur Geburtstag von R. Steinacker* (Stuttgart, 1960), pp. 33-37.
30. Kvačala, *Dejiny*, pp. 58-59; Peter Ratkoš, "Pôčiatky nevokrsteneckva na Slovenska," *Historický Časopis V* (1957), pp. 185-203.
31. Stöckel attacked Dévay for having forsaken Lutheranism, and news of the controversy between Dévay and other reformers in eastern Slovakia reached Luther, who in 1544 wrote the clergy of Eperies to deplore the growth of sectarian views in eastern Slovakia and expressing astonishment at the reports concerning Dévay. In any case, Luther wrote, Dévay had not learned such ideas at Wittenberg. WA Br. X, pp. 555-556.
32. Szabo, p. 101; Bucsay, p. 80.
33. *CJH*, Article 6, 1548.
34. Iohannes Ribini, *Memorabilia augustanae confessionis in regno Hungariae*, I (Posonii, 1787), pp. 67-70.
35. Viktor Bruckner, *Gedenkbuch anlässlich der 400. jährigen Jahreswende der Confessio Augustana* (Leipzig, 1930), pp. 3-67.
36. CR VIII, pp. 354-361; Kvačala, *Dejiny*, pp. 120-121.
37. Ribini, pp. 521-528; Kvačala, *Dejiny*, p. 124.
38. Kvačala, *Dejiny*, pp. 134-136; Borbis, p. 39.
39. Borbis, p. 39.
40. Kvačala, *Dejiny*, pp. 131-132.
41. For the best short study of Láni see Ján Mocko, *Eliáš Láni, prvý superintendent cirkve evanj. augš. vyzn. v Uhrách a jeho doba* (Lipt. Sv. Mikuláš, 1902).
42. Josef Irinyi, *Geschichte der Entstehung des 26. Gesetzartikels von 1790/1 über Religionsangelegenheiten* (Pest, 1857), pp. 7-10; Kvačala, *Dejiny*, pp. 147-148.
43. *CJH*, Articles I, X, XIII, 1608 Ante Coron.
44. Johannes Szeberinyi, *Corpus maxime memorabilium synodorum Evangelicarum Augustanae Confessionis in Hungaria cum praefatione Historica in Singulas* (Pesthini, 1948), pp. 15-20; Borbis, pp. 124-126.
45. Szeberinyi, pp. 29-42.
46. Concerning Tranoscius and his work see Ján Mocko, *Život Jura Tranovského* (Senice, 1891) and also Ľudovít Haan, *Cithara Sanctorum, její historia* (Pest, 1873) and Ján P. Durovič, *Životopis Juraja Tranovského* (Lipt. Sv. Mikuláš, 1942).

# Theological Observer

## LUTHER IN LUND

It is one of history's remarkable facts that the giant of the Reformation continues to excite world-wide interest and respect. The Fifth International Congress for Luther Research brought an imposing array of nearly 200 scholars from every continent to Lund, site of Sweden's second oldest university (founded in 1666). The Luther Congress has been meeting on a six-year cycle. The last time it convened at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. It is scheduled for Wittenberg in six years, behind the Iron Curtain, if enough space for a couple hundred Luther scholars can be found there.

The Congress is a motley gathering - many nationalities, denominational loyalties (including Roman Catholics), and political leanings (including Marxists) - but joined together by a scholarly interest in Luther. Noteworthy in the business of the Congress were the reports which told of Luther research. For example, the Weimar edition is being updated under the direction of Gerhard Ebeling, now living in Zurich, Switzerland; Japanese Luther scholars announced that they are working on approximately one-third of a projected 36-volume edition of Luther's works; Prof. Erico Sexauer of our own LCMS Brazil District reported that volume 8 of a translation of Luther's works into Spanish is already in process, with 9 and 10 planned. Sexauer is himself responsible for most of this translation. The American edition will reach completion when an index has been prepared. The completion of the more than one hundred volumes of the Weimar edition is scheduled for about 1998 with the appearance of a definitive index. Prof. Helmar Junghans, of Karl-Marx-Universität, Leipzig, editor of the *Luther Jahrbuch*, informed the delegates of certain policy changes in future editions of this important annual account of all notable publications on Luther. In the future, publications making a merely incidental reference to Luther will receive no mention in the *Jahrbuch*.

Major essays, each with respondents, and in-depth seminars, occupied the morning, afternoon, and evening sessions, from Sunday, August 14, to Friday, August 19. Delegates could choose any of ten seminars. Bernhard Lohse led the seminar on "theologia crucis - theologia resurrectionis"; Otto Pesch on "Luther's Doctrine of the Two Realms"; Leif Grane on "Luther and Latomus"; Marc Lienhard on "Luther's Religious Anxiety and the Doctrine of the Lord's Supper"; Heiko Obermann on "Luther and Staupitz"; and Bengt Häggglund on "Law and Gospel in the Antinomian Controversy." Such scholars as Ebeling, Albrecht Peters (Heidelberg), Johannes Boendermaker (Amsterdam), and Lauri Haikola (Helsinki) attended this last seminar.

The discussion on Luther's six disputations against the Antinomians (especially Agricola) led quite naturally to a spirited discussion concerning the uses of the Law as Luther understood them. In the seminar, as well as in the plenary meetings, it was evident that a considerable block of delegates would not recognize the occurrence of the third use of the Law in Luther's theology. The undersigned, Häggglund, Peters, Boendermaker, *et al.* found themselves arrayed in support of Luther's use of the concept against Ebeling and Karin Bornkamm, the daughter of recently deceased Heinrich Bornkamm. There is a strange, really antinomian, sort of opposition, in view of the fact that Luther is so explicit in upholding the concept of the Law's special use for the Christian as a guide and norm for godly living. The issue is not whether Luther ever tabbed it the *usus tertius*, or "*puerilis*," or "*pædagogical*," or whatever. Brilliantly plain is his use of the concept in his catechisms and the Galatian commentary.

Prof. Gustav Wingren, of Lund, president of the Congress for the past six

years, gave the opening address on Sunday evening on "Luther and the Situation of the Church Today." He made an appeal for a Luther who would touch more nearly on the present church situation, on the grounds that "the church institutions of today display in general a great similarity with the Church against which Luther directed his criticism in the sixteenth century." Wingren rightly averred: "In every single statement he (Luther) makes, he draws from the Biblical writings. In every sentence, he hurls the message of these writings into the midst of his times." But then he went on brashly to assert that "in no church is he really at home, not even in those which bear his own name." According to Wingren, this is so because we have not entered "as intensely into our own society" as Luther did into his. The emphasis came down on a "gospel" for an alienated society. Wingren disavowed "social-gospelism" but in the end he called for that kind of "liberation" of the human situation which is integral to the social gospel. For Luther, on the contrary, the emphasis was always on the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins through Christ's meritorious suffering and death. Of course, such Scriptural "blood-theology" is not popular in scholarly circles today.

Prof. Eberhard Jüngel of Tuebingen, delivered a massive essay on "The Significance of Luther for Contemporary Theology." He emphasized that theology always has the task of presenting accurately the truth about God, man, and the world. These perceptions arise not out of theology itself, but as theology engages itself with contemporary issues in the world "only with the guidance from the Bible texts," as Luther contended. It was a good and a true emphasis. "Theological discernment develops exegetically (from Scripture) or not at all." Faith clings to God who reveals himself in His Word.

Needless to say, the kind of Biblical authority with which a congress like this works is one in which historical-critical methodology is always implicit. Thus, locating the Word of God is a slippery matter. This became especially evident in the programmed disputation between the Roman Catholic scholar Prof. Albert Brandenburg and Prof. Eric Gritsch of Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary on "Luther's Success and Failure as a Reformer of the Church." As disputations go, it was more polite and harmless theological chit-chat than real grappling with issues. Brandenburg admitted that the Gospel occurs but rarely in Rome's decrees and councils, though Luther has it on every page. He insisted, nevertheless, that this Gospel "most certainly (was) never lost in our church" and is not now. Weijenborg, a colleague in the Vatican, was closer to the facts with his frank statement that "Luther's gospel was not the gospel of Rome."

A number of speakers, such as Erwin Iserloh, Wilhelm Dantine, Otto Pesch, Albrecht Peters, and the reviewer joined the fray in the discussion. It was my contention that Luther was immovable on any point of doctrine, since all doctrine was given by God clearly. This was especially true of his plain identification of the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God. "Luther-research will run dry and sterile, if it does not now face up to the fact that the Reformer was always bound by the text of Scripture; he knew no other authority; and it is this same stance that the formulators and signers of the Formula of Concord also took unabashedly and unequivocally." Gritsch was quick to counter: "As to Herr Klug—we have seen each other before at the LCUSA April meeting on the Formula of Concord in Chicago. He belongs to the Missouri Synod. What he stated concerning Scripture is so close to fundamentalism that I cannot and need not distinguish between them. That should suffice." Of course, it was no answer, but a put-down, the kind which scholarly circles find embarrassing.

Regin Prenter, the Danish dogmatician, now a parish pastor, had not been at the previous sessions but came to deliver the last lecture of the sessions, "Luther As Theologian." With artless simplicity, outstanding brilliance, and measured strokes, Prenter drove home one basic theme, namely, that "Luther is never able to detach the Gospel, that needs to be proclaimed and defended,

from the individual Biblical texts that witness to it, so as to develop it into a reasoned system of doctrine." It was without question, at least in this observer's opinion, the crowning climax of the Congress. In citing Prenter as a theologian who openly recognizes Luther's commitment to Scripture and its authority, one cannot claim that Prenter operates entirely with the kind of theological commitment that Luther had to the verbally inspired prophetic and apostolic text. In fact he jibed at orthodoxy for its stance on this point, claiming a gulf between Luther and men like the authors of the Formula of Concord on the doctrine of Scripture. Be this as it may, Prenter at least acknowledged that for Luther there is no Word that establishes doctrine other than the Biblical Word. Prenter's concluding statement is worth noting: "Luther, as theologian, is a Biblical theologian, who is aware of the limitations of all theology, and this not merely theoretically, and who permits everything he produces as an interpreter of Holy Scripture to be determined by this awareness."

Prior to the Congress' sessions, there was also a three-day meeting of the Luther Academy. This little group of about fifteen Confessional scholars is distinctly Lutheran in its membership and goals. These men have all taken a stand against such a compromise document as the Leuenberg Concord, as well as against philosophical-theological trends in European theology (from Schleiermacher to Barth and Bultmann, etc.) which have damaged Christian theology in European universities. This they have done in spite of opposition within their own territorial churches and the Lutheran World Federation. It was a distinct privilege and pleasure to converse with men like Prof. Dr. Bengt Hägglund, of Lund; Professor and Territorial Superintendent Dr. Joachim Heubach, of Schleswig-Holstein; Prof. Dr. Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, of Muenster; Pastor Dr. Ulrich Asendorf, of Hannover; Prof. Dr. Tuomo Mannermaa, of Helsinki. A useful dialogue is stirring through the efforts of the Ratzburg Luther-Academy, in much the same way as through the Kirchliche Sammlung um Bibel und Bekenntnis, the parent, originating body.

E. F. Klug

#### THE EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The Evangelical Theological Society (ETS), a group of Protestant scholars committed to the concept that "The Bible alone and the Bible in its entirety is the word of God written and therefore inerrant in the autographs," has a greater influence than its membership of a thousand or so might indicate. Its presidents, for instance, are men whose books and articles have been required reading at our seminaries: John Walvoord, Harold Kuhn, Roger Nicole, Laird Harris, Gordon Clark, J. Barton Payne, Kenneth Kantzer, Carl F. H. Henry, Harold Lindsell, Richard Longenecker, Bruce Waltke, Samuel Kistemaker, and Walter Kaiser, Jr. The ETS has provided a significant impetus to conservative scholarship in America.

The major American Protestant denominations lost their Biblical moorings in the conservative-liberal controversy of the 1920's. Like dominoes falling in succession, each church body came under the influence of newer Biblical approaches and eventually surrendered its Reformation heritage. The Missourian Lutherans and Southern Baptists may be the only exceptions to this historical process. Within the past two or three decades, however, conservative theology has made some significant advances in American Protestantism. Members of the ETS have been in the vanguard of the advances. Noteworthy contributions have come from successful conservative publishing ventures. *Christianity Today*, whose two editors were ETS presidents, has shown in a popular way that the liberals are not the only ones entitled to intellectual respectability. Previously conservatives, a group, were seen as simpletons, while liberal

theologians in all denominations were regarded as the scholars and intellectuals. *Christianity Today* has helped to dispel that negative image. Certain publishing houses have also made possible the dissemination of conservative theology - Moody, Eerdmans, Zondervan, Baker, InterVarsity. The revivalistic caricature of conservative Protestant publishers has proven to be erroneous. From these presses come the dissertations of scholars who are generally members of the ETS and who have studied at some of the most prestigious European and American universities and seminaries. ETS members have also contributed to the stature of conservative seminaries. Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, for example, established about fifteen years ago, proved that conservative theological schools could not only survive, but so prosper that students had to be turned away. Most liberal seminaries wish they had enrollment problems of this sort. As a group of scholars, the ETS has been in no position to venture forth into the great enterprises which only a denomination or corporation could accomplish. Its activities are still limited to annual national and regional meetings and the quarterly production of its journal. The society provides a place for the exchange of ideas among scholars committed to Biblical inspiration and inerrancy.

These concepts, of course, have likewise been at the heart of the Missouri Synod's theology since its inception. The recent change in theological direction within the Missouri Synod is probably the most significant reversal of the trend toward liberalism among American Protestant denominations. Various authors have traced the causes for this reversal from their individual perspectives. Adams in *Preus of Missouri* focuses on the personality of one man as a major cause; Danker of Seminex in *No Room in the Brotherhood* favors a political interpretation; Marquart of the Seminary in *Anatomy of an Explosion* sees the seeds of reform in the history of the Missouri Synod itself. The rise and success of conservative American Protestant theology in the past three decades may also have been a contributing factor. Conservative theologians of the Missouri Synod have had to rely for current scholarly support on the works produced by so-called "evangelical" authors - while disavowing the Calvinistic and Arminian leaven in such works. *Christianity Today*, for example, helped to alert Missouri Synod pastors to the grave dangers to the church posed by such neo-orthodox theologians as Barth, Brunner, and Bultmann. With any great historical upheaval it is difficult to pinpoint any one cause. What has happened in the Missouri Synod certainly is not simply the result of the greening of the intellectual respectability of conservative Protestant scholarship in America. Still, members of the ETS have provided many of the intellectual tools used to accomplish the reform.

In a letter of October 14, 1977, to the membership, ETS president, Dr. Walter C. Kaiser, professor of Old Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, states that "evangelicals (conservatives) are still weakest in creative contributions to exegetical, Biblical, and systematic theology." He finds conservatives bogged down in "surveys, history of interpretations, or defensive apologetics." Hesitatingly he agrees with the indictment of G. Ernest Wright: "One of the most striking characteristics of the conservative wings of the church during the century has been the weakness of their Biblical scholarship . . . with rare exceptions . . ." The ETS, then, has provided a necessary impetus to conservative theology in American Protestantism and has been of much value to the Missouri Synod. The call of the ETS president to more intense and creative Biblical and systematic scholarship should likewise serve as a challenge to Missourian Lutherans to start making more contributions to contemporary theological scholarship.

# Homiletical Studies

THE SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY: MATTHEW 3:13-17  
(JAN. 8, 1978)

When we hear the word "Epiphany" what comes most readily to mind? The star; the magi. But originally when worshippers heard of the Epiphany they thought at once of the Baptism of Jesus. This was the great event originally chosen to celebrate the fact that the Child born in Bethlehem was made manifest as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world.

Textual Notes: 1) John's baptism. At John's time there was a baptism in Judaism for proselytes, those who came into Judaism from some other faith. But it was for "sinners," and no Jew ever thought that he, a descendant of Abraham, could ever need such a baptism. John makes no distinction; he calls also Jews to repentance. And they come. Jesus later tells us that John's baptism was "from heaven." Here was God acting in giving repentance and grace to all people who stand under His judgment. 2) "Fulfill all righteousness": In His baptism Jesus identified Himself with the people He came to save. He came to live and die vicariously for sinners in need of repentance. That is why He insisted on being in the water. 3) The descending Dove and heavenly Voice are the supreme verification and stamp of approval on all that Jesus is and all He came to do. 4) "This is My beloved Son" - a quotation from Ps. 2, which is a description of the Messiah, the mighty King of God who was to come. 5) "In whom I am well pleased" - another OT quotation, this time from Is. 42, which is a description of the Suffering Servant.

Introductory thought: When we see Jesus standing in the river with John the Baptizer, there is one question that must come to mind:

## What Is Jesus Doing In The Water?

- I. Jesus did not belong in the water (at least John the Baptizer did not think He belonged there).
  - A. John's baptism stands as a stark reminder that all people are sinners under the judgment of God.
  - B. In John's baptism God was acting in giving repentance and channeling His grace to people.
  - C. But Jesus needed no repentance or forgiveness; why did He insist on being in the water?
- II. Jesus is in the water because that is where we belong.
  - A. We are sinners under God's judgment.
  - B. By His being baptized Jesus identified Himself with the people He came to save.
  - C. The innocent Son of God assumed our guilt and bore the penalty of our sin.
  - D. Jesus' finished work makes the water of our baptism a place of righteousness and rebirth, it is where we belong.
- III. The Dove and Voice tell us God is glad that Jesus is in the water for us.
  - A. Jesus is the bearer of the Holy Spirit who has the power to renew us.
  - B. Jesus is the Anointed King who goes His royal way, the way of the cross.
  - C. Jesus is God's Suffering Servant who comes to enthrone Himself in our hearts and lives.

So now we know what Jesus was doing in the water. He was there because of us. He was there to save us. What an Epiphany that is!

RH



THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD: MATTHEW 17:1-9  
(JAN. 15, 1978)

We sing in one of our hymns, "Jesus, Jesus, only Jesus" (TLH 348). That is putting all our eggs in one basket. It eliminates other options and leaves us with the question: In a world gone to the devil, is Jesus all we need for our spiritual life and well-being? Are the resources we have in "Jesus only" enough for the problems and challenges we face? It is to this question that our periscope speaks with convincing clarity. In particular we focus on verse 8: "And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only."

Textual Notes: The Transfiguration follows Peter's great confession (it is like God's "Amen" to Peter's affirmation of Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God) and Jesus' prediction of His passion (16:13ff.). The conversation on the way down from the mountain discussed the martyrdom of John the Baptist and the impending death of Jesus. At the foot of the mountain we find the remaining nine apostles unable to cope with a demonic aspect of life because of the littleness of their faith (17:10ff.).

"Moses"—the law-giver of Mt. Sinai. "Elijah"—the fiery prophet of Mt. Carmel who insisted on undivided loyalty to the Lord. Perhaps the two together symbolize the fullness of God's revelation (law and prophets) to Israel. "Booths"—reminiscent of the sojourn of Israel when they received the revelation of the Law through Moses. "Bright cloud"—indicative of God's presence. "My beloved Son"—a revelation of the divine Sonship of Jesus as the victorious Messianic King spoken of in Ps. 2. "In whom I am well-pleased"—an echo of the Messianic Servant passage in Is. 42:1; Jesus is doing His Father's will when He suffers and dies for the sins of the world; He is our Saviour. "Listen to Him"—the glory of this moment will soon pass away, but this same Jesus will continue to address His Word to you.

Introductory thought: Is not having Moses and Elijah and the bright cloud and the heavenly voice and a transfigured Jesus—gleaming and glowing—better than simply having "Jesus only"?

### Jesus Only

- I. When the apostles saw "Jesus only" it meant the end of the mountain-top experience.
  - A. Jesus had granted them a moment of spiritual exhilaration.
    1. What an experience! Jesus transfigured, Moses and Elijah, the voice from the cloud.
    2. Like Peter, we often crave to bask in the vicinity of such heavenly splendor, far removed from the sordid realities of daily life. But—
  - B. Jesus brings His apostles back down into the "real world."
    1. Here is where God's spokesmen are under attack and the devil appears invincible.
    2. Here is where our feeble faith frequently falters and fails.
- II. "Jesus only" is more than sufficient to meet our needs as we face life at the base of the mountain.
  - A. The same Jesus who was transfigured is with us day by day.
    1. He is God's own Son who has conquered the forces of the devil. Faith in Him lays hold of the power needed to confront life's problems.
    2. He is the One who pleased God when He came to be our Saviour. Faith in Him lays hold of heaven's glory prefigured in the Transfiguration.
  - B. Amid life's many clamoring voices, we are still to listen to this transfigured Jesus.
    1. As God's Son He speaks a true and powerful Word that strengthens our faltering faith in the face of life's problems.

2. As our Saviour He speaks a forgiving Word that opens to us heaven's glory. Jesus only: He is enough!

RH

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY: MATTHEW 5:27-37  
(JAN. 22, 1978)

A house eaten by termites and beginning to sag may appear better with a fresh coat of paint, but it is still a rotting house. The problem lies on the inside and must be dealt with there. In like manner, Christian morality is not simply doing things which appear good to other people; it has to do with God. Sin is, first of all, an "inside job." The heart of the matter is a holy heart and that is what this pericope is all about.

Textual Notes. Four preliminary observations: 1) Jesus speaks the words of this pericope to His *disciples* (Matt. 5:1-2). 2) Three times He declares, "But I say to you." We note the divine *authority* with which He addresses men, and also that it is *Jesus* who speaks, the One who came to live for us a life dedicated to His Father's will and to die in payment for our sins. 3) Jesus was speaking in the context of that rabbinic legalism which, through casuistry and compromise, had externalized God's Law, thereby evading its full intent and excluding God's claim over every aspect of life. 4) This pericope is primarily a law text directed to a disciple's old Adam and setting forth a pattern for his life.

Vv. 27-30. By giving prominence to the outward act the scribes tended to externalize the command forbidding adultery. Jesus directs the Law to the root of the sinful impulse, the heart. The 6th Commandment calls for a pure heart which keeps even the eyes pure. The strong words point to the strenuous effort necessary to master sexual passion; Jesus is not recommending successive amputations.

Vv. 31-32. The scribes had so re-interpreted the prescription of Moses as to permit all manner of divorce and thereby evade the intent and will of God. One rabbinical tradition at the time of Jesus permitted divorce for the love of another woman or for causes as trivial as inferior cooking. We cannot substitute human regulations for the divine requirement. Every severance of marriage, apart from death, violates God's commandment.

Vv. 33-37. Again, the scribes had a great deal to say about which oaths were binding and which were not, concluding that any oath which avoided using God's name was not (i.e., swearing by heaven, earth, Jerusalem, or one's own head). The logic was that if God's name was not used, He had nothing to do with the transaction. Jesus declares that no man can keep God out of any segment of life; you cannot exclude His demand for truth by substituting something less sacred for the divine name. For the disciple, whose heart is pure and who always speaks the truth, there is no need for oaths. In civic life, however, because of the untruth in the world, the state, which has to deal with all men, must often require oaths.

In the area of Christian morality

**The Heart of the Matter**

is a holy heart wholly intent on doing God's will in every aspect of living.

