

# CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY

# CTQ

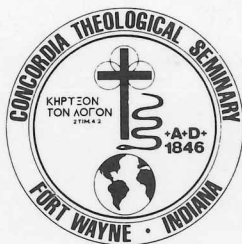
Volume 46, Number 4

---

OCTOBER 1982

---

Announcement .....	263
The Theology of the Cross .....	Karl Wengenroth 267
Tongues: An Evaluation from a Scientific Perspective .....	Klemet Preus 277
Luther and the Confessions .....	Wilbert Rosin 295
Theological Observer .....	299
Homiletical Studies .....	301
Book Reviews .....	339
Books Received .....	353



CONCORDIA  
THEOLOGICAL  
QUARTERLY

CTQ

ISSN 0038-8610

Issued Quarterly by the Faculty of  
Concordia Theological Seminary

The *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, a continuation of *The Springfielder*, is a theological journal of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, published for its ministerium by the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

DAVID P. SCAER, *Editor*, DOUGLAS JUDISCH, *Assistant Editor*, GERHARD AHO, *Homiletical Editor*, G. WALDEMAR DEGNER, HEINO KADAI, ROBERT D. PREUS, *Associate Editors*, SYLVIA DEAN, *Typesetter*.

*The Faculty:* GERHARD AHO, HAROLD BULS, ROBERT H. COLLINS, G. WALDEMAR DEGNER, HENRY J. EGGOLD, JR., C. GEORGE FRY, ALBERT L. GARCIA, WILLIAM G. HOUSER, DOUGLAS JUDISCH, HEINO KADAI, EUGENE F. KLUG, WALTER A. MAIER, KURT MARQUART, NORBERT MUELLER, RICHARD MULLER, KENNETH PFLUEGER, ROBERT D. PREUS, DANIEL G. REUNING, WILBERT H. ROSIN, JOHN SALESKA, DAVID P. SCAER, ALVIN J. SCHMIDT, OTTO F. STAHLKE, RAYMOND F. SURBURG, HOWARD W. TEPKER, JAMES VOELZ, MICHAEL WARNER, WILLIAM WEINRICH, DEAN O. WENTHE, WARREN WILBERT, ALBERT WINGFIELD, HAROLD ZIETLOW, MELVIN ZILZ.

The CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY is published quarterly in January, April, July, and October. Changes of address for Missouri Synod clergymen reported to Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, will also cover the mailing change of the CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY. Other changes of address, Paid subscriptions, and other business matters should be sent to CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY, Concordia Theological Seminary, 6600 North Clinton Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825.

Annual subscription rate: \$5.00

© Concordia Theological Seminary Press  
1982



# **Announcement:**

## **The Sixth Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions**

celebrating the  
**Five Hundredth Anniversary of Luther's Birth**  
**A Convocation for Pastors and Laymen**  
**sponsored by**  
**The International Center of Lutheran Confessional Studies**  
  
**Concordia Theological Seminary**  
**Fort Wayne, Indiana**  
**January 26 - 28, 1983**

### **THE SCHEDULE**

#### **Wednesday, January 26, 1983**

- 1:00 p.m. Welcome
- 1:15 p.m. "Luther and Justification"  
Pres. Robert D. Preus
- 2:00 p.m. "Luther on Church and Ministry"  
Prof. Eugene F. Klug
- 3:00 p.m. Coffee Break
- 3:30 p.m. "Confessio Augustana Mea Est"  
Prof. Leif Grane
- 6:00 p.m. Dinner
- 7:30 p.m. Concert: "Luther's Heritage"
- 8:45 p.m. "Gemuetlichkeit" in the Commons

#### **Thursday, January 27, 1983**

- 7:00 a.m. Breakfast
- 8:50 a.m. Chapel
- 9:30 a.m. "Luther's Last Battles"  
Prof. Mark U. Edwards, Jr.
- 10:45 a.m. Coffee Break
- 11:00 a.m. "American Interpretations of Luther"  
Prof. Lewis W. Spitz
- 12:15 p.m. Lunch
- 1:45 p.m. "Luther's Impact upon the Universities and the Reverse"  
Prof. James M. Kittelson

- 3:00 p.m. Coffee Break  
3:30 p.m. "Luther Then and Now"  
Prof. Heino O. Kadai  
6:30 p.m. Banquet  
"Luther, the After-Dinner Speaker"  
Prof. Lewis W. Spitz