**I. The heart of the matter**

(Jesus had made us His disciples)

**A. Jesus came to seek and claim disciples.**

1. Discipleship is a gift of His grace.
2. Discipleship places His claim of grace upon us.

**B. To this end:**

1. He lived a life of whole-hearted commitment to God's will for us.

2. He gave His perfect life in payment for our sins.
  3. Through His Spirit He gives us new hearts intent on doing God's will.
- II. Is a holy heart  
(Jesus calls for a holy heart as the source of a life in keeping with our discipleship.)
- A. Jesus condemns the scribes who externalized God's Law (example: 6th Commandment a matter only of the outward act and not of the heart).
  - B. Outward piety is not enough, our hearts must be pure. No matter how pious we appear to others, God sees and judges our hearts.
  - C. We continually need to have the Holy Spirit at work in our hearts.
- III. Wholly intent on doing God's will  
(Jesus calls for a heart wholly intent on doing God's will.)
- A. Jesus condemns the scribes who interpreted the Law so as to evade its full intent (example: their casuistry with regard with divorce).
  - B. We cannot substitute human rationalizing for the divine requirement. (examples: situation ethics where "love" determines "right and wrong." Or again, "Do your best" is not good enough, no matter how acceptable it may be to the world around us.)
  - C. After all, it is because Jesus was "wholly intent on doing God's will" that we are His disciples today.
- IV. In every aspect of living.  
(Jesus calls for a heart that does God's will in every aspect of living.)
- A. Jesus condemns the scribes who sought to exclude God's claim over every aspect of their lives (example: their casuistry with regard to oaths).
  - B. We cannot compartmentalize our lives and exclude God from any area our speaking and doing. What we say and do on Saturday night (or Monday morning) is as much under the claim and judgment of God as what we say and do on Sunday morning.
  - C. He died for us that we might live for Him (2 Cor. 5:15). "So, whether you or drink or *whatever you do*, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).

"Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20). We have that exceeding righteousness in Jesus Christ. Let's live it!

RH

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY: MATTHEW 5:38-48  
(JAN. 29, 1978)

When the lawyer asked Jesus "Who is my neighbour?" (Luke 10:29), he was trying to find out who were the guys he did not have to love. In a sense we can understand that. There are some people we don't even like; how can we love them? Others have treated us so badly they don't deserve our love. Where can we draw the line? What are the limits on love? In this pericope we hear Jesus tell His disciples that for the children of the heavenly Father there is no limit to love.

Textual Notes: Vv. 38-42. "An eye for an eye"—this is a sound principle of civil law; its original aim was the limitation of vengeance, indicating how a judge in the court must assess punishment and penalty. In the Mishna a money payment in lieu of eye, tooth, etc., is taken for granted. Jesus does not condemn the principle that legal justice is a set of limited revenges. Rather, He removes every impulse for retaliation and desire for vengeance from the heart of His disciples.

The examples he gives are arranged in the form of an anticlimax: acts of violence, legal proceedings, official demands, simple requests. "Strikes you on the right cheek"—perhaps a backhanded blow which would be a deliberate and contemptuous insult. "Coat/cloak"—the tunic, or undergarment, and the blanket-like outer garment which doubled as a blanket at night. Jewish law permitted a man's tunic to be taken as security, but not his cloak; see Ex. 22:26-27. "Forces you to go"—a Persian word which came to mean enforced service by an occupying power; example: Simon of Cyrene, Luke 23:26. "Beggars/would borrow"—nuisance requests.

Vv. 43-48. The Law did not include the words "and hate your enemy," but this was the result when the scribe sought to find areas where a person was not explicitly required to show love. "Love your enemies"—Jesus removes every limitation from love. Such love (*agape*), which actively seeks the highest good ("pray for them") for those who treat us the very worst, involves something of the will as well as the heart. It is like the action of God's love in the world which is unwearied in its benevolence toward all people. It is love which has its source in the adoptive love of the Father. "Father," as a name for God, occurs first in the Sermon on the Mount where we find it 17 times.

"Perfect" (*teleios*) often means "totality"; the disciples of Jesus should be "total" in their love, including their enemies within its compass. Such perfection is also functional, i.e., a disciple is "perfect" to the extent that he reproduces in his life the forgiving, sacrificial love of God which made him a son. The pattern and power of this lived sonship is Jesus Himself. It is the Gospel which makes people the children of God and which enables them so to live.

#### No Limit To Love

- I. Jesus won't let us limit our love.
  - A. We want to limit it.
    1. By nature we have an inclination for vengeance.
    2. God restrains and regulates this impulse through civil courts.
  - B. Jesus' words remove every limitation from love.
    1. "Love your enemies" removes every limit.
    2. Rather than vengeance, we are to seek their highest good ("Pray" for them).
- II. This is because God's Love, which made us His children, knows no limit.
  - A. God's love knows no limit
    1. We can observe it in His unwearied benevolence in the world.
    2. We see it in the sending of His Son. "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).
  - B. This love has made us God's children.
    1. He has adopted us.
    2. He wants us to be "perfect" children by demonstrating His kind of love in our lives.
- III. Therefore, as our heavenly Father's "perfect" children we show love without limit when we—
  - A. Bear insults and personal abuse without resentment and retaliation ("turn to him the other also").
  - B. Do not insist upon our rights ("let him have your cloak as well").
  - C. Put ourselves out for the other person ("go with him two miles").
  - D. Are willing to be put upon ("do not refuse him").

QUINQUAGESIMA: MATTHEW 6:24-34  
(FEBRUARY 5, 1978)

"You can't work for me and him too!" explodes an employer when he learns that one of his employees is also attempting to hold a full-time job with his arch-competitor. It is ludicrous; it cannot be. That sort of things is what our Lord has in mind when He states that a disciple of His cannot "be a slave to two owners." He points out that worry is a test of our allegiance. If God comes first, we will trust Him completely (as we confess in to day's introit: "In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust."). Worry indicates that someone or something else is in the top spot, namely, Mammon.

Verse 24: "No person can be a slave to two owners." The disciple cannot have a divided loyalty; there is no room for competing masters. The alternative to God, who has come to us in Jesus Christ and claimed us as His disciples, is "Mammon." Mammon is wealth, material possessions, personified. It is a false god that demands exclusive loyalty as God demands it. The meaning is not, "You cannot serve God and have riches"; rather, "You cannot be faithful to God and make an idol of wealth."

Verse 25: "Therefore"—the extent to which we "fear, love, and trust in God above all things" is evident by the amount of worrying that we do. Anxiety with respect to earthly goods is evidence that we are serving Mammon. Food and clothing represent basic earthly needs. Can we not trust Him who gave us the greater (body and life) also to give us the less (food and clothing)? Verse 26: The birds work, but they do not worry. Verse 27: No amount of worry can add the shortest span to life. Verses 28-30: God, who is so lavish with the short-lived flowers, will not be forgetful of His disciples. Worry is evidence that we do not trust God above all things; it points to the littleness of our faith.

Verses 31-32: To make the provision of food and clothing an object of anxiety, is to live like the pagans whose primary allegiance is to the accumulation of earthly goods—Mammon. Verse 33: If, however, our primary allegiance is to God, our primary concern will be for His rule in our lives. The assurance ("shall be yours as well") of the needed material goods implies that the main quest—God's kingdom and righteousness—will be secured. Verse 34: Trust lives one day at a time.

### Worry Or Trust: A Test Of Our Allegiance

#### I. God demands our complete allegiance (v. 24).

##### A. God is the Owner who—

1. Claims us, not to benefit Himself, but us. (He became a slave to serve us; cp. Phil. 2:6-8).
2. Demands our complete allegiance. (We should fear, love, and *trust* in God above all things.)

##### B. Mammon is a false god that also demands our exclusive loyalty.

1. "Mammon" is wealth personified. The goods entrusted to us by God become the god in whom we trust.
2. When Mammon holds sway, our primary concern becomes the accumulation of earthly possessions.

##### C. Divided allegiance is impossible: "No person can be slave to two owners."

#### II. Worry gives evidence of Mammon's sway (vv. 25-30).

##### A. Mammon says, "Get more!"

1. We worry that we will not have enough.
2. How unlike the birds; they work but never worry about accumulating for the future.
3. How pointless; worry cannot prolong our lives a moment.

##### B. Mammon replaces the God who has already given us "more."

1. He has given us life and body which is "more than" food and clothing.
  2. He has given us His Son that we might live with Him forever, body and soul.
  3. Should we not trust Him for the food we need (we are of more value than the birds) and clothing (we are more important than flowers)?
- C. Worry, therefore, is evidence, that we do not trust God above all things; points to the littleness of our faith.
- III. When God holds sway in our lives (vv. 31-34)—
- A. We live as children of a heavenly Father.
    1. The primary concern with material goods is a pagan trait.
    2. We trust a heavenly Father who provides for all our needs.
  - B. We seek God's rule and righteousness.
    1. Our primary concern is for these spiritual needs.
    2. We trust God to provide them.
  - C. We live one day at a time.
    1. We experience God's help to meet today's problems.
    2. We trust Him for tomorrow's needs.

RH

ASH WEDNESDAY: MATTHEW 6:1-6, 16-18  
(FEB. 8, 1978)

"Piety" (v. 6) refers to good works in the life of a believer. Not men but God should be uppermost in our minds when we practice our righteousness or piety. In chapter 5:21-48 Jesus deals with the doctrine of the Pharisees; in the text He deals with their practice. Alms are mentioned first because the self-righteous Jews attributed to them a special merit. "Sound no trumpet" is to be taken figuratively; hypocrites broadcast or blazon forth their works of charity (v. 2). They receive their reward in the encomium of their followmen, but nothing more remains, for from God they receive no reward. The aphorism in v. 3 means that we are not to carry good deeds aloft as banners, not to make them known to our fellowmen, not even to our nearest kin. We are to be ignorant, so to speak, of the good works we perform. On the last day the righteous will ask with unfeigned surprise, "Lord, when did we see Thee. . ." (Mt. 25:37)? No matter if others do not see our charity; God sees and rewards (v. 4). The Pharisees made public prayer a spectacular part of their worship. Also they prayed three times each day in accordance with Ps. 55:18 and Dn. 6:11) with all due ceremony wherever they happened to be (v. 5). But prayer is not a standard to be raised before human eyes, but an overture of the soul to its God (v. 6). Public prayer is not forbidden here. The stress is on a personal approach to God and the seclusion of the inner life. The Pharisees in their private fasting simulated sorrow but had no concern about their sins in their hearts—pride in the garb of humility. They made their faces inconspicuous in order to be conspicuous among men (v. 16). Fasting is not forbidden, but those who fast should come as they are. One should fast because it may be useful in his spiritual life, not to display sadness (vs. 17-18). This applies to any act of self-denial whereby sinful inclinations are subdued and pure affections cultivated.

The central thought of the text is that Christians are not to make a show of their piety. The goal of the sermon is that the hearers would be sincere and humble in their piety. The problem is that Christians sometimes become hypocritical and self-righteous in their piety. The means to the goal is that God knows and rewards the good we do.

Introductory thought: Orwell in his fantasy 1984 warns that "Big Brother sees." He sees, and hears, all that might be inimical to his power; so all citizens beware. Similar fear may be aroused by the realization that God sees

all, especially our sins. The text brings out that God sees, not only the evil, but also the good we do.

### God Knows About the Good We Are Doing

I. Others do not have to know about it.

II. We do not have to keep a record of it.

#### I.

- A. Jesus warns against ostentatious religion.
  1. Giving to help the needy and to support the church in order to gain a reputation for generosity (v.2).
    - a. Insisting on public acknowledgement of one's charity.
    - b. Giving less if the contribution is not made known.
  2. Making sure others know about our worshipping (v. 5).
    - a. Much attention to public worship with neglect of private devotion.
    - b. Letting it be known that we pray much in private.
  3. Displaying self-denial (v. 16).
    - a. Letting others know one has become a teetotaler, or that one has given up a vacation to attend a religious retreat.
    - b. Advertising one's sacrifices for children or parents.
- B. Such religion is wicked.
  1. It pretends to be something it is not.
  2. It cultivates the admiration of men with little or no thought of God.
  3. It brings God's judgment (v. 6b).
- C. Such religion is unnecessary.
  1. Though the good we do is concealed from the world, it is not hidden from God ("sees in secret").
    - a. It does not follow that others must not see the good we do or that only those deeds are truly good which no one has ever seen.
    - b. It does follow that this is a matter over which we have no control and that we must not advertise our wares.
  2. Though no one praises us, we will have a better prize from Him who will not let even a cup of water given in His name go unrequited (vs. 4, 6, 18; Mt. 10:42).

#### II.

- A. We are to be "ignorant" of the good works we are doing ("alms may be in secret," "shut the door," "fasting may not be seen by men;" Mt. 25:37).
  1. Not constantly informing ourselves about our charity (v. 3).
  2. Not using prayer as a badge of piety but as a means of communion with God in our innermost heart (v. 6).
  3. No being conscious of sacrifice, denying ourselves but making no issue of it.
- B. To keep a record of our goodness is foolish.
  1. This goodness is so small—like a drop in the ocean compared to God's holiness.
  2. It is so tainted by impure motives.
  3. We have Jesus and heaven as our treasure by God's grace, and thus there is no need to try to earn heaven (Mt. 6:21).
- C. It is enough that God keeps a record.
  1. God's record-keeping will be revealed on the last day (Mt. 25:35-36).
  2. He looks beyond the outward deed to the source from which it springs.
  3. He gives to those whose piety flows from a heart transformed by grace a rich reward, though unearned and undeserved by them.

Concluding thought: Be on guard against ostentation in religion. We need not let others, not even ourselves, know about the good we are doing. God knows about it. That is good enough.



INVOCAVIT, THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT: MATTHEW 4:1-11  
(FEB. 12, 1978)

"Then" (v. 1) shows that Jesus' temptation is closely connected with His baptism. In baptism He was endowed with the Holy Spirit's power to resist temptation. "Led up by the Spirit" indicates that temptation was part of the calling Jesus had accepted. He had to enter the strong man's house and bind him (Mt. 12:19). This was the first onslaught; it was not accidental, but willed by Father and Son. The temptation was real and not simply pretense or simulation. It brought Jesus suffering (He. 2:18). From v. 2 and also parallel accounts it is obvious that Jesus was tempted continually for forty days, the ordeal culminating in the three conflicts described in the text. In the first temptation the devil tried to get Jesus to doubt and to misuse His divine power. In the second, Jesus was tempted to pride in His Messianic office. He was tempted to glorify Himself before men. In the third, He was tempted to anticipate a future dominion not in accord with His calling, which was the way of suffering. The sum total of all the temptations is a carnal caricature of the work of the Messiah. Jesus does not argue with Satan but wages the battle against him with the written Word of God. Truth may be oppressed, but not suppressed. The Word is the sword of the Spirit, the weapon of offense and defense in the Christian's spiritual armament (Eph. 6). But Scripture must be used properly, not misused.

The central thought of the text is that Jesus used God's Word to overcome Satan's temptations. The goal of the sermon is that the hearers would overcome Satan's temptation. The problem is that they often feel unable to do so. The means to the goal is that Jesus overcame Satan for us.

Introductory thought: During the 1960's movements arose which adopted the slogan, "We shall overcome." Christians belong to a movement which can well take the same slogan. Jesus, the Founder of this movement, said so (Mt. 16:18). So every Christian can say:

**We Shall Overcome**

**I. Can we overcome?**

**II. How can we overcome?**

**I.**

**A. There would seem to be sufficient reason for confidence.**

1. Jesus was baptized and thus empowered with the Spirit, and so are we.

2. Jesus was led all the while by the Spirit, and so are we.

**B. Yet it is not easy to be confident because temptations are often severe.**

1. It is hard not to set physical needs above spiritual needs.

2. It is hard not to rely presumptuously on God.

3. It is hard to stifle ambition and to avoid operating with the "end justifies means" principle.

In the face of such temptation it is no wonder we begin to ask, "Can we overcome?" But we can. How?

**II.**

**A. Obey God.**

1. Keep priorities straight.

2. Refuse to use God.

3. Worship God alone.

**B. Do not argue with Satan.**

1. Eve could not reason with Satan, and neither can we.

2. Our best recourse is the pertinent and specific word of God to which Satan has no comeback.

## C. Look to Jesus for help.

1. He understands our temptations (He. 4:15).
2. He stands by us.
3. He conquered Satan once and for all (Col. 2:15).
4. He strengthens us through Word and Sacrament (He. 2:18).

Concluding thought: In Him and through Him we shall overcome.

GA

REMINISCERE, THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT: JOHN 4:5-26  
(FEB. 19, 1978)

In asking for a drink (v. 7) Jesus placed Himself on a level with the woman. His request made her willing to listen further to what He had to say. She felt His true, unselfish interest. Her interest was further aroused by the statement: "If you knew the gift of God. . ." (v. 9). She was moved to consider Christ's claims (v. 12). Next Christ gave a promise appealing to conscious need (v. 14). The woman had sought satisfaction all her life, unrestrained in her search by laws of God or man, but she thirsted still. In every heart there is a thirst, a sense of lack which Jesus promises to satisfy (vs. 13-15). Then came a command appealing to conscience (v. 16). No matter how a person may admit Christ's claims, he will never find satisfaction until the thing that is wrong in his life is made right. Jesus had touched the sore spot in her life, Her answer (v. 17) was half true. Jesus proceeded to reveal her whole life (v. 18) with such divine insight that she called Him a prophet (v. 19). Jesus had appealed also to a religious instinct which, though dormant, was not dead. But the woman thought of religion only as form and ceremony and imagined that the mistake was in the location of the worship (v. 20). Jesus informed her (vs. 21-25) that the trouble was not the place of worship but the fact; she had never worshipped at all. Since God is a Spirit, true worship is not a question of place or of form and ceremony, but of spiritual reality. Jerusalem has indeed been the divinely appointed place of worship, because of the promise of salvation through the Jews, but the time has come when there are to be no local restrictions to worship. True worshipers will not be concerned with place and symbol. The woman in her reply suggested a need for a mediator to give fuller knowledge of God. Now she was ready to hear the supreme word (v. 26). Did she believe? She made no verbal response, but her actions (v. 28) were more eloquent than speech.

The central thought of the text is that Jesus leads lost souls to know the gift of salvation. The goal of the sermon is that the hearers would reaffirm Jesus as the gift of God that satisfies.

Introductory thought: Although Jews generally avoided Samaria, Jesus did not. He sat down to rest, but forgot his weariness when the opportunity presented itself to lead a lost soul to know God's gift. Jesus, who suffered weariness and thirst for us, has come to us and pleaded, "If you knew the gift of God. . ." He comes to us again today and offers the gift of God, His own self, to know and to enjoy.

Jesus Leads Us to Know The Gift of God

- I. He makes us aware of our need of it.
- II. He shows us where to find it.

I.

A. Jesus reminds us that earthly wells cannot quench spiritual thirst (v. 13).

1. We, like the Samaritan woman, have earthly wells of whose waters we boast (v. 12) - money, success, possessions, ambitions.

2. There are times when we yearn for something more than the water of these miserable wells (v. 15).
  - B. Jesus puts His finger on sin as the cause of our thirst (v. 16).
    1. Jesus condemns as sin actions we may have excused (vs. 17-18).
    2. We can no longer hide or equivocate (v. 19).
    3. That which is wrong in our life must be made right if we are to have satisfaction.
    4. Jesus stimulates in us a desire for the gift of God (v. 14).
- Jesus leads us to know the gift of God by first bringing us to an awareness of our need for that gift. Then He shows us where to find it.

## II.

- A. In the true church.
    1. We may be perplexed as to which church is right (v. 20).
    2. The true church is there where God's Word is taught purely and the Sacraments are administered according to Christ's command. There we find the gift of God - salvation (v. 22).
  - B. Among true worshipers.
    1. Who are not bound to any particular place or ritual (v. 21).
    2. Who worship the true God in spirit and in truth (v. 23).
      - a. God is not bound to any outward group or building.
      - b. Church organizations can cease to exist, but true worshipers, who make up the church, will continue.
  - C. In the Savior Himself.
    1. Jesus reveals Himself to us (v. 26) in Word and Sacraments.
    2. We can have Him now, as we are, in our emptiness and thirst.
    3. He is the gift that satisfies (vs. 28-29).
- Concluding thought: Do you know the gift of God? Jesus says to you, "I who speak to you am He."

## OCULI, THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT: JOHN 9:26-41 (FEB. 26, 1978)

The healing of the blind man was a marvelous "sign" and would go far to persuade men to admit the claims of Jesus. This Christ's enemies feared and so they sought to prove that the miracle had not been wrought, but without success. The Pharisees carefully cross-examined the man who had received his sight and also his parents. They summoned him a second time and urged him to admit that the reputed miracle was only a deception (v. 24). The man's answer (v. 25) does not mean he had no opinion regarding the character of Jesus but that he was willing to leave the theological problems to their superior wisdom. He knows, however, what Jesus did for him. The Pharisees were indeed in a dilemma; there stood the man before them, his sight perfect who had been born blind. They had either to deny the facts or to admit the divine nature of Jesus which the facts proved. They tried to escape from their dilemma by asking the man to repeat his story, hoping to entangle him in his report. But the man sees their dilemma and asks, with bold irony, whether their eagerness for more information was due to a desire to become his disciples (v. 27). Now they could only revile him (vs. 28-29), abuse taking place of argument. The man heaps upon their cowardice the contempt it deserves in the form of an unanswerable argument (vs. 30-33). The Pharisees dismiss the matter by excommunicating him (v. 34). Jesus knew the difficulties the man had encountered in his faith and came to strengthen him (vs. 35-38). He who first regarded the Lord as a man called Jesus, and then as a prophet, now saw Him as the Son of God. Often the humble who have no wisdom of their own

are the first to admit the claims of Christ. But this is no excuse for the wise and learned. The Pharisees' greater privileges and knowledge of Scripture should have made them the first to believe. Their boasted insight was their very condemnation and aggravation of their guilt (v. 41).

The central thought of the text is that the coming of Jesus brings both darkness and light. The goal of the sermon is that the hearers would see Jesus more clearly. The problem is that opposition sometimes blurs their vision of Christ. The means to the goal is Jesus bestowing and sharpening spiritual vision.

Introductory thought: The actions of Jesus are paradoxical: the poor filled with good things and the rich sent empty away; the righteous declared to be sinners and sinners made righteous. To those who laugh He brings weeping and laughter to those who weep. The last He puts first and the first last. The wise He shows to be foolish and to the foolish He gives wisdom. He is the world's Savior, but in our text He declares, "For judgment I came into this world" (v. 39). The text presents:

### The Paradoxical Purpose Of The Coming Of Jesus Into The World

I. That the seeing may become blind.

II. That the blind may see.

I.

A. The Jewish leaders thought they could see.

1. Yet they refused to believe that the man had been given his sight (Mt. 9:17-26).
2. When they could no longer deny the fact, they treated the whole matter with contempt (vs. 28, 34).
3. They would not admit their blindness. Therefore their guilt remained (v. 41).

B. Many today think they can see.

1. Skeptics who substitute for the religious formula of the Pharisees (Mt. 9:16) the axiom that the supernatural cannot exist and that miracles cannot occur.
  - a. They try to prove discrepancies in the Gospel story and to accuse Jesus of deception.
  - b. Yet they are troubled by the facts.
2. Agnostics who lack the moral courage to face the facts.
3. Those in Christendom who twist God's word, deceiving and being deceived (2 Tim. 13), and refuse to be instructed by the Word.

Jesus' purpose in coming is to judge all such. They see Jesus, the light, but deny Him. Insisting that they see, they remain blind. To all such Jesus speaks as to the Pharisees (Mt. 23:16, 17, 19, 24). How paradoxical! There is another side to the paradox.

II.

A. We are by nature "those who do not see" (v. 39a).

1. Cannot discern spiritual things (1 Cor. 2:14).
2. Opposed to God (Ro. 8:7-8).

B. Jesus alone can open our eyes.

1. He works through the Gospel that proclaims Him as Savior (Ac. 26:18; 1 Tim. 1:15).
2. The Gospel is the eyesalve of the Spirit that opens our eyes so that we can say, "I believe" (v. 38; Re. 3:18c).

C. Jesus sharpens our vision.

1. Obstacles can blur it.
  - a. Rational and theological arguments (v. 24).
  - b. Reviling (v. 28).
  - c. Persecution (v. 34).

2. Jesus enables us to confess Him simply and boldly (vs. 25, 27, 30-33).

3. We see Jesus more clearly (vs. 35-38).

We have seen Jesus and heard Him speak. No more is needed.

Concluding thought: The blessed aspect of Jesus' paradoxical purpose is fulfilled in us who can say "Mine eyes have have seen thy salvation" (Lk. 2:30).