**Friday — January 28, 1983**

- 7:00 a.m. Breakfast  
8:50 a.m. Chapel  
9:30 a.m. Panel: "The Theology of Luther - *Sola Scriptura, Sola Gratia, Sola Fide*"  
Profs. Grane, Edwards, Kittelson, Spitz, Preus, Kadai, Klug

**THE SPEAKERS**

Prof. Dr. Robert D. Preus, President of Concordia Theological Seminary and Professor of Systematic Theology, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Prof. Dr. Eugene F.A. Klug, Chairman of the Department of Systematic Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Prof. Dr. Leif Grane, University of Copenhagen, Institute of Church History and Missions, Chairman of the International Luther Congress Continuation Committee, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Prof. Dr. Mark U. Edwards, Department of History, Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana.

Prof. Dr. Lewis W. Spitz, Wm. R. Kenan Professor of History, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

Prof. Dr. James M. Kittelson, Department of History, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

Prof. Dr. Heino O. Kadai, Chairman of the Department of Historical Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

---

## REGISTRATION INFORMATION

The fee for registration, program material, and participation in the banquet is \$45.00 per person, \$70.00 for husband and wife. In the case of pastors emeriti, however, the fee is \$25.00.

The registration fee for a single day is \$20.00. The fee for participation in the banquet is \$12.50 per person.

College and seminary students may register at no cost (although participation in the banquet will require payment of a fee).

The seminary will provide limousine service from the airport for \$10.00 per person when given at least two days' notice of arrival time.

Limited dormitory space is available for registrants and their wives. The fee for a room is \$7.00 per person. There will be two people in each room. Motel reservations are available should they be preferred.

Please include your name, address, congregation, and telephone number with your request for registration. Early registration by mail will guarantee the accommodations of your choice.

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner may be purchased in the seminary dining hall.

*Send requests for registration (or requests for further information) together with the registration fee to the International Center of Lutheran Confessional Studies, Concordia Theological Seminary, 6600 North Clinton Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825, or call 219-482-9611.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Check the appropriate box:

Please reserve a dormitory room for me ☐ and my spouse ☐.

Please reserve a motel room for me ☐ and my spouse ☐.

I will make my own accommodation arrangements ☐.



# The Theology of the Cross

Karl Wengenroth

## I. A Contemporary Perspective

Moved by a deep understanding of the theology of the cross, Johann S. Bach incorporated the following words into his cantata for the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity:

The cross then I will gladly bear,  
Bestowed on me by God's dear hand.  
It leads me safe through many a snare,  
Into my God's own promised land.  
Into a grave shall then pass all my fears,  
My Saviour then shall wipe away all tears.

On his missionary and pastoral journeys Pope John Paul II uses a bishop's staff fitted with a crucifix. Does that staff give new force to the theology of the cross in our world? Will the personable style of this man make the crucified Christ more real to the millions of people who embrace him? Will the appeal of this pope lead his immense following to seek out the crucified Christ and embrace Him by faith, or is immediate communication with divinely gifted men really all our contemporaries want from God?

Does the use of the cross by a gifted church official with great appeal really give new force to a theology of the cross? Helmut Heissenbuettel speaks of our "seduction by the live appearance of the original." A charismatic figure conducts immensely popular journeys on behalf of a Christ who died a humiliating death, forsaken by God and men. Does not this phenomenon turn the reflection of the lowliness of Christ crucified into an attempted manifestation of His glory and power, doing away with the scandal of the cross, substituting the theology of glory for the theology of the cross? Indeed, the church stands at the threshold of enthusiasm if a personal encounter displaces the message of justification through faith in the crucified Christ which Augustana IV recognizes as the heart of the Gospel. It is certainly no mere accident that during the papal visit to Germany in November of 1980, although many note-worthy statements were made by the pope, not one sentence was heard to the effect that our salvation is based upon the vicarious atonement of Christ on the cross.

The theology of the cross is likewise of little concern to the ecumenical movement. Thanks to Philip Potter, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, one need have no doubt whatsoever about the content of present ecumenical

theology and its practical aims. As far as he and his ilk are concerned, the concept of *theologia crucis* and *theologia gloriae* never enters the picture. He has unmistakably declared that liberation is the topic of present-day theological concern.

While Luther's theology of the cross emanated from his concern with the question, "How can I find a gracious God?" the Genevan ecumenists have centered their attention upon the question, "How can I find a gracious neighbor?" Christ's suffering on the cross *for us* is turned into a suffering *with us*, suffering *with* all the oppressed and enslaved in the world. Such a struggle to join with other human beings in the process of liberation to bring about true human community has nothing to do with the theology of the cross. The theology of the cross actually testifies to the fact that on the cross Christ has liberated me for true communion with God and all others who have received that liberation through faith.

The forces of ecumenism in our day are responsible for a decisive shift in emphasis from theology to anthropology. The question, "Who am I?" is posed before all others, yet the question, "Who am I before God?" receives no answers. Christ is considered the great example of true humanness. The suffering that took place for our redemption becomes a proof of the human potential for self-sacrificing love. Christ and His cross become a motivation to master the problems of life in accordance with His moral standards and to find a meaning in life through reasonable deliberation. In contrast to such a view, the theology of the cross shows me that I can now live a life empowered by a source wholly outside myself. I need no longer rely upon my own strength. Because the theology of glory is such a dangerous temptation for the church, a careful definition of the theology of the cross is clearly essential.

## II. The Biblical Perspective

Biblically the theology of the cross finds its basic text in I Corinthians 1:18 within the context of the first two chapters of that epistle: "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." Nevertheless, in seeking for evidence of a theology of the cross in the New Testament, there are no other instances where the language is equally clear. In Philippians 3:18, to be sure, allusion is made to the concept when Paul informs his readers that many "live as enemies of the cross of Christ." One is, however, faced with the question of whether or not the theology of the cross can function as a key concept in theology on such a narrow textual basis.

A number of parallels may be found in the Pauline writings, especially in Romans 1:16-17 and the third chapter of that epistle. For Paul the *logos tou staurou* is of ultimate significance for man. The fate of the whole world is bound up with it. For the cross is not merely a place where one man died; it is rather the place where the Son of God died to redeem all men. If, then, the theological task is not merely to talk abstractly about God, but rather to describe the saving action of God, "the word of the cross" deserves a central position. It testifies to the dynamic by which God in His gracious love accomplished the salvation of all men. That Paul really intended this "word of the cross" to be the basic foundation of all theology becomes clear as we look at his negations. Neither *sophia* (1 Corinthians 1:21) nor *nomos* (Romans 3:21,28) - neither reason nor law - can be a foundation. Such concepts would make human thought or action the standard for salvation. Man attempts, of course, to find security by these means, but the cross reveals the fundamental folly of human wisdom and the fundamental impotence of human achievement. God refuses to display His divinity in the ostentatious way desired by the Jews; rather, He went to the cross, renouncing His glory. Nor is a true recognition of God granted through the philosophical proof desired by the Greeks, but only through the gracious revelation of the Gospel, as the gift of God in Jesus Christ, which can be accepted only by faith. One must conclude, therefore, that God can be defined only from the starting point of the cross. All true teaching about God must be a theology of the cross, without any concession to a concept of self-enlightenment apart from the cross. A sinner can live only by the power and wisdom that emanates from the crucified Christ. Karl Rahner correctly stated, "Theology itself is crucified theology, not merely talk about the cross."

The question may be asked, however, whether such statements, based on the Pauline corpus, are representative of the New Testament as a whole. It is true that the books of the New Testament were not generally designed as systematic treatments of Christian dogma. The letters of Paul were ordinarily written to address contemporary problems in particular places, and it must be granted that the *sedes* of the theology of the cross as opposed to a theology of glory are Pauline assertions. In the broader sense, however, every writing in the New Testament deals with the cross of Christ, but at times the cross is treated as so integral to salvation that it is seen as one aspect of divine glory. Nevertheless, Paul's theology of the cross retains its key role in that it makes use of the cross in polemical criticism of all other approaches to salvation.

Examples of this use of the theology of the cross may be found in Paul's criticism of the Judaistic and Hellenistic approaches to salvation.

According to this view, then, the cross is the subject rather than the object of theology. It has an interpretive function. From the cross light falls upon the world in general and the Christian community in particular. The cross has a concrete significance for the world; the death of Jesus on the cross shows the world its sin and offers salvation or judgment. For the Christian community the cross means the completed reconciliation with God which through faith brings righteousness and peace to men. The cross rescues us from a merciless compulsion to prove ourselves, to create our own righteousness.