GA

LAETARE, THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT: MATTHEW 20:17-28  
(MARCH 5, 1978)

Jesus took the twelve disciples "aside" from others who were also journeying toward Jerusalem (v. 17). His thoughts centered on the portentous events which lay ahead, and He sought to prepare the disciples by telling them in detail what would happen to Him (vs. 18-19). According to Luke (18:34) they "understood none of these things," for their thoughts were not yet disengaged from a kingdom of earthly glories. The request (v. 21) came from the sons of Zebedee, James and John, and although their mother was their intermediary Jesus directed His answer to them (v. 22). To be given a place at the right and at the left of the king seated upon his throne was in the Orient a token of the highest possible rank in the kingdom. As Jesus began to speak of His suffering, they recalled His words (Mt. 19:28) and supposed that in the glorious final outcome they who had followed Him and who were also His first cousins should receive a reward of highest distinction. Jesus reminds them (v. 22) that His kingdom is not a kingdom of worldly glory but a kingdom of the cross. Jesus asks them if they are able to drink His cup of suffering (Mt. 26:39) and to endure a baptism with blood, that is, a cruel death. Not fully understanding the meaning of Christ's question, or then perhaps trusting too much in themselves, they nevertheless reveal a desire to follow Jesus. Jesus does not reprimand them but predicts that their love would be put to a severe test (v. 23). Jesus' words were fulfilled (Ac. 12:2). Yet Jesus, in His lowliness, cannot arbitrarily assign to any individual a place of prominence in heaven, but must act according to the will of the Father to whom He now submits. In His humiliation He may do nothing of Himself (Jn. 5:19). The ten become incensed at the request of James and John, for they yield themselves to no one (v. 24). Jesus teaches them that greatness in His kingdom will not be obtained by persons who covet an exalted position but by those who forget themselves in their desire for the welfare of others (vs. 25-27). Not egotism but service is the prerogative. Tyranny must be wrecked upon the solid rock of subordination. The supreme example is Jesus Himself (v. 28), who came to serve, manifested especially in His giving Himself as a ransom for many. The symbolism is that of prisoners or slaves who are liberated upon the payment of a price. This ransom was paid to God, whose holiness and righteousness had been violated. "Many" are all sinners (Ro. 5:19), in whose behalf the ransom was paid.

The central thought of the text is that Jesus came to serve us that we might serve Him. The goal of the sermon is that the hearers would live the life beautiful, a life of faith in and service to Jesus Christ. The problem is that Christians sometimes fail to see that service follows faith. The means to the goal is that Jesus ransomed us.

Introductory thought: Despite their best intentions, people are often unable to live well. Life is full of dissatisfaction and despair. The secret of beautiful living eludes them. That secret is found when we begin to ask not what others can do for us but what we can do for others. The text expresses it even better in the words, "Not to be served but to serve." Here we have

### The Secret Of Beautiful Living

I. Jesus served to save us.

II. We are saved to serve Jesus.

#### I.

- A. Jesus walked the way of the suffering servant (vs. 17-18).
  - 1. Even though He knew the anguish that lay ahead.
  - 2. His love for us moved Him to go unflinchingly.
- B. The result was our ransom (v. 28b).
  - 1. We could not ransom ourselves from sin (Ps. 49:7-8).
  - 2. The ransom required was nothing less than the perfect life and atoning death of Jesus Christ (1 Pe. 1:18-19; Ga. 3:15).
- C. Jesus still serves us.
  - 1. He is patient with us.
  - 2. He calls us by the Gospel.
  - 3. He keeps us in the faith.

The secret of beautiful living is to know how greatly Jesus served us by His redemption.

#### II.

- A. We are to serve after the example of Jesus (v. 28a).
  - 1. Unselfishly.
    - a. Not exploiting others (v. 21).
    - b. Not vying for a position we have not earned (v. 23b).
  - 2. Sacrificially.
    - a. Denying self.
    - b. Suffering with Jesus if need be (vs. 22-23a).
  - 3. Humbly.
    - a. Not lording it over others (vs. 25-26).
    - b. Not operating with a "might is right" principle.
- B. We can serve in this way.
  - 1. Because Jesus has ransomed us from sin's power (Ro. 6:6, 18; 8:2).
  - 2. Because we are already great in Jesus Christ (Ga. 3:26; Mt. 12:49).
  - 3. Because service is not only our duty but our delight (Ps. 40:8; Ro. 7:22).

Concluding thought: The secret of beautiful living is to serve rather than be served, following the example and through the power of Jesus Christ.

GA

### JUDICA, THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT: JOHN 11:21-45 (MARCH 12, 1978)

Martha laments but does not upbraid Jesus for arriving so late (v. 21). Her expression of hope (v. 22) indicates that at this time Jesus was for her a great prophet; not until a little later was He, for her, true God (v. 27). Jesus' promise (v. 23) is interpreted by Martha as a reference to the resurrection on the last day. There is resignation in her answer as well as assurance based on Old Testament Scripture such as Ps. 17:15; Dn. 12:2; Job 19:25ff. With His words in v. 25-26 Jesus strengthens Martha's faith, directing her attention away from Lazarus to Himself, specifically to what He would do. He is the resurrection, not "shall be." The death of a person who believes in Jesus opens the way to true life which is lived in a body-spirit entity. Indeed, the person who believes in Him lives already (v. 26), and even though the believer must die he will emerge victorious from death. When Jesus asks Martha if she believes this, she expresses the same conviction as Peter in Jn. 6:69. Mary addresses Jesus (v. 32) just as Martha did, but her pain seems to be more

poignant, for she is able to utter nothing more. Jesus also is silent. Now the Jews who came to offer their condolences stand before Jesus wailing with Mary (v. 33). Jesus is deeply troubled by the sight (v. 33) and groans with emotion mingled with impatience and indignation. He is greatly agitated. No doubt Jesus' displeasure was the result of His contemplation of the power of death that had brought such calamity upon the human race. Jesus expresses His emotion also in tears (v. 35), revealing His true humanity in His compassion. His tears are not understood rightly by all (vs. 36-37). Those standing nearby are not left to be merely idle spectators but are made lowly assistants (v. 39). As the stench from the grave reaches Martha, she wavers in her faith, convinced that her brother will not be restored to life and that she and Jesus should be spared the sight of the corruption which had set in. But Jesus guides her back to the promise of His power (v. 40). Jesus prays (v. 41) with assurance, making clear that this act is the work given Him by the Father. The awakening from the dead is effected through Christ's word. This miracle, apart from His own resurrection, most vividly portrays the glory of His Godhead.

The central thought of the text is that Jesus strengthens faith in Him as the Lord of life. The goal of the sermon is that the hearers would cling to Jesus as the source of life in the midst of death. The problem is that Christians often lose sight of the life they have in Christ. The means to the goal is that Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

Introductory thought: People often say, "If I would see I would believe." Jesus says: "If you would believe you would see the glory of God." When a loved one dies He assures: "The dead one will rise again." And He asks: "Do you believe this?" What is our answer? What we need is

**Faith In The Lord Of Life**  
**I. Faith involves struggle.**  
**II. Faith sees the glory of God.**

I.

- A. It is hard to believe when Christ delays (Jn. 11:5).
  - 1. A loved one dies despite our earnest prayer that he live (Jn. 11:3).
  - 2. We are then besieged by many "ifs" (vs. 21, 32), blaming circumstances, others, and ourselves, and questioning God's love.
- B. It is hard to believe that all things are under God's direction.
  - 1. That He hears our prayers (Jn. 11:5-6).
  - 2. That He does more than we can ask or think (Jn. 11:4, 15).
- C. Still we can believe.
  - 1. Knowing that His tears mingle with ours at the time of death (Ps. 33:35).
  - 2. Even when we cannot see His ways or understand His thoughts.

II.

- A. Faith sees the glory of the Lord now (v. 25a).
  - 1. The Lord resurrects us from spiritual death to spiritual life (Eph. 2:4-6).
  - 2. The Lord enables us to live anew each day (v. 26 "whoever lives"; Ga. 2:19-20).
- B. Faith sees the glory of the Lord in death (vs. 25b, 26b).
  - 1. Death is seen not only as the destroyer of plans and the separator of loved ones.
  - 2. But as the doorway to heavenly life.
- C. Faith sees the glory of the Lord on the Last Day (v. 24).
  - 1. Jesus will call us from the grave, as He called Lazarus, and our bodies, though decayed, will rise (v. 43; Jn. 5:28-29).



2. Not in the wrappings of death but with glorified bodies (1 Cor. 15:49), 54-55).

3. To experience glorious, endless life (Re. 7:16-17; Is. 35:6; 1 Pe. 1:3-5).

Concluding thought: There is no need to grieve over loved ones who have died in the Lord, for we have faith in the Lord of life. We can cling to His precious promise (vs. 25-26), our comfort in life and in death.

GA

### PALM SUNDAY: MATTHEW 26:6-13 (MARCH 19, 1978)

According to Jn. 12:1 it was six days before the Passover that Jesus came to Bethany. The verses (vs. 3-5) immediately preceding the text express the hatred of Jesus' enemies, but the supper and the anointing described in the text are tokens of love. The devotion of Jesus' friends and the exuberant love of Mary are in striking contrast to the sinister plans of the Jewish leaders. The man in whose house the supper was given (v. 6) had been leprous and had been made well by Jesus. He wished to show his gratefulness to the Master. According to John (Jn. 12:3), the woman (v. 7) was Mary, the sister of Martha and of Lazarus. Now she did not wish only to receive from Jesus but to give a token of her esteem. The ointment she poured on Jesus was very expensive (v. 7). Her deed was inspired by her ardent love for Christ. The disciples' displeasure was instigated by Judas (Jn. 12:4). "Why" (v. 8), a word of censure and cutting reproof. They considered Mary's act senseless extravagance and in questionable taste. Mary remained silent and Jesus stepped into the breach in her defense (v. 10). The love of the Lord is beneficent. Even luxury and embellishment are permissible when done to the glory of God. We cannot be sure whether Mary knew that Jesus would die in Jerusalem and that she was now anointing Him for His burial (v. 12). It is more like that Jesus construes her active devotion as much richer and greater than she had supposed. He thinks so highly of what Mary has done that He holds her act up (v. 13) as a model for all good deeds for all times.

The central thought of the text is that Mary performs an exemplary good deed. The goal of the sermon is that the hearers would be active in good deeds. The problem is that Christians sometimes disparage good works because they are not saved by them. The means to the goal is Jesus' acceptance and commendation of good deeds.

Introductory thought: We are entering Holy Week when so much evil was done to Jesus. But a week before His death He must have been cheered by a very good thing done to Him. He holds up what Mary did as an example for us. Here is a model for all time of

#### Deeds That Honor Jesus

##### I. They are the fruit of faith.

A. Externally good deeds that spring from motives other than faith do not honor Jesus (He. 11:6).

##### B. Mary's faith moved her to act (v. 7; Jn. 11:3).

1. Her faith was created and sustained by Jesus' Word (Lk. 10:39, 42).

2. Faith in Jesus always produces good deeds (Mt. 7:17; 12:35; 1 Jn. 3:3; Ga. 5:6).

3. Only the believer can do truly good deeds.

##### II. They reflect love for Christ.

A. Deeds done to reflect love of self, to gain recognition and praise, do not honor Jesus

- B. Deeds of *agape* are needed (1 Cor. 13:2, 13).
    - 1. With them we show love for Him who died for our salvation (v. 12).
    - 2. With them we honor Christ's body, the church.
  - III. They represent effort on our part.
    - A. Mary gave the best she had.
      - 1. The ointment was "very expensive" (v. 7).
      - 2. She could have used the money for herself.
    - B. There is a correlation between goodness and sacrifice.
      - 1. We must sacrifice the claims of the self—squench the flesh with its desire for self-indulgence.
      - 2. How much have we sacrificed (Mk. 12:44; 2 Cor. 8:2-3)?
      - 3. Think of how the church would be blessed and Christ honored if we gave our best.
  - IV. They receive the Lord's commendation.
    - A. Some do not commend them.
      - 1. Hypocritically some find fault (Judas, Jn. 12:4).
      - 2. Others thoughtlessly join in (v. 8): "Why spend so much for missions, the upkeep of the church and ministry, etc.?"
    - B. Deeds that honor Christ have abiding value.
      - 1. Fault-finders will pass away.
      - 2. Good deeds are a perpetual memorial (v. 13; Re. 14:13).
      - 3. Therefore we can leave our vindication to Jesus.
- Concluding thought: Are we engaged in ugly fault-finding or in doing beautiful things that honor Jesus?

GA

MAUNDY THURSDAY: JOHN 13:1-17  
(MARCH 23, 1978)

When Jesus sat down He waited in vain for one of the disciples to perform the customary foot-washing. But their minds were filled with a sense of their own greatness and dignity. So Jesus gave them a memorable object lesson to remind them that greatness is measured by service. John describes the incident from the viewpoint of Christ's great love (v. 1). Even though Jesus knew that the resolution to betray Him had already formed in the mind of Judas (vs. 2, 11), and even though He was fully conscious of His own dignity (v. 3), He performed the menial service of washing His disciples' feet, also of His betrayer. His act was interrupted by a dialogue with Peter which reveals the spiritual significance of the act. His sense of Jesus' dignity was the compelling motive in Peter's refusal (vs. 6, 8a). The Lord, the Son of the living God, shall not wash the feet of a sinful man. But Peter did not grasp the importance of this act (v. 7). If it were not done, Peter would have no part in the friendship of Jesus and in all Jesus would impart that night to His disciples (v. 8b). Now Peter, typically, went impulsively to the other extreme (v. 9). Jesus' answer (v. 10a) obviously refers to a spiritual cleansing. The foot-washing portrays spiritual purification from daily sins. Having been justified by faith, the believer is indeed cleansed from the impurity of sin. But since the believer's sinful flesh still leads Him into evil ways, he needs cleansing or forgiveness from the guilt and stain of sin each day. The footwashing is also a token of mutual service and helpfulness. The disciples are to imitate Jesus in loving, lowly service (vs. 12-16). They need not literally wash each other's feet on every occasion, but rather they are to bear one another's burdens in the spirit of love. Christ calls such service blessed (v. 16) because it is done in a spirit quite different from the love of vain glory shown by the disciples in their strife about who would be the greatest.

The central thought of the text is that Jesus reveals His unfailing love by washing His disciples' feet. The goal of the sermon is that the hearers would be renewed daily, both inwardly and outwardly, by the love of Christ. The problem is their tendency merely to admire the love of Christ. The means to the goal is that Christ in His unfailing love daily cleanses us from sin.

Introductory thought: Jesus kept on loving His disciples despite their self-seeking (v. 1b). Even though He knew one would betray Him (v. 11), and even though He was conscious of soon entering the glory from which He had come (v. 3), He performed for His disciples, also for His betrayer, the menial service of foot-washing. In that act was shown in all the beauty of its perfection.

### The Unfailing Love Of Jesus Christ

#### I. A love that makes us clean.

- A. The foot-washing portrayed Christ's loving work of spiritual cleansing (v. 10).
  1. Peter did not understand the real significance of the act (vs. 6-8a, 9).
  2. Though justified by faith and thus purified from sin, we still sin daily.
    - a. Flesh and blood lead us into evil.
    - b. We need daily cleansing from daily defilement.
  3. We are assured that Jesus is ready and able to give this cleansing when we see Him stoop to wash His disciples' feet.
- B. If our feet are not washed, we have no part in Jesus (v. 8b).
  1. We confess we need to have our feet washed when we pray daily, "Forgive us our trespasses."
  2. He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us (1 Jn 1:9).
  3. We have a part in all that Jesus earned for us by His suffering and death.

We are daily made clean all over. The love Jesus showed in washing His disciples' feet does not fail us either.

#### II. A love that makes us humble.

- A. The foot-washing provides us with a pattern for humble service (vs. 12-15).
  1. Christ's act is a picture of His voluntary humiliation whereby He stooped to save (Php 2:6-8).
  2. But literally washing one another's feet will not bring us any nearer to the mind of Christ.
  3. We follow Christ's example when we bear one another's burdens (Ga 6:2).
    - a. Concerned for their physical comfort.
    - b. Aiming to secure their spiritual and moral cleansing.
- B. The love of Jesus enables us to "wash one another's feet."
  1. That love transforms our hearts so that we get rid of arrogance, envy, and anger.
  2. That love guides us in a spirit of lowliness and helpfulness.

Blessed are we when we let the unfailing love of Jesus move us to imitate Him (v. 17).

Concluding thought: The love of Jesus will not fail. He who washed His disciples' feet will cleanse us daily and empower us to humble service.

GA

GOOD FRIDAY: JOHN 19:30b  
(MARCH 24, 1978)

Jesus summons His waning strength, lowers His head, and cries with a loud voice the words from Ps. 31:6 (recorded in Lk. 23:46), "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!" Now He dies with Scripture, even as He dies according to Scripture. With this word He summons death. The power of death does not deprive Him of life who had life in Himself. He enters death of His own free will, just as He willingly suffered Himself to be made a prisoner and to be bound. He came to death, as the Fathers have put it, and death did not come to Him. Calling out with a loud voice, He proclaims that truth to all. Here is an awesome mystery: The Son of God died. What John says in the text emphasizes Christ's willingness to die and His consciousness of dying. As the Father's beloved Son, He gives His life into the Father's hands in order to receive it again from Him on the morning of the resurrection. Thereby Jesus teaches us not only how to live but how to die. Through His death He gives us strength to die as He did.

The goal of the sermon is that the hearers would be confident that in the midst of death they possess life. The problem is that they are often fearful as they think about the death of others as well as their own. The means to the goal is that God through death destroyed death.

Introductory thought: "God isn't dead" was a bumper sticker response to the death-of-God theology some years back. Of course, God isn't dead; God cannot die. And yet today we are brought face to face with an awesome fact: God died! What happened on the first Good Friday is incredible. Let us look at

**The Incredible Death Of Jesus Christ**

- I. His death as real.
  - A. We cannot fathom how the God-man could die, and yet His spirit left His body.
  - B. His body hung lifeless, His lips no longer spoke, His eyes no longer saw, His ears no longer heard.
- II. His death was voluntary.
  - A. Death comes to us because of something—illness, accident, murder.
  - B. But Jesus came to death, giving up His spirit when He was ready to, in full possession of His faculties, in full control (Jn. 10:18).
    1. Died only when He had accomplished all things (Jn. 17:4).
    2. Died only when He had finished the atonement.
- III. His death was the death of death itself.
  - A. Because Christ took upon Himself the penalty for our sin which causes death (Eze. 18:4; Ro. 8:3; 1 Pe. 2:24).
  - B. Because death could not hold Him who was sinless and who had made a perfect atonement (Ro. 6:4, 9).
- IV. His death means life for us.
  - A. Death has now but the "shadow" (Ps. 23:4) of its former menacing power, for it is not a step into the unknown (Ps. 118:17; 2 Cor. 5:8).
  - B. Death is, now the avenue to God's presence, which is eternal bliss (1 Cor. 15:54c, 57).

Concluding thought: What an incredible death! Because Jesus died, "It is not death to die." The sting of death has been removed. We can live well, and die well.

EASTER SUNDAY: JOHN 20:1-9  
(MARCH 26, 1978)

Verse 1: Women were the last at the cross and the first at the tomb. Mary may have reached the tomb before the other women (Mt 28:1). Verse 2: Mary made her own deduction. She should have followed the Scriptures. "We know" implies that Mary came with the other women. Verse 5: John respected rabbinic law and did not go into the sepulcher. Peter did. Verse 7: The grave clothes were laid aside with apparent care. This would not have been the case had Jesus' body been stolen. Verse 8: "He believed," i.e., Mary's report or that Christ had not been taken away by others from the grave. Verse 9: What John saw brought all the prophecies of the Old Testament together, e.g., Ps 16:10; Is 53:10-11. Furthermore, Jesus predicted His resurrection, Jn 2:19; Mt. 20:18-19. "They knew not the Scriptures": They were blinded by overwhelming emotion. Introduction: The resurrection of Christ is the cornerstone of our faith, 1 Cor 15:17-20.

He Is Risen

I. Faith looks at the evidence.

- A. Mary had the evidence but drew the wrong conclusion.
- B. Peter and John had the evidence but were blinded by overwhelming emotion (v. 9).
- C. We have conclusive evidence.
  1. The Old Testament prophecies, Ps 16:10; Is 53:10-11.
  2. The predictions of Christ, Jn 2:19; Mt. 20:18-19.
  3. The testimony of the angel at the open grave.
  4. The testimony of Jesus' enemies.
  5. The post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, Jn 20:11-18; Jn 20:19-31; Lk 24:13-35; 1 Cor 15:1-8.

The evidence of Christ's resurrection is overwhelming, and faith rejoices in it.

II. Faith rejoices in the consequences.

- A. Jesus is indeed the Son of God, Jn 2:19.
- B. Jesus is with us as our living Lord, Mt 28:20.
- C. The Father has accepted the sacrifice of Christ, Rom 4:25; Phil 2:5-11.
- D. Christ's resurrection is the pledge of our resurrection, 1 Cor 15:20-23; Jn 11:25-26; Jn 14:1-3.

What treasures there are for us in the empty tomb! "Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

HJE

QUASIMODOGENITI, THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER:

JOHN 20:24-31

(APRIL 2, 1978)

Verse 24: Thomas is an example of an anxious skeptic. "Thomas was not with them": This was his first mistake. Verse 25: Thomas's second mistake was that he discounted the unanimous testimony of reliable witnesses. Verse 27: Note the patience of Jesus. Thomas is now convinced and boldly declares Christ's divinity. Verse 29: Believing is seeing; that is faith. Verse 31: The miracles are a part of Christ's proclamation of Himself as the Son of God; they are Christ's sign language intended to bring men to faith. The goal of this sermon is to encourage people to walk by faith, not by sight.

**"Jesus Lives To Strengthen The Faith Of Anxious Doubters"**

- I. Thomas doubted because he lived by the philosophy "seeing is believing."
  - A. His first mistake: He was not with the others when Jesus appeared.
  - B. His second mistake: He discredited the report of the witnesses.
  - C. His third mistake: He demanded to see before believing.
  - D. We doubt sometimes for the same reasons.
    1. Solitude is the breeding ground for doubts and anxiety, He 10:25.
    2. We are tempted to doubt the promises of God; He 13:5; Peter walking on the water.
    3. We are tempted to look for some sign to bolster our faith, M 12:38; 1 Cor 1:22; Mk 8:12.
- II. Jesus encourages us to walk by faith, for believing is seeing.
  - A. Jesus deals patiently with Thomas.
    1. He shows him the evidence.
    2. Thomas confesses, "My Lord and My God."
  - B. Jesus encourages us to live by the philosophy, "believing is seeing."
    1. We have a sure word to guide us.
      - a. The word is given by inspiration, II Tm 3:15; II Pe 1:21.
      - b. The word is truthful, Jn 17:17.
    2. The Word has precious promises.
      - a. Of God's power, Mt 28:20.
      - b. Of God's wisdom, Jn 21:17.
      - c. Of God's love in Christ, II Cor. 5:19-20.
    3. Faith clings to the Word.
      - a. Against circumstances, Lk 5:5; cf. the wise men, the centurion, the Syro-Phoenician woman.
      - b. Against feelings, Ps 42:5.
    4. Faith is rewarded by sight, for God is faithful to His Word. Examples: Abraham; the children of Israel at the Red sea and Jericho; Gideon again the Midianites.
  - C. The ultimate sight is in heaven, I Jn 1:1-3.

Let us walk by faith and not by sight, for "this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith."

HJE

**MISERICORDIAS DOMINI, THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER:**

LUKE 24:13-35

(APRIL 9, 1978)

Verse 13: Emmaus, the modern Kalonich, was six or seven miles from Jerusalem. This appearance of Christ probably took place between four and six p.m. on Easter Sunday. Verse 16: "Their eyes were restrained": Overcome with sorrow, they did not recognize Jesus. Jesus wanted to give them a lesson in believing the Word. Verses 17-23: Our faith and hope are often subject to vascillations and uncertainties. The disciples had the facts, but a wavering faith. Jesus' coming changes things. Verse 18: Literally, the question is, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know?" "His glory" following the resurrection Christ's human nature shares always and fully in the attributes of His divine nature. Verse 27: Christ found Himself everywhere in the Old Testament, Jn. 5:39-40. Verse 30: Many feel this breaking of bread refers to the Lord's Supper, but the idea is debatable. *Artos* was a general name for food, including drink. Verse 31: "He vanished"—an evidence of His state of exaltation. Verse 34: The appearance to Peter is not recorded in the Gospels, but Paul places this appearance first, I Cor. 15:4-8.

Introduction: Easter proclaims the living Lord as promised, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

### The Abiding Presence Of Christ

#### I. As our Companion through life.

##### A. The disciples desperately needed Christ as their companion.

1. Their spirits were low and their hopes shattered.
2. They had evidences of the resurrection, but little faith to accept the evidences.
3. Sometimes we become so overwhelmed by tragedy that it is difficult to believe God's promises, Mk. 4:40.

##### B. Jesus joins the Emmaus disciples.

1. He knows about them, and he knows about us, Jn. 11:11; Ps. 139:1-4; Is. 49:15.
2. He joins them, but they do not recognize Him—how much like ourselves when tragedy strikes.
3. He wants them to tell Him all, Mt. 7:7.
4. He points them to the Scriptures.
  - a. They testify to Him as Saviour and Lord, Gn. 3:15; 12:3; Is. 7:14; 9:6; 53:1ff.
  - b. Their hearts burn within them as the fire of faith is renewed, Mt. 18:20.

In our anxieties, let us remember that Christ is with us. Let us diligently seek Him in the Scriptures.

#### II. As Head of the Christian home.

##### A. Jesus enters the home of the Emmaus disciples.

1. They constrain Him to come in.
2. As Jesus responds, they are blessed.

##### B. Jesus wants to bless our homes too with His presence.

1. Homes are in trouble when Jesus is not there.
2. We need to constrain Him to be present.
  - a. As we pray together at meals.
  - b. As we read and share the Scriptures, Jn. 8:31-32.
  - c. As, prompted by His love, we confess our faults to one another and forgive one another.

Let us welcome Christ into our homes by seeking Him in the Scriptures and following Him in Christian living.

HJE

### JUBILATE, THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER: JOHN 10:1-10 (APRIL 16, 1978)

Verse 1: The text was spoken in the temple, immediately after Jesus healed the man who had been blind, Jn. 9:1-41. The sheepfold was a yard with a high stone wall to keep out wild animals and other intruders. The gate was guarded by a porter. On the contrast between true and false shepherds, cf. Jer. 23:1-4; Ezk. 34; Zach. 11:4-17. Verse 2: A "parable" is literally any speech differing from the common way of expression. "They understood not": In rejecting Christ, the Pharisees and Scribes become thieves and robbers. Verse 3: The sheep know the voice of their shepherd. He has names for each of them. Verse 4: Overnight several shepherds may use the same sheep fold. In the morning the sheep heed the call only of their shepherd. "He goeth before them": this is still the custom in the East. Verse 5: Sheep do not trust a stranger as they do their shepherd. The sheepfold is the Church of God. True pastors enter by the gate, Act. 20:29. False teachers climb over the wall, Rom. 16:17-18; Mt. 7:15. Luther says: "All who do not preach Christ are thieves and robbers." Verse 7: Jesus is still the door because He is the only Savior, Jn. 14:6. Verse 8: "All who come before us," i.e., making themselves doors. Verse 9: The thief wants to make the sheep his own, not to give them pasture; to sacrifice them to his



purposes, not to deal graciously with them for theirs; to destroy, not to give life. The three great blessings they have are: 1) deliverance from all enemies; 2) liberty to go out and in, the liberty of the children of God; 3) sustenance. Verse 10: The thief comes to take away, to use the sheep for his selfish purposes. But Christ has come to give life—true, lasting, eternal life in its fullness.

Introduction: There are various pictures of the intimate relationship between Christ and the Christian: We are branches in Christ the Vine, members of His Body, His bride, stones in the spiritual temple. The most familiar picture of all, however, is that of the Shepherd and His sheep.

### **The Intimate Relationship Between The Shepherd And His Sheep.**

#### **I. The relationship of the Shepherd to His sheep.**

##### **A. Christ is the door.**

1. He came to give His life for the sheep, Jn. 10:11.
2. He is the only door, Jn. 14:6.

##### **B. Christ gives rich blessings to His sheep.**

1. Unlike thieves and robbers—false teachers, Ac. 20:29.
  - a. The thief wants to make the sheep his own, not to give them pasture, Rm. 16:18.
  - b. He wants to sacrifice them to his purposes, not to deal graciously with them for theirs.
  - c. He wants to destroy life, not to give it, Mt. 7:15.
2. In contrast Jesus is the Good Shepherd.
  - a. He calls His sheep by name.
  - b. He gives them safety in the sheep-fold.
  - c. He sustains them by leading them out and goes before them, Ps. 23.
  - d. He gives them life now and eternally, Jn. 10:28.

#### **II. The relationship of the sheep to the Shepherd.**

##### **A. They enter by the door through faith, Rm. 3:28; Rm. 4:5.**

1. They are deaf to the voice of others.
  - a. False teachers, Rm. 16:17-18; Mt. 7:15.
  - b. The devil, the world, and their own flesh.
2. They hear His voice.
  - a. The warnings of the Law.
  - b. The encouragement of the Gospel.
3. They follow Him.
  - a. In faith.
  - b. In Christ-like living.

Let us diligently hear the voice of our Good Shepherd in His Word and seek to follow Him in our lives.

HJE

### **CANTATE, THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER: JOHN 14:1-12 (APRIL 23, 1978)**

John 14 is the beginning of Christ's farewell discourse, spoken, no doubt, partly in the Upper Room, partly on the way to Gethsemane. Few passages are more replete with the love of Jesus. "Let not your heart be troubled": That night much would happen to agitate the disciples. The cure for agitation is faith. Verse 2: He promises the disciples mansions where they will enjoy His presence forever. Verse 4: His going involved suffering. Verse 5: Thomas was expressing doubts which others may have had also. Verse 6: "I am the Way": Jesus prepared the way to heaven. He is the Truth: His every word may be trusted implicitly. The Truth directs the Way. Christ is the Life, the fountain,

the giver of life. There is no other Way, Truth, and Life. Verse 7: To know Jesus is to know the Father, Jn. 10:30; Col. 2:9. We know the Father by faith. Verse 8: Philip felt that if he saw the Father that would be enough to establish his faith. Verse 10: Christ's word and works are not performed separately from the Father. The essence of the Father and the Son is identical. Verse 11: He who refuses to believe Christ's word has the unquestionable testimony of His works. Jesus repeats what He told the unbelieving Jews, Jn. 10:38. Verse 12: "Greater works": Converting sinners through the preaching of the Gospel is greater than healing physical infirmities. The reason Christians can perform these greater works is that Jesus is going to the Father, namely, through the cross. The great works of converting men are works of the exalted Christ.

### Rejoice That You Are A Christian

- I. You have the assurance of heaven.
  - A. Jesus promises us heaven.
    1. He is going to prepare a place.
    2. He will come again to receive us unto Himself.
  - B. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.
    1. He prepared the way by a substitutionary death.
      - a. He paid the debt of sin.
      - b. The way is now open to all.
    2. He is the Truth.
      - a. He speaks the truth.
      - b. He is faithful to His word.
    3. He is the Life.
      - a. He is the true God and eternal life, Jn. 1:1.
      - b. He gives life in fellowship with God now and eternally, Jn. 3:16.
  - C. By faith life is ours.
    1. No man comes to the Father without Christ, Ac. 4:12.
    2. By faith heaven is ours, Jn. 3:17-18; Jn. 11:25.
- II. You know the Father.
  - A. The request: "Show us the Father," v.8.
  - B. The response: "He that has seen me has seen the Father," Col. 2:9.
    1. Jesus and the Father are one in essence, Jn. 10:30.
    2. The Father shares in the words and works of Jesus, v. 10.
  - C. Faith sees the Father in Christ.
    1. Faith knows from the words of Jesus that God is gracious, Jn. 1:14-17.
    2. Faith sees in the works of both that Jesus is the Son of God and that God is all-powerful, Mt. 28:18.
- III. You can do greater works than Jesus.
  - A. Jesus performed mighty works.
    1. He healed the sick and raised the dead.
    2. But all those whom he healed finally succumbed to physical death.
  - B. By faith we can perform greater works.
    1. Saving men's souls, Mt. 28:18-20.
    2. By telling them the good news that Jesus, our crucified and risen Lord, has gone to the Father to prepare a place for us.

HJE

ROGATE, FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER: JOHN 14:15-21  
(APRIL 30, 1978)

Verse 15: The fruit of the loving relationship between the disciples and their Lord is that they keep His commandments. Where there is no faith there is no

love. Where there is no love, there is no real keeping of the commandments. Verse 16: Jesus Himself had comforted His disciples; now that He was about to leave them visibly, He promised the Comforter. Verse 17: The Spirit of Truth never deceives or misleads believers. The truth He teaches is the Gospel. Unbelievers refuse to see and know the works of the Spirit, I Cor. 2:14. Only believers know Him. Note the reference to the Trinity in this section: The Son prays to the Father, and the Father sends the Spirit. Verse 18: He will not leave the disciples orphans, without a guide. He will return in the means of grace. Verse 19: When He goes to the Father, the world will not see Him visibly; but the disciples will see Him spiritually, by faith. Verse 20: "I in you": The presence of Jesus in the believers assures them of His grace and power for their sanctification. Verse 21: The love of the Father motivates and follows upon the works of the Christian. We show our faith by our love.

### We Are Not Orphans

- I. We have the Holy Spirit as our comforter.
  - A. He regenerates.
    1. The world cannot receive Him, I Cor. 2:14.
    2. He comes in baptism, Jn. 3:1-15, and the Word, Rm. 1:16.
    3. He dwells in us, II Cor. 6:16.
  - B. He abides with us forever.
    1. He abides through the Word which He inspired, II Pe. 1:21.
    2. Through that Word He guides us into all truth, Jn. 16:13; Jn. 8:31-32; Rm. 8:16-17; Rm. 5:3-5.
    3. Through the Word He impowers us to love, vs. 15-21; Php. 2:13.
- II. Jesus Himself comes to us.
  - A. Jesus is about to leave.
    1. Before Him lies the cross of reconciliation, II Cor. 5:19.
    2. Beyond lies the victorious resurrection and ascension, I. Cor. 15:55-57, Php. 2:9-11.
  - B. He promises, "I will come to you."
    1. He promises to be with us always, Mt. 28:20.
    2. He comes through the Word and the Sacrament, Lk. 10:16.
    3. By faith we see Him.
  - C. He gives hope for the future.
    1. "Because I live, ye shall live also," Jn. 11:25.
    2. Then we shall know, I Cor. 13:12.
    3. Then we will be forever with the Lord.

HJE

### EXAUDI, THE SUNDAY AFTER THE ASCENSION: JOHN 17:1-11 (MAY 7, 1978)

The pericope divides into three sections: vs. 1-5, Christ prays for His own glorification; vs. 6-8, Christ prays for the disciples as those who have kept the Word; vs. 9-11, the distinction between the disciples and this world. A good sermon should be followed by a good prayer; so the sacerdotal prayer follows the farewell discourse. Verse 1: "The hour" refers to the time of Christ's suffering and subsequent glorification. "That Thy Son may glorify Thee": The work of Christ glorifies the Father's grace. Verse 2: "Power over all flesh": By His suffering and death Christ gained all men for Himself, since He redeemed all. As many as the Father has given the Son in the election of grace will have eternal life. Verse 3: To have eternal life is to know the Father of mercy and Jesus Christ, the Mediator of grace. Verse 4: The work is the great work of atonement. Verse 5: Jesus prays for the day when, also according to His human nature, He will be glorified, with full and unrestricted exercise of all the

divine attributes. Verse 6: "Thy name": He had told and showed the disciples the feeling and intention of the Father towards sinful men. To keep God's Word in faith and obedience is discipleship. Verse 8: This verse teaches the eternal generation of the Son; cf. John 1:1-14. Verse 9: Jesus' prayer for His disciples. Verse 10: Note Jesus' assertion of His unity of essence with the Father. Luther notes that the phrase, "All that is thine is mine," permits nothing to be excluded. Verse 11: "Keep": The work of preservation in faith is the work of God the Holy Spirit through the means of grace. "That they may be one": Unity in faith unites all true believers in the external church; unity is a goal to be worked toward.

Introduction: We are in the Holy of Holies as we see Jesus at prayer.

### Jesus At Prayer

#### I. Jesus prays for His own glorification.

##### A. He glorified the Father.

1. By His preaching and healing (v. 6) He demonstrates that God is gracious, Mt. 11:25; Jn. 1:14.
2. By finishing the work (v. 4).
  - a. The work of atonement, Php. 2:5-8.
  - b. To give eternal life to those who know God and Jesus in faith, vs. 2-3.

##### B. He prays for His own glorification.

1. He prays that, also according to His human nature, He may be glorified, v. 5.
2. This prayer was dramatically answered when Christ entered upon His state of exaltation, Php. 2:9-11; Eph. 1:20-23.
3. He is glorified in the believers because they are the fruit of His labor of love, Re. 7:14.

#### II. He prays for His disciples.

##### A. The disciples are those who have kept Christ's Word, vs. 6-8.

1. They accepted Christ's Word in faith.
2. They are now God's and Christ's, vs. 9-10.

##### B. Jesus prays for His disciples.

1. That they may be kept in the faith.
  - a. They are beset by the devil, the world, and their own flesh, v. 11.
  - b. Only the power of God can keep them, Jd. 6.
2. That they may be one.
  - a. In the holy Christian church all Christians are one, Ep. 4:4-6; Ga. 3:28; I Cor. 12:13.
  - b. In the visible church unity is a goal to be worked toward, Ep. 4:3.

HJE

PENTECOST: JOHN 20:19-23  
(MAY 14, 1978)

Verse 19: The scene is Easter Sunday evening. The fearful disciples were aware of the preceding events: the report of women, the appearance of Christ to Mary, the account of Peter and John, and the report of the Emmaus disciples. Luke implies that more than the eleven had gathered. "Jesus stood in the midst" of the disciples in His glorified body, subject to the laws neither of time nor space. "Peace be unto you": This is the peace He won and He alone can give, Jn. 14:27. Verse 20: "He showed them His hands and His side": He is the living One who was dead but is now alive. "Glad": extreme dejection and fear are converted into the joyful conviction of the truth. The disciples heard, saw, and handled the Word of Life, Jn. 1:1. Verse 21: The

first "peace" gave a new revelation; the second "peace" was a summons to service. "As my Father hath sent me," etc.: This is Christ's divine commission to His Church. Verse 22: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost": The Holy Spirit is Christ's parting gift to His Church. Verse 23: "Whosoever sins yet remit," etc.: This is the office of the keys, the peculiar church power to forgive the sins of penitent sinners and to retain the sins of the impenitent. Cf. Mt. 18:15-19; Ac. 2:37-39.

### Jesus In The Midst Of The Church

- I. He gives the command to preach the Gosepl, v. 21.
  - A. Jesus was sent to seek and to save the lost, Mt. 18:11.
  - B. He sends His disciples on a similar mission, Ac. 1:8; Mt. 20:18-20.
    1. The world is still lost in sin and death.
    2. Christians are to seek the lost.
- II. He gives the message, vs. 21, 23.
  - A. A message of peace, v. 21.
    1. Christ won peace for all, II Cor. 5:19; Col. 2:14.
    2. Christians are to proclaim this peace, Is. 40:1.
  - B. A message of pardon, v. 23.
    1. The sins of penitent sinners are to be forgiven them.
    2. The sins of impenitent sinners are to be retained, Mt. 18:15-17; Mt. 23:37.
- III. He gives the power, v. 22.
  - A. His promise was fulfilled on Pentecost, Ac. 2.
    1. The Holy Spirit worked in the apostles, giving them boldness.
    2. He worked through the apostles, bringing three thousand to repentance and faith.
  - B. The Holy Spirit is Christ's abiding gift to His Church.
    1. He works in us, Jn. 16:13.
    2. He works through us, Jn. 16:7-11.

HJE

### THE FEAST OF THE HOLY TRINITY: MATTHEW 28:16-20 (MAY 21, 1978)

The pericope from Matthew 28 represents the point of connection between the ministry of our Lord during the days of His incarnation and the continuing work of the Holy Trinity in the life of the Holy Christian Church. Just as the entire Godhead was active in the person and works of Christ in the days of His ministry, so the Holy Trinity is involved in the apostolic ministry. The person and works of Christ are joined to the ministry of the apostles (who proclaim the Word of God and administer the Sacraments of Christ in the name of Christ), so that we may know the fruits and effects of Christ's saving work among us.

Matthew characteristically uses the phrase *hoi dodeka mathetai* and, after the passion and resurrection, *hoi hendeka mathetai* in the same sense that the other evangelists use the term *hoi apostoloi*. In fact, Matthew uses the latter term only at 10:2 in the listing of the names of the Twelve. The Twelve are something more than simply an "inner-group" of close disciples; they have been particularly chosen by Christ to be His designated representatives to speak and minister in His name and on His behalf (10:5ff). They have fulfilled that commission, and in the last hours of the passion, they have deserted Christ and dispersed. Judas, one of the Twelve, has betrayed Him and taken his own life; Peter has denied Him before witnesses.

Thus, the call of Christ, coming here after the record of the resurrection, tells the remaining eleven that they have now been forgiven and reconciled to

God in the death of Christ. The risen Lord comes before them to reestablish their apostolate and give them a new responsibility: to go out in the name of Jesus with a new and glorious proclamation, to make disciples of all nations, to baptize in the name of the Triune God, and teach the whole counsel of God.

In this ministry, the apostles are to understand that the crucified and risen Christ goes with them. What they say and do in His name is done on His authority (*exousia*). Christ has Himself received this authority from His Father and here indicates to the eleven that it is the spiritual power which will lend authority to their words and actions. What they have received of hope and mercy is now to be communicated to others through the apostolic ministry that Christ gives them. As apostolic messengers, they do not represent their own persons or offer their own message. They represent the person of Christ and speak in His name, on His authority. "When (preachers) offer the Word of Christ or the Sacraments, they do so in Christ's place and stead" (Apology VII/VIII, 28). This post-resurrection appearance and Word of Christ to His eleven stands at the foundation of the whole life and ministry of Christ's Church in this world.

#### In The Name Of Christ

- I. This appearance and Word of Christ mean forgiveness for sinful apostles.
  - A. The eleven were more than ordinary followers:
    1. They were called directly by Christ (10:1-4).
    2. They were charged with a special responsibility.
      - a. In His name they cast out demons.
      - b. In His name they heal the sick and infirm (10:5ff.) and announce that the Kingdom of God is near.
  - B. At His betrayal, they fled (26:56).
  - C. Here on the mountain they are restored and given a new apostolic ministry.
    1. The death of Christ reconciled them to God.
    2. In the name of Christ they are sent forth into the world.
      - a. To make disciples.
      - b. To baptize.
      - c. To teach the whole counsel of God.
- II. The apostles receive authority from Christ Himself.
  - A. They are sent forth to minister in the name and stead of Christ. What they do is done in His name and place.
  - B. Christ is at work in their words and acts.
    1. In their work of making disciples, Christ's gathering of a people for God is carried on.
    2. In their baptizing, the fruit of Christ's redemptive work is continued.
    3. In their teaching, Christ is building up His Church.
- III. The Good News for us.
  - A. Christ provides the plan and foundation for His Holy Ministry and holy Church.
  - B. The Church is built upon the apostle's teaching and ministry. (Acts 2:42).
    1. Ours is an apostolic faith and church.
    2. The ministry of the church does not change.
    3. To this apostolic work Christ promises His presence and blessing.

*Almighty and Everlasting God, who hast given unto us Thy servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity: We beseech Thee that Thou wouldest keep us steadfast in this faith and worship, and bring us at last to see Thee in Thy one and eternal glory, O Father, who with the Son and the Holy Spirit dost live and reign, one God, through all ages.*

**THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY: MATTHEW 7:21-29**  
(MAY 28, 1977)

The lessons find their center in the unfolding of the Will of the Father in the Law and Gospel. The text represents the fusion of two separate pericopes. The two are certainly neither antagonistic nor irreconcilable. In fact, the second appears to flow naturally from the first: his "house" is solidly built who builds upon Christ the Rock. Having recognized this, we ought also to recognize that we will have to put our principal emphasis on either verses 21-23 or verses 24-29; we cannot adequately handle both in the same sermon.

The speaker of verses 21-23 is our Lord, addressing Himself primarily to the first disciples who have gathered around Him, but within the hearing of the multitude as well (5:1ff). In the wider sense, His word is addressed to everyone who hears it, and the message of that word is that to follow Him does not mean to escape the judgment which will issue from Him in the last day. One does not avoid judgment in this life or the end of days by claiming to belong to Christ, regardless of statements to this effect in some contemporary preaching.

All of us must face the temptation to deny Christ by denying the necessity of a Christian life, a life of discipleship, sanctification, and growth in grace. In our preaching we are to call forth that confession which speaks and at the same time moves beyond speech to "do the Will of My Father who is in Heaven."

**"He Shall Come Again To Judge Both The Living And The Dead"**

- I. These words are familiar to us as our weekly confession of faith and hope.
  - A. They are a confession of the complete Lordship of Christ Jesus.
    1. This judgment was seen already in His coming into this world (John 9:39).
    2. In the end of days, He is to come again as Judge of all.
      - a. He will judge the living and the dead (Acts 10:42).
      - b. His authority to judge comes from the Father (Romans 2:5ff.).
  - B. They are a reminder that it is we who are to be judged. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (Romans 14:10).
- II. These words of Christ stand as a solemn warning, a strong preaching of the wrath of God over all forms of ungodliness in our lives.
  - A. What is condemned is our lack of attention to Him, for our devotion is often self-interested and insincere.
  - B. What is condemned is our indifference to His Word.
    1. In the strongest language, He calls us to repentance and amendment of life. Our righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees (5:20).
    2. He pleads with us to turn away from every form of self-righteousness, to seek comfort and help from Him (11:18ff.).
  - C. What is condemned is our reticence to follow Him by rejecting and despising our sins and trusting alone in Him.
- III. At the same time, for those who trust in Him, these words are a sweet assurance of His mercy and forgiveness for all our sins.
  - A. Assurance that in our confession and intention to grow through the means of grace, we have something that will endure forever.
    1. We have been baptized into death with Him, and raised up to new life in Him (Romans 6:3ff.).
    2. Our Communion of His Body and Blood strengthens us in faith and certifies our hope in Him.
    3. Our confession and absolution is the fruit of daily struggle to be faithful.
  - B. Assurance that we are indeed building upon the Rock that is stronger than we (Ps 61:2).

*O Almighty God, whom to know is everlasting life, grant us perfectly to know Thy Son, Jesus Christ, to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life, that, following His steps, we may steadfastly walk in the way that leadeth to eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who lives and rules with Thee in the communion of the Holy Spirit, one God, throughout all ages.*

CJE

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY: MATTHEW 9:9-13  
(JUNE 4, 1978)

In every age the Church has had to face the temptation to cut the Gospel from its grounding in specifics and transform it into a kind of general statement. We have all fallen victim to this temptation at one time or another, for example, when we speak of a sense of thankfulness or having a forgiving nature in rather unspecific terms. In this pericope of the calling of Matthew Levi, we are confronted with the grace of God. What are we to make of it? When the scholastics separated this grace from its scriptural foundations, they turned it into a substance to be spoken of in terms of quantities. Our own temptation is to turn it into a kind of abstract and benign graciousness in which we may comfortably immerse ourselves. The Lutheran Reformation reminded Christendom that the grace of God is His unmerited favour which He shows us in our Lord Jesus Christ. The power of this grace is always revealed and demonstrated in particular acts and situations. In both the Old and New Testaments, this mercy is neither unspecified nor undefined "mercifulness." There is always a specific context, a defined situation in which mercy is given and received.