This theological starting point gives every other salvation event its special significance in the whole scheme of salvation. Already the incarnation stands in the light of the cross when the angel says of Jesus, "... for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). The Baptism of Christ is followed by John the Baptizer's words, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Christ's preaching and healing ministry is accompanied by the announcement of His death on the cross. The risen Lord is the crucified Lord, and in the returning Lord we meet the "Lamb that was slain" (Revelation 5:12).

Another aspect of the theology of the cross receives special emphasis in the Gospels and the First Letter of Peter, namely, that those who belong to Christ by virtue of His self-sacrifice on the cross will themselves bear the cross and suffer with Christ, as they follow Him. Paul, for example, suffered in the course of his ministry (cf. Ephesians 3:13; Colossians 1:24). That not only the apostles, but all Christians, experience suffering is proof that we do not live yet in the time of the consummation when God Himself will turn the theology of the cross into a theology of glory.

### III. The Historical Perspective

In a fragment of a sermon which Luther preached on St. Martin's Day we come across a pivotal statement, "Unum praedica: sapientium crucis!" ("Preach one thing: the wisdom of the cross!"). Luther thus tersely summarized what he learned from Paul about the "word of the cross" (I Corinthians 1:18) — that the cross is the actual content of all Christian theology. Luther's perception of the centrality of the cross was unique in the church of his day. We can see how unique it was when we compare it with the theology of the early church subsequent to the



apostolic age. There the cross played a relatively insignificant role. The incarnation was considered to be the pivotal event of salvation. Irenaeus described the significance of the incarnation with these words, "In His immeasurable love God became what we are in order that we might become what He is." In the words of Gregory of Nazianzus one sees even more clearly why the Eastern church, to this day, has not developed a theology of the cross. Gregory wrote, "Seek to imitate God's friendliness. Man can do nothing more divine than to do the right thing. You have the opportunity to become like God without drudgery. Do not let this opportunity of your deification pass in vain." This is a blatant case of *theologia gloriae*. Like the Roman Emperor Constantine's use of the cross as a sign of political victory, Gregory's statement is alien to the *theologia crucis*. Hermann Sasse has argued, in attempting to explain this phenomenon, that the Eastern church with its Greek heritage has always held an idealistic view of man. Sinful man is, in effect, merely ill and can with much love and patience be cured. According to this anthropology, man has no real need for a Savior to redeem him from spiritual death by means of His own painful and humiliating death and thus no need for a theology of the cross.

Some noteworthy statements about the cross of Christ do occur in the liturgy and creeds of the early church. If one proceeds from the Apostles' Creed, via the Nicene, to the Athanasian Creed, one sees the "crucifixus" ("was crucified") give place to the richer "crucifixus etiam pro nobis" ("was crucified for us") and finally to "qui passus est pro salute nostra" ("who suffered for our salvation"). The Agnus Dei became part of the Roman mass around A.D. 700. The pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the adoration of the cross rather than the crucified Christ were acutally manifestations of a theology of glory. For Christians of that time, the cross was a symbol of the victory of God's power in the world.

The breakthrough for the proclamation of a theology of the cross came in the reform efforts of Martin Luther. He gained his basic insight into the matter between the years 1515 and 1518. In the previously cited sermon fragment of 1515 he admonished all preachers "to lead all Bible readers to the true foundation, namely, the cross of Christ." In this statement he aptly hit upon the pivotal truth of Scripture. In 1517 he took up this theme in the Ninety-five Theses in a different way by referring to "the church's treasure" and extensively elaborated upon it in 1518. This treasure is "given the church through the merit of Christ" (thesis 60) and "is the most holy Gospel of the glory and grace of God" (thesis 62).

In May of 1518 Luther used the terminology of *theologia crucis* as opposed to *theologia gloriae* at the Heidelberg Disputation. His own spiritual struggle to obtain the grace of God as well as his own disparagement of all works-righteousness (thesis 18) is unfolded theologically in theses 19 and 20. "He is not worthy to be called a theologian who means to perceive and understand in his own works God's invisible nature" (thesis 19). "But he properly deserves to be called a theologian who grasps whatever of God's nature is visible and seen in the world as being made real in the suffering of the cross" (thesis 20). In Luther's own commentary on these statements we read: "Thus it is neither satisfactory nor useful for anyone to perceive God in His glory and majesty, if he does not at the same time perceive God in the lowliness and the shame of the cross . . . Therefore in Christ the Crucified we have all the substance of theology." Luther states: "The theologian of honor calls the evil good and the good evil, but the theologian of the cross calls things by their proper names." Luther describes the "theologian of honor" in this way: "Since he does not know Christ, he does not know God hidden in suffering. This is why he gives preference to works over suffering, to glory over the cross, to power over weakness, to wisdom over folly, in short, to the pleasant over the unpleasant; such people the apostle calls 'enemies of the cross of Christ' " (Philippians 3:18).