In Luke 18, Jesus tells the parable of the poor sinner who, unlike the proud Pharisee, prays in humility, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." The writer to the Hebrews reminds us how Jesus became subject in all things on our behalf, and was made perfect (complete) through sufferings, and tasted death for us, "so that He might be merciful and faithful as high priest before God, to expiate the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2:17). In Luke 6, Jesus turns to His disciples, and says, "Be therefore merciful, as your Father in Heaven is merciful."

The Call Of Matthew Reveals The Mercy Of God For Us

- I. That Jesus should call Matthew into His discipleship is a statement of the mercy of God.

Matthew stands in need of mercy, but he does not deserve it. We know that he was a tax-collector. Tax-collectors were obvious sinners; persons to be avoided by church-people. Matthew does not appear to have been an exception—at his table were "tax-collectors and sinners."

- II. That Jesus should eat with sinners is capable of misinterpretation.

- A. It could be misunderstood by the so-called righteous members of the community. And it was!

1. To such it appears as though this act of Christ stands as a specific repudiation of their moral accomplishments and goals.

- a. In the most important sense, it is. Natural man, even at his best, is inclined away from God and toward evil. He labours under the delusion that he can justify his own existence. He is selfrighteous, puffed-up, and always excuses himself.

- b. In a lesser sense, it is not, for civil righteousness is important. Without it, life in this world is chaotic!

2. To such self-righteous persons, the action of Jesus appears as veritable proof that He is not the Christ.



- a. This is the triumph of self-serving human opinion.
- b. This is the rejection of God's mercy.
- B. It could also be misunderstood by open sinners. To such it may appear as though nothing is required of them—no change, no repentance, no sorrow, no confession, no resolution.
  - 1. In one sense, something is required. If one cannot enter heaven by moral achievement, neither can he enter by indifference and sloth. This is Pharisaism in reverse! No one enters the Kingdom of God, except by mercy.
  - 2. In another sense, nothing is required. Whatever is accomplished for our justification is wholly the work of Christ.
- III. That Jesus should eat with sinners is a proclamation of the mercy of God.
  - A. His presence creates a hunger for righteousness and salvation.
  - B. His presence reveals that God neither deserts us nor rejects us in our low estates. Christ became sin for us.

*We beseech Thee, O Lord, in Thy clemency to show us Thine unspeakable mercy that Thou mayest both set us free from our sins and rescue us from the punishments which for our sins we deserve; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who lives and rules with Thee in the communion of the Holy Spirit, one God, throughout all ages.*

CJE

### THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY: MATTHEW 9:35-10:7 (JUNE 11, 1978)

The pericope for Trinity Sunday has impressed upon us the importance of the apostolic office and the work of those who have been called and ordained by the Lord, in and through His Church, who minister in the name and stead of Christ. "They do not represent their own persons but the person of Christ, because of the church's call, as Christ testifies (Lk. 10:16), 'He who hears you hears Me.' When they offer the Word of Christ or the Sacraments, they do so in Christ's place and stead" (Apol VII/VIII 28).

This Sunday's text takes us back to the commissioning of the Twelve as apostolic representatives of Christ, even though, as we have already mentioned, Matthew does not use the designation "Apostles." This act represents the beginning of what, in the resurrection and the final words of our Lord, will be seen to be the most essential work of the Church of Christ.

#### The Calling Of The Twelve

- I. What precipitates this calling and sending forth?
  - A. "He had compassion" (9:36).
    - 1. For the sake of His compassion, He healed the sick (14:14).
    - 2. For the sake of His compassion, He fed the multitude of five thousand with seven loaves and a few small fish (15:32).
  - B. This compassion moves Christ to action.
    - 1. He directs His church (disciples) to pray (37).
    - 2. He sends the disciples forth in His name, with His authority (10:1-42).
- II. This is only the beginning. The work of the apostles here given is circumscribed and limited, for the work of Christ has no yet been completed.
  - A. Limited nationality. The apostles are restricted to the Jewish race, for "salvation is of the Jews" (Jn. 4:22). They are not to go among the Gentiles or Samaritans. St. Peter reminds us (1 Pt. 4:17) that judgment begins with the household of God.
  - B. Limited task. The apostles are called here to cast out unclean spirits

and heal the sick, proclaiming that the Kingdom of heaven is 'near' at hand in the person and work of Christ.

### III. This calling and sending-forth is a foretaste of the Gospel.

- A. Limited though it is, here is the seed from which, with the resurrection, the Gospel springs forth. The kingdom of heaven appears in this world in the person and work of Christ.
  1. He has compassion upon us (Nicene Creed: He came for us men and for our salvation).
  2. He has healed us with the healing of divine forgiveness.
  3. He has suffered and died on our behalf.
- B. This event is the little spring in the desert from which the mighty flood of the Holy Gospel issues forth. It is a long journey from this moment to Good Friday, through suffering and rejection, infamy and death. But the goal is clear. It is the working out of the compassion of Christ for us and all the world.

*Merciful God, we beseech Thee to cast the bright beams of Thy light upon Thy Church that, being instructed by the doctrine of the blessed Apostles, it may so walk in the light of Thy truth that it may at length attain to the right of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who lives and rules with Thee in the communion of the Holy Spirit, one God, throughout all ages.*

CJE

### THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY: MATTHEW 10:34-42 (JUNE 18, 1978)

The words of our Lord are the continuation of the instructions, warnings, and promises spoken to the Twelve previous to their first going-forth in the name of Jesus. They have been given Christ's own authority to minister in His Name. Along with this authority will come open persecution and hatred. The disciple must be fearless, remembering that the Father in heaven knows even the number of the hairs upon his head. In this situation our Lord calls His disciples to bold confession and recognition of the constant and easy temptation to denial.

Confession (*homologia*) is far more than an unaffected acknowledgement of the special status of Jesus among men; rather it is a solemn and binding statement that He is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Such a statement is at once (1) a mark of discipleship (as the present passage indicates), (2) an elementary form of *martyria* (I John 1:2), (3) a public statement (John 1:20), and (4) a basic element in Christian worship, more especially baptism and ordination (I Timothy 6:12). The words of Christ in Matthew 7:21-23 (cf. Trinity I) make it clear that such confession necessarily incorporates acts which spring from right words.

#### The Words Of Christ

- I. The words of Christ remind His Church of the necessity of bold confession in the face of constant temptations to denial.
  - A. The true nature of confession (*homologia*).
    1. An essential mark of every follower of Jesus (cf. Luke 12:8).
    2. An essential mark of testimony to the person and works of Christ (Acts 4:8-12).
    3. An act of obedient and faithful worship (I Timothy 6:12).
  - B. The danger of denial is always present.
    1. Even the Twelve fell victim to this temptation.
      - a. Peter was victimized by fear of personal safety (Matthew 26:69-75).
      - b. Judas Iscariot was victimized by personal interests (26:14ff.).

2. The temptation still faces us today.
  - a. Denial by weakness, immaturity, personal interests, etc. (as Peter and Judas).
  - b. Denial by sloth, selfishness, failure to bring forth the fruits of faith (7:23; 25:12).
- II. The words of Christ stand as both a warning and a promise.
  - A. A warning that our confession must be bold, obedient, and faithful, even in the face of great dangers to body and spirit.
    - a. It must be built upon the Word of God.
    - b. It must be nurtured by the Sacraments of Christ.
  - B. A promise that Christ will be with His people to bless and strengthen them.

*Almighty God, who hast built Thy Church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone: Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made a holy temple acceptable unto Thee: through the same, Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and rules with Thee in the communion of the Holy Spirit, one God, throughout all ages.*

CJE

THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY: ROMANS 6:2-11  
(JUNE 25, 1978)

How superficially we have interpreted the truth and content of the holy Christian faith. We live in the world of the *understandable*, a world which exalts human thought. At the same time we think deeply only with great difficulty. We surrender to our emotions in every area. In matters of faith, each becomes his own master without meditating on the mystery of the faith. The Apostle Paul speaks of a great mystery in Baptism. *Symphotoi* (v. 5) refers to things which grow together and therefore belong together by nature. *This is how close our Heavenly Father reckons us to His Son—so that nothing in heaven or earth can separate us from Him, unless we break the connection.* We have been baptized into death together with Christ and buried with Him in the waters of Holy Baptism. This is a great mystery, which is not shaped according to our human terms and knowledge; rather it is the life-long work of our faith to believe it and seek to understand it.

This Is A Great Mystery

- I. Baptism binds the death and resurrection of Christ to us. (*Homoiomati* (likeness) refers to exact image, not mere similarity, v. 5).
  - A. When we are baptized, we are joined together with Christ in the death which He has died on our behalf.
    1. By it we know that Christ died for us.
    2. By it God the Father reaches out from heaven and takes hold of us, and puts us alongside His only-begotten Son. *"I will always consider you together with Him. What you have been and done, this He has borne for you on the Cross. What He is and does this you will always wear and carry."*
  - B. When we are baptized, we are joined together with Christ in His victorious resurrection, by the act of God.
    1. By this means, the victory of Christ is our possession.
    2. It is as though Christ came to us and said: *"I am going to make an important journey, for your salvation. I will come down from heaven; I walk on earth; I will be hated and despised; I will suffer cruelly, I will hang on the cross and die; I will descend into the*

*depths of hell—and I will take you along with Me. We are bound together for all eternity.*

C. Today this happens in no other way than by Holy Baptism.

1. During His earthly ministry, Christ Jesus did not baptize. He took men, women, and children directly into the Kingdom of God by His Word and Blessing, e.g.; the thief on the cross.
2. But before His Ascension, He left this commandment to His Church, to be observed through all the ages. He instituted this Means of Grace; our total understanding of Baptism is based upon this foundation.

II. Holy Baptism is not an indifferent, unimportant, or empty ceremony.

- A. It is not a human action at all. It is God who works through Baptism. He uses human voices and human hands and earthly water, But He does it; for only God can accomplish such great things.
- B. He plants us together with His Son, washes and cleanses us, and causes us to be born again. He plants faith in our hearts and minds. The Holy Spirit is in the water.
- C. Thus, Baptism is necessary for all, including children.

III. Baptism is a new life together with Christ, beginning in time, and fulfilled in eternal life. Luther: It is God's greatest sermon on the pure grace of God.

- A. It is the source of comfort when sins oppress us.
- B. It is center of faith and trust when temptations and sins assail us. We are sinners in a sinful world, but we are forgiven.
- C. It is a call to turn away from sin and follow Christ in every sense of the word. "To receive Baptism is one thing; to live in Baptism is another."

CJE

#### THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY: MATTHEW 11:25-30 (JULY 2, 1978)

Again two separate sayings of our Lord are conjoined: the first, a public prayer, which takes the form of a declaration of the Son speaking to the Father, and the second, the call and invitation of the Son to weary sinners.

Some commentators have remarked that verses 25-27 seem more characteristic of the Fourth Gospel than the Synoptics. This has led some to posit that we are here confronted by a short liturgical saying which has been grafted into the Matthaean Gosepl. Such a thesis is not necessary to explain the presence of these words, which are reminiscent of the Good Shepherd discourse in John. In fact, the Synoptics include two types of prayer by our Lord. On the one hand, we find prayers in which Christ represents suffering and afflicted sinners before His Father with Psalms and lamentations (The primary examples of this are the Gethsemane prayer, Mark 14:34; and the cry of Psalm 22, Mark 15:34). On the other hand, we find prayers in which Christ stands as the exalted Son of the Heavenly Father in perfect communion with the Father. The verses of the first part of our text represent this latter type of prayer. (Further examples are found at Matthew 14:23, Mark 1:35 and Luke 5:16.)

It is as the perfect and exalted Son of the Father that our Lord urges the invitation of verses 28-30 upon those who hear Him, whether in the first century with His own voice, or in the twentieth century through His Church. This call or invitation represents an event which comes about in the preaching of the Gospel. Yet the call is never simply a past or complete event; it is always at work in the present moment. To those who are not yet Christians, it is a call out of the world and into the Church - a call to Holy Baptism. To those who are within the congregation, it is a call to sanctification and movement toward eternal life.

### The Call Of Christ

- I. The Addressees.
  - A. A call to those who labour. All labour and all the fruits of human labour perish. Only the fruit of Christ's labour endures.
  - B. A call to the heavy-laden. The burden is the Law which Christ alone perfects and fulfils within Himself.
  - C. A call to the weary. Christ endures great weariness in mockery, affliction, temptation, and prayer on our behalf.
- II. The Roots of our Calling.
  - A. To the stranger - a call to Baptism into the death and resurrection of Christ.
  - B. To the Christian - a call to live in the power of Baptism.
- III. The Goal - To Bear the Yoke and Burden of Christ.
  - A. The sign of His Cross - our insignia and confidence.
  - B. The burden of the cross
    1. To mature in faith toward God.
    2. To grow in love toward one another.
    3. To be built together in our mutual hope in Christ.

Conclusion: The call and invitation of Christ is extended to each of us. For those outside the Kingdom it is a grace-filled invitation to leave the world and enter. For those within it is, again, the invitation of the grace of God to grow towards eternal life.

CJE

### THE SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY: MATTHEW 13:1-9, 18:23 (JULY 9, 1978)

It is interesting that Luke's account of the parable of the Sower, and that of Mark (4:1-20) are missing from the three-year lectionary of the ILCW. The apparent reason is the predominance of what many modern critics claim to be inauthentic interpretive material. Thus, in most scholarly circles, verses 1-9 in the Matthean account represent the original parable as spoken by our Lord, and verses 18-23 constitute a later allegorical interpretation which recasts the *Sitz-in-Leben* of the parable for the missionary situation of the early Christian community. The short parable of the Sower found in the recently discovered Coptic text of the Gospel of Thomas (9) is seen as a vindication of this position. It is, however, the text as it stands in the Gospels which is inspired and authoritative. We have no legitimate right to disregard the latter part of Matthew's text of the parable - and with it the texts of Luke and Mark - as though the interpretation of the parable represents an inauthentic addition to the parable or a curious example of the interpretative skills (or lack thereof) of the early Christians.

### The Parable Of The Sower

- I. The Church Bears God's Truth to the World.
  - A. In the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Great Sower of the Seed.
  - B. In those who speak the Word of Christ in His name and by His command.
- II. The Truth of God is Variouslly Received.
  - A. The Evil One is always ready to snatch it away.
  - B. The tribulations and persecutions to which the Word gives rise harden hearts and close ears against it.
  - C. Cares, prosperity, and delectations strangle and choke it.
  - D. By some it is heard and understood, and brings forth great fruit.

## III. This Parable Stands as an Admonition, a Warning, and a Consolation.

- A. Admonition: Let the Word be sown! This is the essential work of the church in our own day.
- B. Warning: Recognize the obstacles raised within your own life and mind against the proper sowing and nurturing of the Word of Truth.
  - 1. Remember the importance of the weekly gathering of the congregation around the Word and Sacraments.
  - 2. Support in every spiritual and material way the sowing of the Word.
- C. Consolation: The Word will bring forth fruit, whether or not that fruit is evident to us.

CJE

THE EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY: MATTHEW 13:24-30, 36-43  
(JULY 16, 1978)

Again, we have a parable with interpretation conjoined - this one concerning the Kingdom of Heaven. The Lord has in the parable of the Sower promised that there will be a rich and abundant harvest. The Church receives these words as a promise, because no great harvest is yet evident and the field is plagued with insects and weeds. What shall be done about them?

Melanchthon speaks to the problem in Apology VII/VIII. On the one hand, the field may be identified as the whole world (VII/VIII.19): "Therefore this passage is more against our opponents than for them since it shows that the true and spiritual people will be separated from the physical people."

But at the same time, it must be remembered that our Lord Himself identifies this parable as a word about the Kingdom, which in this world appears hidden within the visible church. This visible church is of necessity *ecclesia mixta*, containing within it both bad and good, hypocrite and faithful, weed and wheat. Christians are warned against the danger of schisms which precipitously and prematurely divide this visible structure. Against such schisms we implore the help of our Lord (*Litany*, Third Intercession). Schisms and dissensions among believers are to be avoided, as sins against love. "Christ has also warned us in His parables on the church that when we are offended by the personal conduct of priests or people, we should not incite schisms, as the Donatists wickedly did" (VII/VIII.49).

## The Parable Of The Field

- I. The Field is the visible Christian Church. Hidden within it is the true Kingdom of believers, created, sustained, and sanctified by the Means of Grace.
- II. A Call to Patience and Endurance.
  - A. The Kingdom is secure; the harvest will be reaped.
  - B. All that is impure will be burned on the Last Day.
  - C. Let no scandal or dissension divide, discourage, or destroy us. Satan cannot destroy the Church; she shall shine like the sun in the Day of the Lord.

CJE

THE NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY: MATTHEW 13:44-52  
(JULY 23, 1978)

The pericope marks the conclusion of a string of parables of the Kingdom with three short parables: (1) The Treasure Hidden in the Field, (2) The Pearl of Great Price, (3) The Dragnet. The concluding words speak of the scribe who is an expert in Mosaic Law and who, by becoming a disciple of Jesus,

preserves the insights of the Law and adds to them the blessings of the Gospel. The central theme is found in the first two parables. The Kingdom is to be desired above all things; it is such that a man will dispose of all things in order to acquire it. In the first parable, as in the parables of the unjust steward and the unjust judge, our Lord shows how "the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light" (Luke 16:8). In the second parable, the point is reinforced; dedicate yourself to God's Kingdom and know that no other claim upon you has its value.

### The Kingdom Of God

- I. What is a treasure? It is something of surpassing value. The man in the parable is willing to sell everything he owns to possess it. What is the treasure that we are to desire and possess? It is the Kingdom of God. For it we must be willing to make great sacrifices.
- II. What is a pearl? It is an example of something precious. In Judaism, godly wisdom was compared with pearls in value. Here the pearl stands as a simile for the saving blessing of the Kingdom of God (Mt. 7:6).
- III. Both parables stand as an indictment of false values and misguided human effort. But there is great promise also attached: It is the purpose of our Heavenly Father, in and through His beloved Son, to give us the Kingdom (Luke 12:32). The Apostle Paul reminds us that this treasure (*thēsauros*) of wisdom and knowledge is hidden in Christ (Co. 2:3). He give us a new life as a treasure (2 Cor. 4:7) which in this life we carry about in our own frail bodies.

CJE

### THE TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY: MATTHEW 14:13-21 (JULY 30, 1978)

This pericope has received little mercy at the hands of interpreters. Some have pictured this episode as a friendly picnic at which the crowds learn the great "miracle" of sharing by following the good example of Jesus and His disciples. They are inspired to open their lunch-baskets and share with less fortunate friends and neighbours. At the other end of the spectrum, some have totally disregarded the historical circumstances of this episode, and turned it into nothing more than cultic and ritual action, serving as a kind of proto-type to the Holy Eucharist.

With the announcement of the death of John the Baptist, the ministry of our Lord enters a new period. As when the Pharisees took counsel to kill Him (12:9-15), this new phase begins with a period of withdrawal from the disciples and the multitude. The way of the cross is becoming more clear; it is the way to Jerusalem which Christ must follow. The end of the road is not yet in sight. Although the Messianic significance of the ministry of Christ is not evident to the multitudes, Jesus is openly showing Himself to be the Messiah, the minister the compassion of God (v. 14). It is within the context of this larger ministry that we find the special significance of this miraculous feeding.

### The Fulness Of God's Compassion

- I. Christ Jesus is Himself the measure of the compassion of God.
  - A. The ministry of John the Baptist bore witness to that compassion. He prepared the way for Christ.
    1. Zecharias predicted it in the words of the Benedictus (Lk. 1:78).
    2. John himself spoke of it in pointing others to Christ (Jn. 1:18).
  - B. It is compassion which is at work in this great miraculous feeding.
    1. He showed compassion in healing the sick (v. 14).
    2. He was moved by compassion to feed the fainting (vv. 15-16).

3. He showed the measure of compassion by supplying an abundance.
- II. We have been provided with the abundance of God's compassion in Christ Jesus.
- A. We are clothed and covered by it (Co. 3:12-17).
  - B. We are inspired by it (Phil 2:1-2).
  - C. To refuse to receive it and offer it means to deny the love of God. (I John 3:17).

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THE ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY: MATTHEW 14:22-33  
(AUGUST 6, 1978)

This pericope introduces a series of sayings and events recorded by Matthew, Mark (6:45-52) and John (6:16-24), but not by Luke. The particular characteristics of the Matthean account of walking on the water are two in number: 1) The confession of Peter, "You are the Son of God in truth," presaging the great confession of Matthew 16:16. This represents a new element in the Matthean account, whereas in the Markan account, the term "Son of God" is used already in connection with the Baptism of Jesus. Matthew does use the term in reference to the temptation, which is directed specifically against the Sonship of Jesus (4:3,6). Further, Jesus says in the Sermon of the Mount that sonship belongs to the "blessed" (5:9, 16, 45, 18).

2) The sinking of Peter. Human faith, even when directed toward our Lord, is totally inadequate. In fact, it is not faith in its proper sense at all. What is important is the cry of Peter, "Lord, help me!" Julius Schniewind remarks, "Here Peter calls our Lord by His 'last name': 'Helper, Saviour'."

Lord Help Us

- I. Jesus is Helper and Saviour.
  - A. This is the meaning of His name (Jesus/Joshua).
  - B. It was for a Helper and Saviour that God's people prayed.
    - 1. David's Psalter, the Bible's 'Prayer Book' (Ps. 10:14; 30:10; 54:4), expresses this desire.
    - 2. Isaiah pointed ahead to One who would save God's people (Isa 19:20).
- II. Peter Calls Jesus by Name.
  - A. In his cry for help (30).
  - B. In his confession of faith (33).
- III. Jesus extends His hand.
  - A. To Peter, to rescue him from the deep (v. 30).
  - B. To His faithful people, to rescue us from the depths of death and hell (Ps. 130: 'Out of the depths. . .').

CJE

THE TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY: MATTHEW 15:21-28  
(AUGUST 13, 1978)

After healing many of the afflicted who have been brought to Him, Jesus now leaves the area of Gennesaret. From there He travels towards the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea, to the regions of Tyre and Sidon. Centuries before Elijah the Tishbite had been sustained in this same region by the widow of Zarephath, and had raised her son from the dead (I Kings 17:8-24). Now the Messiah to whom Elijah bore witness comes into the same region, and again a woman comes to Him and cries out to Him on behalf of her daughter,



"*eleeson*" (v. 22). This prayer is familiar in both the Old and New Testaments (cf. Ps. 4:1; 6:2, *et al.*). The original sense of *eleos* with reference to God is His own faithfulness and steadfastness (*chesed*, Ex. 34:6; Ps. 86:5, 15, *et al.*). Here the specific reference is to the need for the goodness and mercy of God in specific situations of need. In the Pauline literature, the term will take on specific reference to the salvation which God offers us through His Son, our Lord (Gal. 6:16). The roots of this understanding are found in the words of Christ, in that it is *eleos* that God requires of men, and *eleos* that He shows to men (cf. Mt. 9:13). The phrase "bread of the children" (v. 26) is a veiled reference to the manna by which God continued to show His favour to the children of Israel in the wilderness.

#### Have Mercy, Lord

- I. "Lord declares His almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity."
 

This ancient collect phrase serves to focus our understanding of this healing miracle.

  - A. That our Lord heals and saves is an instance of the steadfast mercy of God.
  - B. It is this steadfast mercy for which the woman asks. Her prayer is joined to that of God's ancient people, even though she herself is not of the family of God.
- II. The mercy and pity of God are not always immediately evident.
  - A. The Lord's response is not immediate and unconditional.
  - B. The condition is a faith that does not shrink from continued prayer.
- III. The cry of the woman is the cry of the church.
  - A. Together with her we ask for the mercy and steadfast love of God in Christ to touch us.
  - B. Together with her we confess the compassion of God, manifested in the person and work of His only-begotten Son.

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#### THE THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY: MATTHEW 16:13-20 (AUGUST 20, 1978)

A review of the sixth chief part of Luther's Small Catechism and the sections relating to the Office of Keys and Confession in the Large Catechism and the Smalcald Articles is in order as a preparation for a sermon on this pericope. A comparison between the Lutheran emphasis on the Keys and the Reformed emphasis on "Church Discipline" (Heidelberg Catechism, qq. 83-85) shows that, in the latter case, it is discipline alone which is administered on the personal level, and no distinction is allowed between the Keys and preaching. In the Lutheran Church, however, the administration of the Office of the Keys is the individual and concrete application of the Word of God to the individual. Early Lutherans did not hesitate to regard the Office of the Keys as a sacramental power given to the church by her Lord. Reference may be made here to the comments under Holy Trinity Sunday, regarding apostolic authority; for possession of the keys in biblical and Jewish tradition represents authority to act. It is the royal steward who possesses the keys of the palace (Isa. 22:22). Further elucidation of the meaning of this power is found in Matthew 23:13, which shows that the disclosure of the will of God in the Scriptures is exercised by means of preaching, teaching, and dividing. The power of the keys is a judicial power, indicating authority to judge the sinful and promise forgiveness to those who believe (G. Kittel, ed., TWNT, III, p. 751).

One may well ponder whether or to what extent the proper exercise of the

Office of Keys can be restored in the modern-day congregation. Some pastors may feel that the need for the sacramental exercise of the Keys has been effectively off-set by pithy sermon applications and general pastoral counseling. Luther's witness to the significance of sacramental absolution may be a helpful reminder to us: "I know what comfort and strength private confession has given me. Nobody who has not fought often and long with the devil knows what it can do. I would long since have been strangled by the devil if I had not kept confession" (WA 10iii, p. 61f.).

### Forgiveness Of Sins

- I. The great message of the Christian Church is the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins.
  - A. It is built upon the confession of the lordship of Christ (v. 16f.).
  - B. It is bestowed upon the church (v. 18f.).
  - C. It is exercised through the Holy Ministry of Word and Sacrament.
- II. The best appreciation and reception of this forgiveness is built upon a good confession.
  - A. We learn to confess our sins sincerely.
  - B. We receive the Word of Absolution as from Christ Himself.
- III. Confession is a practice of great value.
  - A. It is a constant discipline.
    - B. It is an invitation to enter fully into the Law and Gospel.
      1. To confess specific sins.
      2. To receive Christ's specific word of forgiveness for us.
  - C. It is a call to repentant living. The gift of Absolution commands a new life and empowers us in Christian growth.

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### THE FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY: MATTHEW 16:21-26 (AUGUST 27, 1978)

With the confession of the lordship of Christ and the delegation of the fruits of His redemptive work (16:13-20) are coupled the announcement of the specific terms of that redemptive work in the Passion which our Lord must endure on our behalf. The pericope may be divided into three parts: (1) the announcement of the coming Passion (this is the second of five such announcements in the Gospel according to St. Matthew (*vide* 12:40; 17:9; 26:2); (2) the Petrine protest against the Passion and the rebuttal of Satan; and (3) the statement of the conditions of discipleship.

Concentrating on this last division, two passages stand out. The first, Matthew 10:38ff., reminds us of the word of our Lord upon the occasion of the first sending-forth of the twelve apostles. To labour by the command and under the authority of the Christ means as well that one must be willing to share His fate at the hands of the world and the forces of Satan. "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it." The second passage, I Peter 2:21, exhorts the church, on the basis of the sufferings of Christ, to follow His example and enter into His sufferings. "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps."

### The Cross Of Christ And The Cross Of The Christian

- I. The sufferings and cross of Christ stand at the very center of His earthly ministry.
  - A. "For this have I come. . ." (John 12:27-28).
  - B. "And I, when I am lifted up. . ." (John 12:31-32).

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- II. Sufferings and crosses stand at the center of our Christian life.
- A. All mankind suffers; indeed, all creation suffers because of sin (Rom. 8:19ff).
  - B. Unjust sufferings point us to our Lord.
  - C. In sufferings we are made to be like Him (Rom. 8:29).
- III. Christ's sufferings and cross stand at the center of our faith and hope.
- A. By them our salvation has been secured.
  - B. By them our eyes are opened to see the secret blessing of our infirmity and the joy of sacrifice.
    - 1. He offered Himself for us.
    - 2. We offer ourselves to Him (Rom. 12).

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# Book Reviews

## I. Biblical Studies

TWO TESTAMENTS: ONE BIBLE. By D.L. Baker, Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515, 1977. 554 pages. Paper. \$7.95.

This volume by D.L. Baker, Secretary of the Tyndale Fellowship of Biblical Research, constitutes Dr. Baker's doctoral dissertation at the University of Sheffield. Its complete title reads: "Two Testaments: One Bible. A study of some modern solutions to the theological problem of the relationship between the Old and New Testaments."

The New Testament contains the account of the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, said by the New Testament to be the only person who can save mankind from eternal death. The Christian Church in the last 1875 years has relied very heavily upon the teachings contained in the New Testament. If the New Testament is so important, representing as it does the climax of God's revelation to mankind, does the Christian Church need the Old Testament? What is the relationship of the two testaments to each other?

Today this relationship between the Old and New Testaments is a fundamental problem of Biblical research. Baker notes that in this century there have been published a number of exegetical studies dealing with various aspects of the problem, as well as many general publications treating with the problem as a whole. In his summary on page 5 Baker informs his readers that "it is the concern of this thesis to understand a much-needed analytical and critical study of these modern solutions."

By preliminary research Baker settled on eight different solutions given in the massive literature available in books and journal articles, although not all of the eight he believes are mutually exclusive. In Part I the author has presented the Biblical and historical backgrounds of these eight proposed solutions. After that he subjected each of these to critical scrutiny, analyzing, evaluating and comparing them. In Part II the Old Testament solutions of van Ruler and Miskotte are stated, evaluated and generally rejected "because of undue priority they give to the Old Testament, though creating a certain indecisiveness, leads to an inadequate appreciation of the New Testament's contribution to the relationship." Part III offers the "New Testament" solutions of Bultmann and Baumgaertel, which Baker "reluctantly rejected."

In opposition to many other scholars Baker holds that a satisfactory solution is to take the two Testaments in one Bible and to refuse to yield to the temptation of placing one Testament above the other. Or to assert that one Testament is more important than the other.

Part IV attempts such Biblical solutions, which the author claims constitute the most important part of his dissertation. He deals at length with the Christological approach of the Old Testament by Visscher, which in his opinion has been improperly criticized and which he "rehabilitated" in this study. After a discussion of various views as to the use of typology in the Old and New Testaments, Baker develops his own view and employs it in setting forth the relationship of the New Testament to the Old Testament. Thereafter, the so-called "salvation history" approach of von Rad is given and those of his associates, and their position, with some reservations, is accepted. A discussion of the idea of the tension promoted by continuity and discontinuity, a truth often ignored and not mentioned, concludes this study.

Indexes and a supplementary bibliography have been added. There are 136 pages of bibliographical information, a section of the book which will prove helpful to students studying various aspects of Old Testament theology and religion. While Baker wishes to be comprehensive in his listing of books and articles treating with the various aspects of the interrelationship of the two

testaments to each other, he missed many pertinent articles which are to be found in *The Springfielder* and in *The Concordia Theological Monthly* and earlier Lutheran literature appearing in America. Some articles the author did not see but accepted the interpretation of others. At times Baker is willing to make concessions to higher criticism, which are unfortunate.

Raymond F. Surburg

THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. By Walter W. Stuenkel. Concordia Publishing House, 1977. 136 pages. Paper. \$2.95.

This book is designed to be a companion volume to *The Books of the New Testament*, edited by Herbert T. Mayer (Concordia 1969). The purpose of Dr. Stuenkel's volume, former president of Concordia College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is to help lay persons to gain a better understanding of the 39 books of the Old Testament. This volume is not geared for professional theologians, but employs nontechnical language to review all 39 books in chronological order and place them in their proper historical context. Stuenkel provides the reader with background material for each book as well as giving an outline for each Old Testament book. If a book has some famous passage or is known for some distinctive features, these are especially mentioned.

It appears that the materials used in this book were part of a course at Concordia, Milwaukee, one of the junior colleges of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, entitled: "The History and Literature of Israel". The book is dedicated to several thousands of students of Concordia College, with whom the author enjoyed the study of the Old Testament from 1953-1976.

Isagogical questions pertaining to Biblical books, whether they be found in the Old Testament or in the New Testament, are answered differently by Biblical scholars, depending on whether or not they accept or reject the presuppositions and conclusions of the historical-critical method. In the LCMS the historical critical method began to be employed beginning about 1955 and thereafter seemed to gather up momentum and within a decade it became the ruling interpretative methodology at St. Louis Seminary till the exodus of February, 1974. It is, therefore, not surprising that the junior colleges and other terminal schools this same methodology was fostered and promoted.

On page 13 Stuenkel takes cognizance of this situation, when he wrote: "For the last several centuries scholarly research has concerned itself far more with authorship and authenticity than the canonicity of Old Testament books. Many arguments advanced in this area have disturbed faithful Christians. They contend that the proposed solutions undermine the authority of God's Word. It should be pointed out also that many assertions of scholars are mere theories or hypotheses or suppositions for which there is no incontrovertible evidence." Stuenkel continues by asserting: "Obviously, this little volume is not designed to discuss in detail all the theories of literary criticism, form criticism, or redaction criticism, but because the Old Testament is especially the object of much of this learned criticism, the issues deserve some brief comment for the benefit of the readers" (p. 13).

In his volume for lay people Stuenkel places side by side the critical views and the traditional ones on given books, without in many cases stating which view is correct. He presents the Four-Source Documentary Hypothesis without showing the untenability of this position for a Bible-believing Christian. The reader can make up his mind which of the two divergent views he accepts. In citing evidence for Mosaic authorship as found in the New Testament he failed to cite the most conclusive passage for Mosaic authorship, namely John 5:46: "For if you believed Moses you would believe me also, for he wrote of me. And if you do not believe *his writings*, how will you ever believe me."

In connection with the discussion on Isaiah, again both the conservative and Biblical views are presented together with the higher critical. Arguments pro

and con are given and again the reader is left the impression that he may choose the position that may strike him as plausible. Thus Stuenkel wrote: "Regardless of conjectural theories of authorship, the entire Book of Isaiah is inspired by the Holy Spirit and, therefore, totally God's Word of truth for all time. The New Testament quotes Isaiah by name some twenty times and these quotations refer to both sections" (p. 80). If the New Testament designates passages from Isaiah 40-66 as having been written by Isaiah, how can a Christian scholar then not necessarily reject the critical position that denies to Isaiah the entire Book? On the Book of Daniel both the critical and conservative arguments, which are significantly different, are given and then the reader is told: "For a thorough discussion of arguments supporting either the earlier or the later view of the time of writing, the reader is referred to the pertinent books in the bibliography" (p. 95). But the author takes no stand, thus giving the impression again that either view is acceptable. The same procedure is followed in the discussion of the Book of Esther. Arguments for and against the historicity of the book are presented with the reader permitted to accept which ever view appeals to him.

A good feature of Stuenkel's book is his setting forth of the Messianic character of the Old Testament. Appendices II and III give an overview of Old Testament Messianic prophecy (II) while in III he lists those Old Testament passages which were predictive of the Messiah together with their New Testament fulfillment. Over against the critical position he states that "Malachi stands on the threshold of four hundred years of prophetic silence between the Old and New Testament revelations." Critical scholarship holds that a considerable number of books were written between 400 and 100 B.C.

Raymond F. Surburg

A READER'S HEBREW ENGLISH LEXICON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. By Ferris L. McDaniel. Published by the Author, Dallas, Texas. 125 pages. Paper. \$3.50.

The purpose of this volume is to help students to read the Old Testament by providing them with an aid that takes care of words that occur ten or less times in the Old Testament. McDaniel's lexicographical effort was not designed to replace the standard dictionary of Koehler-Baumgaertner or that of Brown, Driver and Briggs, lexica not easily displaced. Often students of the Hebrew Old Testament are discouraged from reading many of its books because of the occurrence of numerous unfamiliar words. "This reader's lexicon is a pragmatic solution to the problem in that it provides quickly the definitions to many of these words"—is the reason for the publication of this linguistic help.

Words that occur ten or less times, as determined by Lisowsky's *Konkordanz zum Hebraeischen Alten Testament* (Stuttgart: Wuerttembergische Bibelanstalt, 1958) were listed alphabetically by chapter for each Biblical book. This count was checked against Brown, Driver and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907). The definitions were taken from the same lexicon and checked against Koehler and Baumgaertner. McDaniels states that "where these lexicons differ significantly, both definitions are provided. An attempt has been made to provide the definition which fits the context of the passage as expressed in these lexicons. In the case of verbs, the definition attempts to give the meaning of the stem involved. Where the definition is not certain or where the problems are involved, the definition(s) are followed by the sign (?). These will deserve special attention on the part of the reader.

McDaniel's vocabulary guide thus supplements vocabularies like that of Landes who stops his listing with vocables which occur between 24-10 times. (Cf. his *A Student Vocabulary of Biblical Hebrew, Listed According to Frequency and Cognitive*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961, pp. 39-

41; or that J. Barton Payne, *Hebrew Vocabularies*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1956, pp. 4-6 (verbs), 11-15 (nouns).

Raymond F. Surburg

**A CHRONOLOGY OF THE HEBREW KINGS.** By Edwin R. Thiele. Zondervan Publishing House, 1977. 93 pages. \$2.95.

Chronology plays an important part in the presentation of Biblical history. Without chronology history cannot properly be understood; in fact, it is the backbone of history. Not only in the historical books is chronology important, but there are chronological references in the prophetic writings, in the four Gospels, and in the epistles of the New Testament.

The chronological problems connected with the period of the Divided Monarchy in the Old Testament have defied solution for over 2,000 years. Some forty years ago a former missionary to China and later a professor in the department of religion at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, decided to tackle this thorny problem. In connection with his doctoral studies at the University of Chicago he did research on this problem. The results of his study were published as "The Chronology of the Kings of Judah and Israel" in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, July, 1944. The same dates given in this journal article were set forth in Thiele's book, *Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, 1st ed., University of Chicago Press, 1951. A revision of the 1951 book was published under the same title by Eerdmans in 1965.

A perusal of books dealing with the Old Testament whether they be books of introduction, commentaries, Bible dictionaries, histories of Old Testament times reveals a plethora of different dates given for the same kings or historical events. For the average reader this is extremely confusing. Many scholars have tried to synchronize the data of the kings of Israel and Judah and have been unable to do so, and as a result concluded that the Biblical records are replete with errors and not trustworthy.

In his preface Dr. Thiele writes:

So intricate and perplexing are the chronological problems of the Hebrew kings that many of the most careful Bible students have come to regard them as beyond solution. When I first began to give attention to the difficulties involved, I had serious doubts as to whether a solution could ever be reached. Today I believe the problem to be basically solved and in the following pages the solution will be followed (p. 8).

This rather short volume, when compared with the two editions of his *Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, represents the distillation of four decades of research and publication. The Zondervan publication, one of the latter's *Contemporary Evangelical Perspectives* volumes, is designed not only for the specialist in the Biblical field but is also meant for laymen who desire to understand the Bible better. Thiele hopes that this volume will help those whose problems with Old Testament chronology was instrumental in causing them to question the veracity of the Word of God.

In setting forth his results, Thiele has given extensive diagrams, charts, and tables. A glossary of technical terms as well as an index of Bible passages referred to and discussed further enhances this study.

Raymond F. Surburg

**UNDERSTAND. A STRAIGHTFORWARD APPROACH TO INTERPRETING THE BIBLE.** By Walter Henryrichsen. Navpress, A Ministry of the Navigators, Colorado Springs, Colo, 1976. 107 pages. Paper. \$1.95.

Frank E. Gaebelein, cited by Robert D. Foster in his foreward, has aptly said:

Christianity is peculiarly a religion of a single book. Take away the Bible and you have destroyed the means by which God chose to present through



successive stages His revelation to man. It follows, then, that knowledge of the Bible is an indispensable prerequisite for growth in the Christian life.

Although the Bible is vital for learning how to be saved and how to live a God-pleasing life, the Bible is not easily understood in many of its portions. At the present time we are living in a world of biblical illiterates who are not only ignorant of the teachings of the Word of God, but also do not know how to proceed in ascertaining its teachings and saving truths. Henrichsen published this book to help the average layperson to understand the Bible. In the opening chapter he defends the proposition that the Bible is for everybody. In chapters 2-5, he has given 24 rules with a half dozen or so corollaries; these 24 basic principles of interpretation he has grouped under four major categories: 1. General principles of interpretation; 2. Grammatical principles of interpretation; 3. Historical principles of interpretation; and 4. Theological principles of interpretation.

One thing may be said for certain. These rules represent the old hermeneutic and have nothing in common with the radical character of the so-called new hermeneutic. This volume could profitably be used by pastors with Sunday School teachers' instructional meetings or in a Bible class. Some statements the orthodox Lutheran pastor will challenge. A number of times examples will be given from the Scripture and the reader will be asked: "how would you understand this passage as you apply this rule of interpretation?" He appears to do this where there are serious denominational differences and inasmuch this book is intended for different Protestant groups, this appears to be a way out of the dilemma.

On the last page of this interpretative tool Henrichsen correctly warned: "In seeking to apply these rules you must remember that there is a difference between the rules being biblically correct, and using them properly. A hammer is the correct tool to drive in a nail, but using hammer does not guarantee that you won't bend the nail. As you apply these rules of interpretation to your Bible study you are not guaranteed a correct interpretation at every try. You will make mistakes. But hopefully proficiency and accuracy will come with faithful practice."

A pastor can help his people greatly by giving such a basic course in biblical interpretation and by supervising the work of those with whom he undertakes such a worthwhile endeavor.

Raymond F. Surburg

**GOOD NEWS FOR MODERN MAN. HOW TO USE THE GOOD NEWS BIBLE.** By Eugene A. Nida. Word Book Publishers, Waco, Texas, 1976. 119 pages. Paper. \$3.25.

In the early part of 1977 the American Bible Society published the Old Testament counterpart of the *Good News For Modern Man*, available in the New Testament only till recently, but now the 66 books of both Testaments have been published and will be disseminated in millions of copies. This version is also known by the name, *Today's English Version* (TEV).

*Good News for Modern Man, How To Use the Good News Bible* was written by Dr. Nida, internationally respected scholar and translation expert. This book is a companion volume to *The Good News Bible*. The publishers believe that the use of Nida's help will enable the readers of the TEV Bible to understand the new translation better, irrespective whether it is the King James, the Revised Standard Version, the New English Bible, The Living Bible or any other Bible translation read or consulted.

There is no doubt that in this volume, which records the story how the Good News Bible came to be, Nida exposes difficulties other translations have had to face over the years; he points out problem passages, geographic ambiguities, words which lost their meaning, variations among manuscripts which showed



the need for a translation in understandable English. Many readers are not aware of the various helps which were incorporated in this new translation and, therefore, Nida shows how to use the following helps: section headings, parallel passages references, the word list, the index-concordance, with its list of data on important persons, events and themes of the Bible, the chronological table, historical maps, illustration by Annie Valerie, who provided such dynamic art for *Good News for Modern Man*.

In Chapter 4, Nida informs his readers how it happened that *Good News for Modern Man* came into being. The New Testament portion was translated by Dr. Robert G. Bratcher, once a Protestant missionary to Brazil. This English version was a tremendous success from the moment of its publication. The demand for *Good News for Modern Man* (New Testament) led to a demand for a similar rendering of the Old Testament, following the same principles of translation as had been used in rendering the Greek New Testament into twentieth-century English.

In September, 1967, work was begun on the Old Testament. The personnel of the Old Testament committee consisted of the following: Dr. Bratcher, chairman of the committee, Dr. Roger A. Bullard, Dr. Keith R. Crim, Dr. Herbert G. Grether, Dr. Barclay M. Newman, Dr. Herbert F. Peacock, and Dr. John A. Thompson and for the British and Foreign Bible Society the Reverend Brynner F. Price. These scholars, a number had been missionaries, in producing the basic draft of the O.T. (called "stage 1") in the translation process had to face three phases of work: (1) deciding upon the text of the Hebrew (or Aramaic for some chapters in Ezra and Daniel), (2) determining the meaning, and (3) expressing this meaning accurately on a common-language level. It would be impossible, claims Nida, to list the many problems faced by the translators.

Future scholars will want to have opportunity to evaluate the Hebrew and Aramaic texts which serve as the basis for the O.T. part of *Good News for Modern Man*. That this newest of all Biblical translations can be beneficially utilized by scholars this reviewer does not question. That in their approach to Biblical studies a number of the translators were affected by a critical approach to the Bible this reviewer also believes was the case. Thus in the Hebrew Old Testament in the Book of Psalms over 100 psalms have superscriptions, which both the King James Version and The Revised Standard Version have not omitted but translated. In the Hebrew printed text they are always the first verse of the psalm. But the TEV, like *The New English Bible*, omits them. That reflects a higher critical bias. In Proverbs the translator (or translators) adopted the theory that Prov. 22:17-24:22 was influenced by the Egyptian work of The Wisdom of Amenemope. The Hebrew adopter of this material is supposed to have taken thirty sayings from the thirty Houses (i.e. "chapters") comprising this Egyptian wisdom book. The truth is that the consonantal letters in Hebrew, translated as "thirty," can also be rendered in three other ways. The caption over 21:17: "The Thirty Wise Sayings" is an interpretation that does not correctly reflect the teaching of 22:19. The word *almah*, always meaning "virgin" in the passages where it occurs in the Hebrew Old Testament, is rendered "young woman" in Isaiah 7:14, which contradicts Matthew 1:23.

*Good News for Modern Man* uses the principle that the translator must render his translation in English or the target language in such a way that the reader believes the original Bible was written in his own language. Dr. Nida is an advocate of what he calls "dynamic equivalence." This is good and sound if the translator has correctly grasped the meaning of the text. However, if he fails, then the rendering in the target language is not actually what God has revealed in his Word. If the translator has correctly understood the original text, rendering it in a non-literal or paraphrastic way may be all right, but there are instances where the translators have failed to do this.

Nida's book will be a great help in showing American and English readers how to better appreciate the distinctive features of one of the newest and popular English versions.

Raymond F. Surburg

**BACKGROUNDS TO DISPENSATIONALISM.** By Clarence B. Bass. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 184 pages. Paper. \$3.95.

This is a part of a series of previously published books (about 40 volumes) which are out of print and which were books that were adjudged significant and as valuable contributions to the four areas of theology: the exegetical, dogmatical, historical and practical.

Bass' book was originally published by Eerdmans in 1960. Clarence Bass, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at Bethel Theological School of St. Paul, was trained in the dispensational system, but left it when he began to understand the foundations on which the dispensational framework are constructed. Bass in a scholarly manner treats of the historical genesis and the ecclesiastical implications of dispensationalism.

The theses proposed, supported and proved by Bass are the following: 1) dispensationalism is not a part of the historic faith of the Christian Church; 2) It is not the only premillennial view, since there was a historic premillennial interpretation for eighteen hundred years before the formulation of dispensationalism; 3) Dispensationalism rests upon a faulty hermeneutical system.

Bass claims that historic premillennialism, dispensationalism, and amillenialism hold this truth in common that there will be a visible earthly return of Christ in the future. "Having this central truth in common, adherents to all these three views should be able to have fellowship in love and tolerance. Eschatological interpretations may differ, and should be debated sharply to find the truly biblical principle, but should not be made a test of fellowship." (p. 155) Bass is convinced that dispensationalism is wrong! How then can a believer claim that a wrong system of Biblical interpretation may be countenanced, when it affects a number of different Biblical doctrines?

Lutherans would also disagree with Bass' view that historic millennialism is the correct New Testament teaching. Revelation 20:1-10 is misunderstood and misinterpreted by premillennialism. Bass' work is useful in seeing the dependence of dispensationalism on Scofield and in turn Darby's influence on Scofield.