Luther later unfolded other aspects of this theology of the cross in *De Servo Arbitrio* (1525), addressed to Erasmus of Rotterdam, in his lectures on Isaiah (1527-1530), and in his great lectures on Genesis (1535-1545). It may truthfully be said that the theology of the cross dominated Luther's entire theological and ecclesiastical career.

According to the theology of the cross, a proper perception of God comes only "in the cross and suffering." Perceiving God merely as the omnipotent Creator is only a partial understanding of God and cannot prevent man from lapsing into foolishness (Romans 1:20-22). For a sinner to stand before a righteous and almighty God necessarily means damnation unless he knows of the cross of Jesus Christ. This knowledge comes not through human reason or any other human sense, but only through the "folly" of what we preach "to save those who believe" (I Corinthians 1:21). The perception of God understood in this way is perception of salvation. A theology based upon the cross of Christ perceives salvation as a gift from God, not something achieved by *ratio* or *lex*.

Luther further explicated the theology of the cross as a

theology of faith. It substitutes the "foolish God" hidden under the cross for any human thoughts or deeds as the means to salvation. Only through faith can the salvation of the God of the cross be obtained. Faith is a certainty that can rely on the God who is hidden from one's senses on the cross and in suffering. "Cruce tectum" (Apol. VII:19) - "hidden under the cross" - is the basis of a theology of faith rather than sight. "But our life is hidden in God (i.e. in the bare confidence in His mercy)."<sup>1</sup>

Finally, it was almost inescapable for Luther that the theology of the cross should be a theology of suffering. Whoever believes in the cross must be prepared to bear the cross. "He who has not been brought low, reduced to nothing through the cross and suffering, takes credit for works and wisdom and does not give credit to God. He thus misuses and defiles the gifts of God."<sup>2</sup> Luther understands the salutary significance of the holy cross by which a member of God's people comes to be like his Head, Christ.<sup>3</sup> Part of the theology of the cross is "to be crucified with Christ." Thus, it is not merely a Christian philosophy, as the bloodless theology of glory will always be; rather it is an attitude enveloping one's whole life and death.

The profoundly comforting nature of Luther's theology of the cross is apparent in a letter which he wrote to a fellow monk, the Augustinian Georg Spenlein of Memmingen. On April 8, 1516, Luther wrote, "My dear brother, get to know Christ and Him crucified. Learn to praise Him and to despair of yourself. And then say to Him: Dear Lord Jesus! You are my righteousness; I am Your sin. You have accepted what is mine and given me what is Yours. You took upon Yourself what You were not and gave me what I was not . . . For Christ lives only among sinners . . . In Him alone, utterly despairing of yourself and of your works, will you find peace. He makes His righteousness to be yours, just as He accepted you and made your sins to be His very own. If you firmly believe this . . . then continue your fellowship with your brethren. . . How pitiful the righteousness of a man if he compares himself with others, finds them to be worse than himself, and for that reason will grant them no fellowship . . . He should remain among them, to serve them with patience, with intercession, and with his personal example . . . If you desire to be a rose or a lily of Christ, then you will need to know that your way leads through thorns."

#### IV. The Practical Perspective

The church of Jesus Christ as a whole, and our Evangelical Lutheran confessional churches in particular, committed to the

theology of the cross in proclamation and life, are constantly being challenged and endangered by the spirit of a theology of glory. The *theologia gloriae* manifests itself in many different forms, yet as a distinctive way of doing theology. The theology of the cross, therefore, must assume a polemical role toward a church under the influence of the so-called ecumenical spirit of the times. Some manifestations of a theology of glory in the church today are the following:

1. Charismatic and "holiness" movements either seek certain visible signs from God, or they identify themselves as a sinless Christian community. The theology of the cross puts an end to both claims by testifying that the decisive criterion of Christian living is faith. It is not from the holiness of its life that the church receives its perfection but from the forgiveness of sins. As Luther put it in his comments on thesis 28 at the Heidelberg Disputation: "Sinners are beautiful because they are loved; they are not loved because they are beautiful."

2. Syncretistic movements speak of many ways of salvation. They make the salvation accomplished by Christ on the cross merely one of many religious possibilities for man.