Raymond F. Surburg

**THE BLESSED HOPE AND THE TRIBULATION.** By John F. Walvoord. Zondervan Publishing House, 1976. 174 pages. Paper. \$3.95.

In this book Dr. John F. Walvoord, the President of Dallas Theological Seminary, examines the posttribulationist viewpoint and contrasts it with the pretribulationist. To completely follow the argumentation of the author, the reader should have to have read his book on *The Rapture Question* published in 1957. The subject matter of post- and pretribulationism is an aspect of eschatology. The president of Dallas Seminary contends that posttribulationism is wrong on exegetical and hermeneutical grounds. The big issue of this apologia of the event relating to the Second Coming of Christ is the question: Does the rapture of the church precede or follow the Great Tribulation?

It is the author's contention that there are four schools of thought within posttribulationism and Walvoord purports to challenge those scholars who do not share his interpretation of the Bible point for point. It is his conviction that pretribulationism affords the most Scriptural and logical understanding of the Christian's assurance of the "blessed hope."

Historic Lutheranism and historic Calvinism both reject the basic her-

menaeutical position of Walvoord's school of dispensationalism, premillennialism and his literalistic interpretation of Biblical prophecy. The system of Scofield, which has exercised such a tremendous influence through the Old and New Editions of *The Scofield Reference Bible* (1909, 1917, 1967) affects the interpretation of the Old Testament, the Gospels, the parables, the Book of Acts, the Pauline Epistles, the General Epistles, the Book of Revelation and a number of Christian doctrines. Those readers who wish to see how complex the doctrine of Christ's Second Coming can become should read this volume.

Raymond F. Surburg

**THE MEN BEHIND THE KING JAMES VERSION.** By Gustavus S. Paine. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 212 pages. Paper. \$3.95.

This is a paperback version, formerly published under the title, *The Learned Men* (Thomas Y. Crowell Co.) in 1959 by Diana B. Paine and Bela Paine. The purpose of this book is to help students and Bible readers to know more about the men who made the King James Bible and about their work with it. Paine traces the history of the events as to how the 54 or more men were chosen to revise the English Bible from 1604 to 1611.

Thirteen chapters of this fifteen-chapter book are devoted to tracing and portraying the events which led up to the decision to revise the Bible till its final printing in 1611. Questions the author answers are such as these: Were the translators happy in their labor? Did they live with success after their work was completed? What is the difference between the Authorized Version and those which preceded it, such as the Geneva Bible, Bishops' Bible, Coverdale Bible, the contemporary Roman Catholic Douay, and later the Revised Standard Version? Since the King James Version was a group effort, was it better than a translation made by one person?

In recent years there has been a tendency no longer to read the KJV. H.L. Mencken, not known as a friend of Bible and religion, wrote about the Bible translated in Elizabethan English as follows:

It is the most beautiful of all the translations of the Bible; indeed, it is probably the most beautiful piece of writing in all the literature of the world. Many attempts have been made to purge it of its errors and obscurities. An English Version was published in 1885 and an American Revised Version in 1901, and since then many learned but misguided men have sought to produce translations that should be mathematically accurate, and in the plain speech of everyday yielded to any of them, for it is palpably and overwhelmingly better than they are, just as it is better than the Greek New Testament, or the Vulgate, or the Septuagint. Its English is extraordinarily simple, pure, eloquent, and lovely. It is a mine of lordly and incomparable poetry, at once the most stirring and the most touching ever heard of.

Three different groups of scholars: the Westminster group, the Cambridge group, and the Oxford group contributed to this remarkable translation. At least fifty men were involved, whose contributions can now be better understood since Paine's discovery of the Bois notes, which were made by one of the editors and never previously discussed.

Only in this volume can students of the KJV find material pertaining to all its major contributors: Puritans John Rainolds and Laurence Chaderton; Miles Smith, the author of the seldom-printed Preface to the Reader and the final editor; devout Lancelot Andrews, the then famous Dean of Westminster; Bishops Bancroft, Bilson, Abbot and others.

The author expresses the hope that reading about these stalwarts of over 370 years ago as they endeavored to put the Bible into the best language of their day, so present users of the Bible will experience the urge anew "to revise the phrases in any way you please, and then compare your wordings with what we have so long deemed our standard Scriptures. Thus you may keep the Bible

alive for yourself, really be active as you read and study it, and be at one with the learned men, those common people who gave us their splendid best." (pp. viii, ix)

Raymond F. Surburg

THE NEW TESTAMENT. AN INTRODUCTION TO ITS LITERATURE AND HISTORY. By J. Gresham Machen. Edited by W. John Cook. Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, Scotland, and Carlisle, Pa., 1976. 387 pages. Cloth. \$8.95.

This writing of J. Gresham Machen is a popular work in the best sense. It is designed for both private and group study. In plain yet graphic fashion the former Princeton Theological Seminary and later Westminster Theological Seminary professor, has set forth the New Testament's message and history. Those individuals embarking on a study of the New Testament will find this work an excellent introduction; even mature students will discover this writing of Machen to be stimulating and penetrating in setting forth the essential facts of the history and literature of the New Testament's twenty seven books.

By 1930 Dr. Machen was recognized as one of the leading scholars of conservative New Testament theology. Machen is better known for such volumes as *The Origin of Paul's Religion, Christianity and Liberalism, The Virgin Birth of Christ, The Christian View of Man*. The publishers believe that the books just enumerated will continue to be consulted and "that the abiding value of his Introduction may well prove to be his most influential work in the last quarter of the present century."

Machen was totally unsympathetic with all forms of radical criticism. When differences are discussed they relate only to such issues where Bible-believing scholars may legitimately entertain differences of opinion. The book written for the general lay Christian avoids all footnotes as well as references to other scholarly works.

Machen favors the North Galatian theory relative to the question as to when Galatians was penned over against the South Galatian theory. The Captivity Epistles of Paul, Philippians, Philemon, Ephesians and Colossians, according to Machen, come from Paul's First Roman Imprisonment. The Two-Source and Four-Source hypotheses as views setting forth the relationship of the synoptic Gospels are never mentioned and not seriously considered as options.

The writing of this New Testament Introduction is characterized by clarity of thought, depth of scholarship and an evident passion for explicating the message of the New Testament.

Raymond F. Surburg

THE NEW TESTAMENT: AN INTRODUCTION. Edited by Norman Perrin. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc., 1974, 385 pp.

In Res. 3-11 of the Dallas Convention the Missouri Synod went on record as rejecting and repudiating "any view of the Bible and method of interpreting it which relates history to the production of the sacred writings in such a way as to diminish their 'not of this world' character and to deprive them of their divine authority." Anyone who might wonder why the Synod took this position against the historical-critical method of Bible interpretation should really read Perrin's *The New Testament: An Introduction*. In this book the author of *What Is Redaction Criticism?*—published a few years ago by Fortress Press as part of their series of *Guides to Biblical Scholarship*—applies historical-critical methodology to the entire New Testament. A person who is interested in knowing how far New Testament scholarship has departed from the traditional view under the influence of form and redaction criticism would do well to read this book.

In the first chapter the author gives an overview of his way of looking at the New Testament. He admits that he has been influenced by Bultmann's ap-

proach to Jesus. For him "the New Testament is a fascinating blend of history and myth" (p. 1). The material found in the synoptic Gospels "reflects the teaching, understanding, and concerns of early Christian communities, and much of it was in fact created by the prophets and scribes in those communities" (p. 5). He says that the Gospels were not written by eyewitnesses of the ministry of Jesus. Paul did not write 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles. Also 1 & 2 Peter, James and Jude are pseudonymous writings. The Gospel of John, the Epistles and Revelation were not written by the Apostle John but rather by various different men. Except for the seven letters that Paul wrote, all of the New Testament was written somewhere between A.D. 70 and 140. In regard to the Gospels he maintains that "form critics have been able to show that the sayings and stories in the synoptic gospels have a long history of transmission in the history of the church, during which they have changed and developed in all kinds of ways" (p. 12).

In discussing the nature of the New Testament, Perrin maintains that there are marked differences in the theology of the various books, for the authors "develop their understanding of the nature and meaning of Christianity differently" (p. 18). He reveals his existentialist point of understanding life by supporting the views of Strauss and Bultmann. He says that "the story of the resurrection of Jesus is myth, a crassly human story about the resuscitation of a corpse and its eventual elevation to a region above the earth via the clouds as a kind of celestial elevator. But the reality so described is the spiritual presence of Jesus in the kerygma, the proclamation of the church" (p. 22). By responding to this myth of the resurrection in the kerygma, man can achieve the reality of authentic existence. While he admits that there is history in the New Testament, for it is about a man who lived and taught, suffered and died in Palestine, yet for him "the New Testament interweaves myth and history" (p. 27). Thus, for example, he considers the narrative of the last Passover meal and the institution of the Lord's Supper "a product of the piety of early Christianity" (p. 30). He says that "a fundamental aspect of the New Testament texts is that they are in no small part the end product of a long and constant process of interpretation and reinterpretation" (p. 34).

In chapters 3 and 4 Perrin surveys what he considers the theological development of early Christianity. He believes that "the Christian Church began as sect within ancient Judaism" (p. 42). Jesus Himself had simply proclaimed the coming of the Kingdom of God, that is the "imminence of the interruption of God in history to judge and to renew, and to destroy and to remake" (p. 42). The source "Q" represents this early Palestinian Christianity. It proclaims the imminent coming of Jesus from heaven. As this did not occur, the Christians had to adjust and reinterpret their beliefs. Apocalyptic Christianity was challenged by a more Hellenistic form of Christianity, yet we see a resurgence of the earlier form in the Gospel of Mark and in Revelation.

Chapters 5-11 are an overview of the books of the New Testament interpreted according to the various "schools" of Christianity which they supposedly represent. The author believes that Paul did have a vision of Christ on the Damascus road and that he understood this as a resurrection experience (p. 94). It was Paul who developed the doctrine of justification. He was no doubt put to death at the time of his first Roman imprisonment. Perrin believes that the author of Luke-Acts has taken liberties with historical events to make them fit his purposes (p. 199). Thus the speeches of Paul, Peter and Stephen are not summaries of what they actually said but rather are simply examples of Hellenistic Jewish Christian mission preaching (p. 196). Luke-Acts has a different Christology than Mark (p. 217). "The Jesus of the Gospel of Luke is the first Christian, living out of the power of the spirit of God in the world. He is not the Jewish Messiah whose death ransoms men from the power of sin over them" (p. 218). He is rather the primary example to be imitated. Perrin

claims that the Fourth Gospel has been redacted from an original text (p. 223). It was written somewhere in the Hellenistic world. "The gospel and letters of John are not the product of an individual but of a 'school'" (p. 249).

In the final chapter Perrin deals with Jesus as the heart of the New Testament. Once again he emphasizes the fact that the outline we have of the life of Christ in Mark—or for that matter in any of the Gospels—is theological and so has no historical value. He says that "the most that can be argued for the gospel outlines is that some aspects of the story they tell have an element of inherent historical probability" (p. 279). Yet very few facts about Jesus' life can actually be established as historical reality. However, by using certain criteria for authenticity, more can be known about the message of Jesus than about His life. He summarizes what can be known for sure about the life of Jesus in less than one page! That summary, incidentally, contains nothing about His birth, His miracles or His resurrection! Jesus' teachings are summarized under the proclamation of the Kingdom of God, His parables, the proverbial sayings He spoke, the Lord's Prayer and what He said about the future. Many of these teachings of His were reinterpreted by the early Church to fit its needs. Thus Jesus Himself never claimed that He was the Messiah (p. 301). Furthermore, Perrin maintains that "we simply do not know how Jesus thought about his own death" (p. 301). In fact, he says that "the historical details of the movement from the Jesus who proclaimed the Kingdom of God to the New Testament and its various proclamations of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, are probably forever lost to us" (p. 302).

The book closes with five appendixes that contain some very useful information about the Hellenistic world in New Testament times, the history of the Jews before and during the time of Christ, the development of the canon of the Bible, the text of the New Testament and the various English translations of the Greek New Testament.

*The New Testament: An Introduction* by Norman Perrin is a good example of where New Testament studies are today as a result of historical-critical methodology. It should help one to see clearly the wide gap that exists between the conclusions reached by the historical-grammatical method which has been used since the days of the Reformation and the historical-critical method as it is practiced in many areas of the Christian Church today. Even though the claim is often made that the method used today is different from the destructive higher criticism that came out of the Enlightenment, it is obvious from this book that very little of the New Testament is left as authentic and historical by those who follow the approach of Norman Perrin. What does remain are various theologies—often in conflict with one another—that are supposed to reflect the faith of the Christians in the first 100 years after the death of Jesus. This, of course, is the general conclusion reached by those who use historical-critical methodology in interpreting the New Testament.

Norman Wangerin  
Concordia College, Milwaukee

**CHRONOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST.** By Harold W. Hoehner. Zondervan Publishing House, 1977. 176 pages. Paper. \$3.95.

The purpose of this book is not to discuss the life of Christ but to establish certain fixed dates in the Savior's life. There has been a considerable divergence of opinion on the part of scholars as they have attempted to establish a framework for the life of Christ. In the past there has been vagueness about dates in our Lord's life. Reasons for this situation are stated by Dr. Hoehner as follows: First, "there is not a series of concrete dates given in the Gospels." Gospel writers were more interested in recording the facts of the events and words of Christ than to give a record of when they occurred. Second, "since there are great differences of opinion among scholars concerning each of these events given in this book there is a tendency to abandon the



effort rather than attempt to see if one can make sense with the date of each event as well as seeing if they can make a sensible chronological scheme from all events." (p. 9).

The various chapters first appeared as contributions to *Bibliotheca Sacra* in the years 1973, 1974, 1975. In this six-chapter book, the first five treat the following key dates: Ch. 1 "The Date of Christ's Birth;" Ch. 2 "The Commencement of Christ's Ministry;" Ch. 3 "The Duration of Christ's Ministry;" Ch. 4 "The Day of Christ's Crucifixion;" and Ch. 5 "The Year of Christ's Crucifixion."

Important dates for Christ's life are Jesus' birth in the winter of 5/4 B.C., shortly before Herod's death. Hoehner places the 12 year old Christ in the temple at the passover April 29, A.D. 9. The beginning of John the Baptist's ministry is put in A.D. 29 and the beginning of Christ's ministry, summer/autumn A.D. 29. Hoehner also postulates four passovers attended by Christ: the first (John 2:13), April 8, A.D. 30; the second, April 25, A.D. 31; the third (John 6:4) April 13/14 A.D. 33. According to Hoehner's computation the last week in Christ's earthly life was March 28—April 5, A.D. 33. The triumphal entry is put on Monday, March 30. On April 2, A.D. 33, Jesus ate the passover, was betrayed, arrested and tried. On Friday, April 3, Christ was tried and crucified and laid in the tomb. Christ's resurrection is given as Sunday, April 5. Christ's ascension occurred on Thursday, May 14, A.D. 33. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost took place on Sunday, May 24, A.D. 33.

Not all scholars will agree with Hoehner's interpretation of Daniel's Seventy Weeks as given on the chart on page 139, where the seventy weeks are worked out according to a dispensational system of hermeneutics. Keil, Leupold, Payne and Young are some of the scholars who differ with Hoehner's understanding of Daniel 9:25-27.

A sixteen page bibliography will be found extremely useful for a study of Christ's life chronology. The discussion cannot but lead to a greater appreciation of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, a wish with which this excellent volume ends.

Raymond F. Surburg

CAN WE TRUST THE NEW TESTAMENT? By John A.T. Robinson. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977. 142 pages. Paper. \$1.95.

This volume is by the author of *Honest to God*, a diatribe in favor of theological liberalism. Last year (1976) Dr. Robinson dropped another bombshell into the theological world by a rather scholarly book, entitled, *Redating the New Testament*. In the latter volume the now dean of Trinity College, Cambridge enunciated views of New Testament isagogics which were very conservative and which constituted a serious attack on a number of the cherished positions of what Robinson called Critical Orthodoxy. While the more liberal New Testament scholars of today believe that the books of the New Testament as a collection were not available before A.D. 150, Robinson argues that the 27 books were in existence by A.D. 70. The Gospel of John, usually dated as coming from A.D. 100 and not written by an Apostle, is said to be apostolic and written by A.D. 70. He places John's Gospel between A.D. 50-55, 2 and 3 John and 1 John between 60-65. The two Epistles of Peter are assigned to A.D. 61-62. The Book of Acts was written by A.D. 62 and the Pastoral Epistles are assigned prior to Paul's death.

These views are very startling and in some respects represent views held by fundamentalists and by Christian scholars before the appearance of Biblical criticism with its disturbing views in the 19th and 20th centuries. However, if any reader of *Redating the New Testament* thinks that Bishop Robinson has espoused a different theology since the publication of *Honest to God*, the

bishop's latest literary creation will reveal that his liberalism is the same as it was over a decade ago.

*CAN WE TRUST THE NEW TESTAMENT?*, following *Redating the New Testament*, might have given the impression that the trustworthiness of the New Testament writings as the Word of God was being defended. Anyone who expects to find such a defense will be in for the shock of his life. The miracles of Christ are not accepted, the Virgin Birth is not true, the bodily resurrection of Christ is denied. In the New Testament he claims a distinction must be made between what is fact and what is interpretation. Facts are true and taken seriously, but theological interpretation (including anything smacking of the supernatural) can be allegorized and explained in a manner palatable to human reason. While in his own way Robinson claims that the New Testament is trustworthy, yet by following his types of the historical-critical method nothing but doubt and uncertainty remain as the residue remaining after Robinson's filtering process. This book supports a form of unitarian theology by his elimination of the deity of Jesus Christ.

Raymond F. Surburg

## II. Theological-Historical Studies

*I BELIEVE IN REVELATION*. By Leon Morris. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976. 159 pages. Paper. \$2.95.

This volume by the Principal of Riddley College, Melbourne, Australia is the third book in a series known as *I BELIEVE*, edited by Michael Green. Previous volumes dealt with belief in the Holy Spirit by Michael Green and *The Resurrection of Christ* by George E. Ladd.

The *I BELIEVE* series is intended to take a new look at controversial areas of the Christian faith. The contributors are to be "from different nations, cultures, and confessional backgrounds, all anchor their work in the Bible."

The meaning of revelation has been a subject under discussion and debate ever since the coming of rationalism as a major disconcerting movement of modern church history.

In nine chapters Morris treats the subject of revelation from every conceivable angle. By revelation Morris would mean that teaching that the Triune God has made himself known "through the beauty and order of his creation, the message of the Bible, and climactically, through his Son."

Principal Morris sets out to counter the trend which has rejected or watered down the Bible's teaching about "general" or "special revelation." Morris is abreast of the latest scholarship as it is reflected in books written in English, most of which are published in Great Britain. The only Lutheran contribution to this subject is represented by Dr. J.A.O. Preus' volume, *It is Written* (Concordia, 1971).

This is a discussion of revelation which liberal and neo-orthodox theologians will not appreciate and to which they would raise serious objections. Conservatives will concur with most of Morris' judgments and evaluations.

Raymond F. Surburg

*JEWISH PHILOSOPHICAL POLEMICS AGAINST CHRISTIANITY IN THE MIDDLE AGES*. By Daniel J. Lasker. Ktav Publishing House Inc., New York, 1977. Cloth. 286 pages. \$17.50.

The resolution of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod at the 1977 Dallas Convention urging concentrated efforts in the conversion of the Jews received a wider press than generally earned by evangelism resolutions. In fact few could remember a comparable evangelism resolution of any kind having been



recently adopted by any other major Christian body. Caught up in the guilt of post-World War II Germany, most Christian bodies have been devoting their efforts to understanding the Jews instead of converting them. The published Brandeis University doctoral dissertation analyzing Jewish polemics against Christianity could not have come at a more appropriate time. This is not the time to open old wounds and new hostilities between Jewish and Christian communities, but Christians should understand there are basic differences between them and Jews. Most Protestants probably look upon themselves as Gentile unitarians and Jews as Semitic ones. Jews like Christians fall into religious and cultural groups. Preaching the Gospel to a cultural Jew involves an appreciation of his unique heritage, but to a religious Jew an understanding of Jewish ideas of Christianity is absolutely necessary.

During the first half of the second millenium, Jewish polemics against Christianity received their classical formulations. As this understanding has not developed noticeably into our present age, the religious Jew is still looking at Christianity from the same perspective. Professor Lasker's quite readable dissertation will let Christians share in this perspective. Before zeroing in on the four Christian doctrines of Trinity, Incarnation, Transubstantiation, and Virgin Birth, Dr. Lasker sets forth the philosophical framework of the Middle Ages. In the use of reason Jews and Christians were closer than in their understanding of Biblical interpretation and history. Analysis of the philosophical debate between the two groups is found by Lasker to be more profitable than an analysis of Biblical and historical ones.

In reading through this totally fascinating study, three thoughts continually crossed this reviewer's mind. (1) Various Jewish arguments of logic against Christianity were in fact not those of logic but of philosophy. (2) Many Jewish understandings of God surface again in the Calvinistic discussions of Christ and the Lord's Supper. (3) The Jewish polemicists failed to understand the Christian position and instead dealt with caricatures. Moses Mendelssohn found the suffering of the second person of the Deity as against "reason and cogitation" (p. 38). Christianity does not teach that the Deity actually has human emotions as Jewish polemisists held. The impassibility of the Deity is a revealed doctrine and not one which arises from logic. The Jewish application of the Aristotelian argument against the incarnation that only one object and not two can occupy a given space reminds Lutherans of the Calvinists' arguments against the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. Lutherans have reminded Calvinists that their understanding of the Lord's Supper logically leads to a denial of the incarnation.

If Lutheran pastors are going to take seriously the Synod's directives for the evangelism of the Jews, then the time has also come for learning the Jewish mindset. Lasker has filled in the gap for us. It is difficult to imagine that any pastor working in a community with a good proportion of Jewish people can afford not to obtain this study. The price of \$17.50 is a little steep, but perhaps the cost can be covered by the budget of the evangelism committee.

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CHRISTIANS AND JEWS. Edited by Hans Kueng and Walter Kasper. The Seabury Press, New York, 1975. 93 pages. Paper. \$4.95.

This is a part of the Roman Catholic Series, *The New Concilium, Religion in the Seventies*. New Series: Volume 8, Number 10: Ecumenism. In this Roman Catholic-sponsored volume six Christian and six Jewish scholars engage in dialogue about Christianity and Judaism. The editorial, which begins this work, was written by Hans Kueng and Walter Kasper. The latter assert: "Jews and Christians rarely meet on a religious footing, and seldom engage in theological discussion with one another, despite the declaration of Vatican II on the Jews and the corresponding pronouncement of the World Council of

Churches. There is still a considerable amount of hidden mistrust on both sides and, above all among Christians, a great deal of ignorance."

This section of Concilium is designed to help both Jews and Christians to speak to each other and to relate to each other's theological views and beliefs. The men who were invited to participate among the Jews were: Louis Jacobs, a Rabbi of the New London Synagogue, London, England; Joseph Heinemann, Senior Lecturer of Rabbinic Literature at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem; Samuel Sandmel, Professor of Biblical and Hellenistic Literature at the University of Cincinnati; Jakob J. Petuchowski, Research Professor of Jewish Liturgy at the Hebrew Union College and Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati; David Flusser, Professor of History of Religions, the Hebrew University, Jerusalem and Uriel Tal, Professor of Jewish History at Tel-Aviv University. Among Christians asked to participate were: William David Davies, Professor at Duke University; Clemens Thomas, Professor of Biblical Science and Judaic Studies in the Faculty of Theology of Lucerne University, Switzerland; Jan Mlic Lochman, former Professor of Systematic Theology in the University of Prague and now Professor of Systematic Theology in the University of Basle, Switzerland; Jurgen Moltmann, Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Tuebingen; Bernard-Dominique, Director of the Istina Study Center, in Paris and Kurt Hruby, Director of Judaism section of the Paris Ecumenical Institute and Professor of Rabbinic Hebrew and Judaism at the Catholic University of Paris. These Jewish and Christian scholars presented their respective views on the following topics: 1. The Significance of the Law. 2. Liturgy. 3. Religiousness. 4. Messianic hope. 5. Jesus. and 6. The Future of Christian-Jewish dialogue.