3. Some modern "missionary" strategies consider the development of certain social structures equally as important as the proclamation of justifying grace in Christ.

4. Political theology misconstrues the realization of democracy or racial integration as participation in human salvation.

5. Contextual theology calls for the adoption of non-Christian cultural elements to express the Gospel in order to make it more easily acceptable to prospective Christians. Thus, human religious activity becomes more important than simple trust in the grace of God.

6. Unionism makes corporate size, organizational efficiency, and public influence the criterion of church union, rather than agreement in confession. Unionism has as its goal the visible establishment of the kingdom of God in this world. In actuality, the church cannot retreat from the scandal of the cross if it is to be the church of Christ. True unity in Christ can exist only in and under the cross.

7. A theology of success looks upon financial gain and external growth as sure signs of divine blessing.

The theology of glory, understood in this way, is constantly in search of progress in this world. It draws up programs which are designed to make the kingdom of God sufficiently manifest that we may recognize at least the outlines of paradise in this world. But since sin, death, and the devil cannot be overcome except

through the daily forgiveness of sins, and since the power of this world has not been eliminated, the theology of glory stands in sharp contrast to the form of God's kingdom under the cross. The theology of the cross looks forward to an end of this world and in the meantime expects every Christian to live as a disciple of the crucified Lord in obedient suffering.

### Conclusion

As dangerous as the *theologia gloriae* is, the church must do more than simply expose and reject it. Rather, the church must seek to *live* in accord with the *theologia crucis* in terms of personal piety, worship, pastoral care, administration of the sacraments, and stewardship.

### FOOTNOTES

1. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann, eds., *Luther's Works* (St. Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia Publishing House and Fortress Press, 1955 ff.), 31, p.44.
2. *LW* 31, p.55.
3. *LW* 41, p.164.



# Tongues: An Evaluation from a Scientific Perspective

Klemet Preus

I took a test a while ago called "a spiritual gifts inventory." The test was supposed to determine what spiritual gifts were possessed by those who took it. Happily, I passed, scoring quite high on one particular gift — discerning of spirits. The gift was defined by the inventory as the ability to tell truth from falsehood with relative ease. Excited over my newly discovered spiritual gift I boldly approached the administrator of the test and informed him of it.

"Congratulations," was his predictable reply, "I'm sure that the body of Christ can use the gift of discernment."

I then proceeded to explain to the instructor that the test was replete with false doctrine, based on heterodox assumptions and completely invalid as to its results. "Clearly," I claimed, "you are faced with an insoluble dilemma. If I really do have the gift of discernment, then your test is invalid because I say so. If I do not have the gift, then your test is invalid because it is in error. I either have or do not have the gift. Therefore, your test is invalid."

The administrator looked wryly at me and said, "My experience is that the test works perfectly well."

I began to understand how Alice must have felt in the presence of the Queen of Hearts.

Similar frustration is incurred by questioning the supposed Biblical basis of tongues with practicing charismatics. Experience has told them what God's Word has not. Present-day tongues are claimed to be the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit. Any critical look at them from an exegetical perspective is considered to be either the work of Satan, a sign of quenching the Spirit, or simply contrary to the experience of Christian people. Although such charges may have had some deterrent effects upon exegetes,<sup>1</sup> scientists have risked the charismatic epithets and have arrived at conclusions regarding tongues which from an experiential perspective, cast significant doubts on the supernatural nature of present-day tongues.

## The Central Charismatic Teaching

The central teaching of Neo-Pentecostalism (the charismatic movement) is that subsequent to regeneration a second experience, the Baptism in the Spirit, is to occur in the life of the

Christian. According to almost all Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostals, the necessary initial sign of the Baptism in the Spirit is speaking in tongues. Donald Gee, a leading Pentecostal theologian, says that "tongues regarded as an isolated phenomenon rather than as an initial evidence of the Baptism in the Spirit had not launched a worldwide revival."<sup>2</sup> David J. DePlessis, the Pentecostal most responsible for bringing Pentecostalism into the mainline denominations in the form of the charismatic movement, makes the same claim:

By way of simple illustration let us take a man that goes into a shoe store to buy a pair of shoes. He never mentions the tongues in the shoes, he knows they go with the shoes. Why not accept the baptism in the Spirit just like Jesus gave it on the day of Pentecost when they all spake with tongues as the Spirit gave utterance?<sup>3</sup>

Larry Christenson, the most prolific Lutheran spokesman for the charismatic movement, is equally committed to the doctrine:

Is speaking in tongues the only valid objective manifestation that a person has had this definite instantaneous experience of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit? Scripture does not say that it is the only one. But in showing us the pattern, Scripture gives us no consistent suggestion of any other.<sup>4</sup>

The legitimacy of the present-day phenomena of tongues is crucial to charismatic theology and to the movement itself.