Those interested in the theological views of twentieth-century Jews pertaining to their religious beliefs will find these expressions instructive. However, none of the Christians writers takes the New Testament seriously, for Matthew, Mark, John, Paul and many other Jews in the New Testament accepted the claim of Jesus of Nazareth that in Him the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled. In John's Gospel, those Jews who refused to accept Jesus Christ's claims are described as unbelievers, who will die in their sins. Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the father but by me" (14:6). Peter, the Jew, told the rulers, elders and scribes in Jerusalem: "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12)." In chapter 3 of Acts Peter asserted before the temple in Jerusalem: "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus Christ; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are all witnesses" (3:12-15).

Both Jews and Gentiles, black, whites, yellow and red men need Jesus Christ, if they are to die happily and spend a happy eternity with the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, the angels and the company of the redeemed.

Raymond F. Surburg

**HARD QUESTIONS.** Edited by Frank Colquhoun. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515, 1977. 131 pages. Paper. \$2.95.

The title of this symposium was inspired by the Biblical verse from 1 Kings 13: "Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon she came to Jerusalem to test him with hard questions. . ." Thirty-six "hard questions" are answered by thirty-six different British evangelical scholars. Among the contributors are men of the stature of Michael Green, J. I. Packer, John R. W. Stott, Colin Brown, D. K. Dean, Timothy Dudley-Smith.

The editor, Canon Frank Colquhoun of Norwich Cathedral, states in the preface: "The purpose of this collection is to make available in a compact, convenient form some plain biblical answers to the sort of questions which are commonly voiced by people today, both in the church and on the fringe."

There is no doubt that the questions treated "are big ones and raise all kinds of issues." Each hard question is answered in about 1,000 words, which means that the questions cannot be adequately or completely dealt with. All each writer was asked to do was to deal honestly and sympathetically in the light of modern trends. The approach to these problems is from the perspective of the Christian viewpoint which holds to those doctrines of the Apostle's Creed accepted by historic Christianity.

With thirty-six different contributors it is to be expected that on certain topics there would not be complete agreement. This reviewer would sharply disagree with the presentation and handling of the Biblical data allowing for the existing of charismatic gifts (cf. John Goldingay, "Should all Christians seek to speak in 'tongues'"?). In general, the contributors defend and support those teachings without which Christianity would cease to be the only saving faith among the religions of the world.

Raymond F. Surburg

FANNY CROSBY. By Bernard Ruffin. A Pilgrim Press Book from United Church Press, 1976. 275 pages. Cloth. \$8.00.

The Lutheran pastor of Gloria Dei Church, Alexandria, Virginia has written a very interesting and informative book about a blind poetess, who during a goodly portion of her 95 years of existence exercised a considerable influence on her surroundings and generation. Fanny Crosby, whose marriage name was Van Alstyne, was the author of over 9,000 hymns, including such well-known evangelical favorites as "Rescue the Perishing," "Draw Me Nearer," "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior," "Blessed Assurance." By these and many others Fanny Crosby influenced thousands of people between 1820-1915.

The Reverend Ruffin in 24 chapters has presented a chronological account of Fanny Crosby's life beginning with her childhood, followed by adolescence, her stay at the New York School for the Blind, where she for many years was a student, then a teacher and also for many years the attraction of this New York institution. It was only after many years that Fanny Crosby, "the Blind Poetess," severed her connections and went forth on her own.

Mrs. Van Alstyne became a famous person and met many important political and religious personalities of the last half of the 19th century and also a number of the early 20th century. In the nineteenth century she had associations with such religious figures as Dwight L. Moody, Ira Sankey, William Howard Doane, Robert Lowry, Henry Ward Beecher, Sylvester and Hugh Main, W. B. Bradbury and George Stebbins.

"The Blind Poetess" was a remarkable person. Theologically speaking she would be classified as conservative, some would even say a fundamentalist. She believed in the necessity of conversion, in accepting Jesus Christ as Savior and that all who would die in saving faith would go to heaven. She had a great heart for suffering humanity. She worked in the Bowery and in other missions and especially places where the downtrodden of society would congregate. She received little and inadequate compensation for her literary efforts; she preached, delivered lectures and participated in programs without remuneration; often when she was offered money for her services, she refused to accept it. She lived very humbly; sometimes in conditions of squalor. Ruffin states on page 187 about Miss Crosby: "And, of course, a great deal of Fanny's appeal was due to her charisma and indefinable mystique, a mystique that overwhelmed all who met her. There were few who failed to come under her charm. It is amazing that of all the contemporary accounts which describe Fanny Crosby and her work, not one falls anything short of adulation for her

as a person. Even those who bitterly criticized the quality of her hymns had to admit that as a person she possessed an irresistible charm and an indisputable holiness."

This biography will also help the reader to understand the American scene and in some respects the religious scene in America during the nearly century-long time that Fanny Crosby was granted by her Creator to live and work. In some respects she was a religious enigma; never specifically identifying with one church. Her hymn "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior," in some Lutheran hymnals promoted Calvinism and was not in harmony with true Biblical teaching.

The author of this volume devoted many years to historical study before writing this interesting and inspiring life of this unique Christian woman.

Raymond F. Surburg

### III. Practical Studies

THE LONELY HOUSE. STRENGTH FOR TIMES OF LOSS. By Lowell O. Erdahl. Abingdon Press, 1977. 112 pages. Cloth. \$5.95.

The senior pastor of University Lutheran Church of Hope, Minneapolis, has written a book that pastors as counsellors and people who have suffered the loss of some dear one will find useful and instructive. The Reverend Erdahl offers the bereaved fullness, direction, and hope in these topics: "The Lonely House" . . . "The Promises for Terrible Times" . . . "A Time to Mourn" . . . "Terror on Every Side!" . . . "The Anguish of Regret" . . . "The Weight of Resentment" . . . "The Will of God?" . . . "Why?" . . . "Our Quest for Meaning" . . . "Coping with Every Day" . . . "The Pain of Loneliness" . . . "Antidote for Self-pity" . . . "How Long, O Lord?" . . . "Six Weeks 'till Frost" . . . "Sing a New Song."

These are devotional readings which treat a theme for each week. There are devotions for fifteen weeks, which can also be read in weekly sections or right through, as the reader prefers. Erdahl seeks to show those who grieve and those who seek counsel "how fullness, directions, and hope can replace emptiness, confusion and despair." In his short devotions the author employs Bible passages, longer and shorter, personal suggestions based on psychological insights and memorable thought to bring "from the virtually inconsolable stage of mourning to the seemingly unreachable stage of recovery".

The use of Scripture is appreciated by the reviewer but at times Bible passages are given different meanings than those which were the intent of the text. Passages misapplied are Romans 6:4 (p. 13), Romans 1:7 (p. 14), Ephesians 6:12 (p. 47), Matthew 6:12 (where the Greek *poneros* means the Evil One or Devil), John 4:24 (p. 48), Luke 9:59-60 (p. 85), 1 Cor. 2:9 (p. 110). On page 65 Erdahl belittles correct theology. What is theology? Correctly understood it is God's Word correctly enunciated. A false theology can result in a person's eternal death. The devotion on page 65, entitled "Believe What You Can" contains assertions that are not theologically or scripturally sound. The discriminating pastor will find much of use and help in this book.

Raymond F. Surburg

KNOW THE TRUTH. By Alfred Doerfler and Wm. H. Eifert. Revised and Enlarged by Phillip B. Giessler. Adam/David/Zerubbabel Press, Cleveland, 1977. 60 pages.

The title of this reissued confirmation book for adults, originally published by Concordia Publishing House, in 1944, is based on John 8:31, 32; "Then Jesus

said, "If you live in My Word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will free you."

The present revision was prompted by five considerations, stated by Giessler on page IV as being: 1) it has been a valuable doctrinal tool in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod since 1944; 2) it needed updating since new issues, such as abortion, TM, new examples, etc., have come to the fore; 3) it was felt that proof texts would be more meaningful to adult converts if a more modern translation were used; 4) its former outlining seemed somewhat crammed; and 5) it lacked the incorporation of various written-out parts of Luther's Six Chief Parts, as well as a few of the more important questions and answers from the Schwan edition of Luther's Small Catechism.

Besides giving attention to these points, all Scriptural quotations are cited in William F. Beck's, *An American Translation*. It has also used *Luther's Small Catechism with An American Translation Text* as the basis for the Ten Commandments and those parts of the Small Catechism using the Bible as proof.

This new edition of *Know the Truth* would be useable not only for confirmation classes. In this day of doctrinal confusion and of theological uncertainty this book, by means of which many were introduced to the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, could render a like service for Lutheran congregations as this book did a few decades ago.

Raymond F. Surburg

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR LIBERATION AND OTHER UPSETTING IDEAS. By J. C. Wynn. Abingdon, Nashville, 1977. 111 pages. Paper. \$3.95.

Dr. Wynn, professor of pastoral theology of Colgate-Rochester Divinity School/Bexley Hall/Crozer Theological Seminary and an active member of the Religious Education Association, wrote this brief, easy-to-understand book whose main thrust is to deal with current issues of education inside the church. In this contribution to the field of religious education, Wynn discusses what Christian education is, what it *ought* to accomplish, as well as the *nature* of its task.

Under six different topics he introduces upsetting ideas. He is critical of both modern education as applied to Christian education and at the same time berates traditional orthodoxy. With some of the criticisms made against modern religious educators the reviewer would agree. Some of his observations are accurate and true. How true is Wynn's observation that "church education always reflects, like a mirror, the image of the body of the ecclesiastic itself. Seldom do we see a strong church with weak education or, obversely, a weak church whose educational program is very good. Indeed, if current tendencies persist without amelioration, future generations will face dark ages in which they could be denied an understanding of Christian faith and order," (p. 19).

One topic discussed by Wynn is the place of "liberation theology" in the Christian Churches. Wynn believes that active participation in the promotion of education for liberation of the poor and disadvantaged is imperative and to participate in helping the Third World Nations, sharing our resources and wealth with them, means involvement in "incarnational theology."

From a Lutheran and Biblical standpoint, Wynn fails to grasp the true nature of the Kingdom of God and confuses the social gospel with the Biblical doctrine of redemption.

The last topics discussed by the professor from Colgate-Rochester Divinity School is "the conspiracy of silence about eschatology in Church Education" (pp. 89-100). Here again his understanding differs from the traditional understanding. In discussing the nature of the second coming of Christ he adopts Dodd's "realized eschatology" concept. Wynn does not present a consistent

view of what really is eschatology and what is involved in teaching this doctrine in the program of Christian education.

Raymond F. Surburg

**A NEW CLIMATE FOR STEWARDSHIP.** By Wallace E. Fisher. Abingdon, Nashville, 1976. 127 pages. Paper. \$3.95.

Undoubtedly, there is a need for a new climate for stewardship, and the rediscovery of Biblical stewardship, for which the author calls. We look for a reexamination of stewardship in the light of God's Word and of the responsible stewardship of Biblical truths. We second the motion of the "call for fundamental change." It is vital to emphasize the care of persons, evangelism, social action, ethical individual acts, and race relations as a stewardship responsibility.

The author is to be commended for condemning the reliance on budgets, manipulative techniques, and preoccupation with raising money and meeting institutional needs. But so much is promised and so little delivered. Many valid questions and issues are raised, some of which are handled quite adequately, but many of which are left at loose ends because a liberal theology is promoted.

Wallace E. Fisher has written some very stimulating books and is a provocative writer. It is the impression of this reviewer that the publishers recognized this and asked Fisher to write a book on stewardship. Possibly, the stewardship efforts of Fisher's congregation are good, but that does not make him competent for providing solutions to the stewardship problems of our day. He raises the right issues, but his answers do not satisfy in many cases.

Fisher promotes a liberal theology and the historical-critical method. His definition of God's Word is: "The Word of God is the good news of God's saving work in Christ." He claims to take the middle road, for on pages 38-40 he seems to advise that we should not be too conservative and not too liberal. But Fisher plainly sides with the liberal side when he says that the congregation can accept myth, legend, drama, etc., in the communication of the Creation, the Fall, etc. That, of course, is corrupt stewardship of the Word. He commends "solid Biblical scholarship" that equipped the clergy in mainline Protestant churches to discern "more clearly the divine Word in human words," and he wants the laymen to be taught likewise, approving the J and P sources to help understand better the Creation stories (page 53).

Rightly, he raises questions about protecting human rights and avoiding pollution, but he apparently equates these with specific political methods. He does not seem to understand that sin exists, which is at the base of ecological problems.

The section on quotas and apportionments is good. The treatment of sales and bazaars is bad.

Fisher pecks away at many problems, settles some, but this is not the book for congregational stewardship committees or their leaders. It is stimulating, but mostly in the political arena, where it takes the liberal view. A smorgasbord is offered, some tasty, some not so tasty.

Waldo J. Werning

## Books Received

- ON HUMAN CARE. By Arthur J. Dyck. Abingdon, Nashville, 1977. 189 pages. Paper. \$4.05.
- SERMONS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE CHRISTIAN YEAR. By Vance Barron. Abingdon, Nashville, 1977. 95 pages. Paper. \$3.95.
- SURVIVAL TACTICS IN THE PARISH. By Lyle E. Schaller. Abingdon, Nashville, 1977. 208 pages. Paper. \$4.95.
- OUR SOVEREIGN GOD. By James M. Boice, Editor. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 175 pages. Paper. \$4.95.
- MYSTICISM. WINDOW ON A WORLD VIEW. By Margaret Lewis Furse. Abingdon, Nashville, 1977. 220 pages. Paper. \$5.95.
- BURNT OFFERINGS. By E.T. Eberhart. Abingdon, Nashville, 1977. 96 pages. Paper. \$3.95.
- CHRISTIAN PERSONAL ETHICS. By Carl F.H. Henry. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 615 pages. Paper. \$7.95.
- JOSEPHUS AND THE JEWS. By F.J. Foakes Jackson. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 299 pages. Paper. \$4.95.
- THE SERVANT-MESSIAH. By T.W. Manson. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 104 pages. Paper. \$2.95.
- MAJOR BLACK RELIGIOUS LEADERS 1755-1940. By Henry J. Young, Abingdon, Nashville, 1977. 173 pages. Paper. \$5.95.
- THE PROBLEM OF WINESKINS: STUDY GUIDE. By Donald C. Smith. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, 1977. 32 pages. Paper. \$95.
- PREMARITAL COUNSELING. By H. Norman Wright. Moody Press, Chicago, 1977. 215 pages. Cloth. \$6.95.
- YOU AND YOUR DESTINY. By Otto C. Brosius, M.D. Vantage Press, Inc., New York, 1977. 151 pages. Cloth. \$6.50.
- EFFECTIVE BIBLICAL COUNSELING. By Lawrence J. Crabb, Jr. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 202 pages. Cloth. \$6.95.
- THE HOLY LAND. By Michael Avi-Yonah. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 249 pages. Paper. \$3.95.
- ABRAHAM: GOD'S MAN OF FAITH. By C. Donald Cole. Moody Press, Chicago, 1977. 223 pages. Paper. \$3.95.
- FROM NOW TO ETERNITY. By Nathan M. Meyer. BMH Books, Winona Lake, Indiana, 1977. 216 pages. Paper. \$4.00.
- LIBERTY TO THE CAPTIVES. By George E. Ogle. John Knox Press, Atlanta, 1977. 188 pages. Paper. \$5.95.
- HOW CAN I GET THEM TO LISTEN? By James Engel. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 185 pages. Paper. \$4.95.
- THE ESSENCE OF HUMAN NATURE. By Mark P. Cosgrove. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 77 pages. Paper. \$2.95.
- THE PUPPET MASTER. By J. Isamu Yamamoto. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, 1977. 131 pages. Paper. \$3.95.
- ABORTION, THE BIBLE AND THE CHRISTIAN. By Donald Shoemaker. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 62 pages. Paper. \$95.
- THE MANY FACES OF GRIEF. By Edgar N. Jackson. Abingdon Nashville, 1977. 174 pages. Cloth. \$7.95.
- CHRISTIAN HOLINESS: RESTUDIED AND RESTATED. By J. Sidlow Baxter. Zondervan Publishing House, 1977. 206 pages. Cloth. \$12.95.
- CHRISTIANITY FOR PIOUS SKEPTICS. By James B. Ashbrook and Paul W. Walaskay. Abingdon, Nashville, 1977. 160 pages. Paper. \$4.95.
- QUESTS FOR THE HISTORICAL JESUS. By Fred H. Klooster, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 88 pages. Paper. \$3.95.
- THE WING-FOOTED WANDERER. By Donald E. Miller. Abingdon, Nashville, 1977. 240 pages. Cloth. \$9.95.



- HOW TO BE BORN AGAIN. By Billy Graham. Word Books, Publisher, Waco Texas, 1977. 187 pages. Cloth. \$6.95.
- ISSUES OF LIFE & DEATH. By Norman Anderson. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, 1977. 130 pages. Paper. \$2.95.
- THE GRIEF PROCESS: ANALYSIS AND COUNSELING. By Yorick Spiegel. Abingdon, Nashville, 1977. 384 pages. Cloth. \$13.95.
- THE BIBLE IN COUNSELING. By Waylon O. Ward. Moody Press, Chicago, 1977. 153 pages. Paper.
- HOW TO MAKE AND USE OVERHEAD TRANSPARENCIES. By Anna Sue Darkes. Moody Press, Chicago, 1977. 48 pages. Paper. \$1.95.
- JESUS-LORD FOR ALL TIMES. LEADER'S GUIDE. By Donald G. Dawe. John Knox Press, Atlanta, 1975. 76 pages. Paper.
- CELEBRATE WHILE WE WAIT. By The Schroeder Family. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1977. 62 pages. Paper. \$2.95.
- THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE. By D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 373 pages. Cloth. \$8.95.
- THE LEGACY OF ZION. By Henry R. Moeller, editor. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 212 pages. Cloth. \$8.95.
- THE GOSPEL FOR KIDS SERIES A., By Eldon Weisheit. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1977. 128 pages. Cloth.
- DARING PRAYER. By David Willis. John Knox Press, Atlanta, 1977. 157 pages. Cloth. \$6.95.
- IN THE FINAL DAYS. By Walter K. Price. Moody Press, Chicago, 1977. 192 pages. Cloth. \$5.95.
- THE EVANGELICALS. By David F. Wells & John D. Woodbridge, editors. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 325 pages. Paper. \$4.95.
- THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING ON THE ROLE RELATIONSHIP OF MEN AND WOMEN. By George W. Knight, III. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 76 pages. Paper. \$3.95.
- STUDIES IN PHILIPPIANS. By H.C.G. Moule. Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, 1977. 136 pages. Paper. \$2.45.
- STUDIES IN EPHESIANS. By H.C.G. Moule. Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, 1977. 175 pages. Paper. \$2.95.
- MALE AND FEMALE CREATED HE THEM. By Ernest Green. Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, 1977. 86 pages. Paper. \$1.95.
- STUDIES IN ROMANS. By H.C.G. Moule. Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, 1977.
- IN AND AROUND THE BOOK OF DANIEL. By Charles Boutflower. Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, 1977. 314 pages. Cloth. \$9.95.
- SOLI DEO GLORIA: ESSAYS IN REFORMED THEOLOGY. Festschrift for John H. Gerstner. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1976. 210 pages. Cloth. \$6.95.
- THE APOSTLE PETER SPEAKS TO US TODAY. By Holmes Rolston. John Knox Press, Atlanta, 1977. 99 pages. Paper. \$2.95.
- I'M SAVED, YOU'RE SAVED. . . MAYBE. By Jack Renard Pressau. John Knox Press, Atlanta, 1977. 136 pages. Cloth. \$6.95.
- THE PURSUIT OF THE DIVINE SNOWMAN. By Peter Macky. Word Books, Publisher, Waco, Texas, 1977. 240 pages. Cloth. \$6.95.
- THE HEART OF PAUL. By Ben Campbell Johnson. Volume 1. Word Books, Publisher, Waco, Texas, 1976. 174 pages. Cloth. \$5.95.
- THESSALONIANS. AN EXPOSITIONAL COMMENTARY. By Donald Grey Barhouse. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1977. Cloth. \$5.95.
- INHERITED WEALTH: STUDIES IN EPHESIANS. By Tom Julien. BMH Books, Winona Lake, Indiana, 1976. 141 pages. Paper. \$2.95.
- THE FIRST CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY: STUDIES IN ROMANS. By Herman A. Hoyt. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 187 pages. Paper. \$2.95.



- THE ALEPHS. By J. Barnhart. Printed in the U.S.A., 1977. 123 pages. Paper. \$1.95.
- GREAT VERSES FROM THE PSALMS. By Charles H. Spurgeon. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 267 pages. Cloth. \$8.95.
- THE ZONDERVAN PASTOR'S ANNUAL 1978. By T.T. Crabtree. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 367 pages. Paper. \$6.95.
- DECLARE HIS GLORY. David M. Howard, Editor. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1977. 262 pages. Paper. \$3.95.
- VISION AND STRATEGY FOR CHURCH GROWTH. By Waldo J. Wer-nig. Moody Press, Chicago, 1977. 125 pages. Paper. \$2.95.
- MANAGEMENT FOR YOUR CHURCH. By Alvon J. Lindgren and Norman Shawchuck. Abingdon, Nashville, 1977. 160 pages. Cloth. \$7.95.
- THE BEST DAD IS A GOOD LOVER. By Dr. Charlie Shedd. Sheed Andrews & McMeel, Inc., Mission, Kansas, 1977. 135 pages. Cloth. 5.95.
- GETTING TO KNOW YOUR FAITH. By Paul Steeves. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1977. 126 pages. Paper. \$2.95.
- YOUTH, BRAINWASHING, AND THE EXTREME CULTS. By Ronald Enroth. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 218 pages. Cloth. \$6.95.
- THE FIGHT. By John White. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1976. 230 pages. Paper. \$3.95.
- A NEW SHORT GRAMMAR OF THE GREEK TESTAMENT. 10th Edition. By A.T. Robertson and W. Hersey Davis. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 454 pages. Paper. \$5.95.
- THE MINISTER AND HIS GREEK NEW TESTAMENT. By A.T. Robertson. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 139 pages. Paper. \$2.95.
- KEYWORDS IN THE TEACHING OF JESUS. At A.T. Robertson. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 128 pages. Paper. \$2.95.
- LUKE THE HISTORIAN IN THE LIGHT OF RESEARCH. By A.T. Robertson. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 257 pages. Paper. \$3.95.
- JOHN THE LOYAL: STUDIES IN THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. By A.T. Robertson. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 315 pages. Paper. \$3.95.
- ANDREWS UNIVERSITY SEMINARY STUDIES, Number 1, Volume XV, Spring 1977. Andrews University Press, Berrien Springs, Michigan, 1977. 96 pages. Paper.
- THE ORIGINS OF NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTOLOGY. By I. Howard Marshall. InterVaristy Press, Downers Grove, 1976. 132 pages. Paper. \$2.95.
- 1-2-3 JOHN: FELLOWSHIP WITH THE WORD OF LIFE. By Raymond E. Gingrich. BMH Books, Winona Lake, Indiana, 1977. 132 pages. Paper. \$2.95.
- CHRISTIANITY FOR PIOUS SKEPTICS. By James B. Ashbrook and Paul W. Walaskay. Abingdon, Nashville, 1977. 160 pages. Paper. \$4.95.
- THE WRITINGS OF JAMES ARMINIUS. Translated by James Nichols and W.R. Bagnall. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1977. Paper. \$24.95. 3 Volumes.
- CREEDS OF CHRISTENDOM. By Philip Schaff. 3 Volumes. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1977. Paper. \$34.95.