### **The Charismatic Denial of Biblical Authority**

The Pentecostal doctrine of tongues, however, is precisely the doctrine which the movement will not subject to the scrutiny of Scripture. In fact, in charismatic theology the Pentecostal experience of tongues has replaced the Scriptures as the norm of Christian doctrine. By so doing the movement has rejected the sole normative authority of the Bible.<sup>5</sup>

Charismatics demonstrate their preference for experience over Scripture in two ways. First, they have an inveterate tendency to reject, on experiential grounds, any exegetical conclusions which conflict with the experience of tongues. This tendency was demonstrated in the pages of *Christianity Today* a number of years ago. Carl Tuland wrote an article in which, on the basis of a study of the Greek texts, he came to the conclusion that the tongues in I Corinthians were unintelligible babbling.<sup>6</sup> In the following weeks the editors of *Christianity Today* published letters from people who took issue with Tuland, not on the basis of the Biblical testimony, but because his conclusions differed



from their experience. One writer wondered if Dr. Tuland had ever been in love.<sup>7</sup> Another suggested, "Don't knock it till you've tried it."<sup>8</sup> A third remarked:

The author struggles valiantly with the text trying to answer other problems that come to his mind. On this he is to be commended. I have found from experience that most of these questions dissolve into the atmosphere when one takes the leap of faith into this new dimension of the Spirit. I highly recommend this way of life to him.<sup>9</sup>

Even Oral Roberts took the time to answer and object to Tuland's article because "the depth of edification and inner strength derived in my own and in the lives of countless others through tongues is too precious and too practical to be summarily dismissed."<sup>10</sup> Finally Dr. Howard Ervin, a Baptist charismatic, was called upon to speak on behalf of the Neo-Pentecostals. He wrote an article and came to conclusions which were, at least ostensibly, based upon a study of the texts.<sup>11</sup> But the charismatic propensity had already been revealed. The results of Biblical study had been rejected solely because they had questioned the nature of present-day tongues.

The second way in which charismatics elevate the Pentecostal experience above the Scripture is their insistence that only those who have received the necessary experience can discover the full meaning of God's Word. Ervin himself admitted that his interpretation of tongues passages had "been enriched for me by this very experience as it unfolded in my own life."<sup>12</sup> Lutheran charismatics extol the tongues experience since it "makes the Bible come alive,"<sup>13</sup> "opens the Bible,"<sup>14</sup> or makes people "able to understand the Bible better."<sup>15</sup> Frances Hunter, a popular charismatic writer and speaker claims that such essential passages as I Corinthians 12-14 are not clear until tongues are spoken — the passages need the experience in order to be interpreted.<sup>16</sup> Former Lutheran, A.G. Dornfield, employs the same reasoning in his discussion of Jude 20. "After you speak in tongues for a while," he claims, you "just know" that Jude 20 refers to tongues.<sup>17</sup> Exegetical or theological discussion between tongue-speakers and non-tongue-speakers becomes impossible. Any assertion by the non-tongue-speaker can be dismissed on the grounds that the Bible is still unclear to him. By this method the Bible is not allowed to speak for itself but is subject to the religious experience of the charismatics. Ian MacPherson has summarized the charismatic position:

Of recent years a considerable literature on the subject [of

tongues] has grown up, much of it from pens of people, who, not having themselves had the experience, are as little qualified to deal with it as a deaf and dumb man to be a teacher of languages.<sup>18</sup>

### **Tongues - Evaluated from a Scientific Perspective**

Since the Pentecostal experience of tongues is more important than the texts of the Scripture to the charismatic, no amount of Biblical evidence is likely to shake the Neo-Pentecostal's confidence in his experience. Knowing this, many scholars have attempted to evaluate tongues from a different perspective. Their studies show that the tongues phenomena can be explained on psychological, sociological, physiological and linguistic ground alone. The scientific evidence is significant since it challenges Neo-Pentecostalism at its central and only distinctive point — tongues.

### **What Are Present-Day Tongues?**

The consensus of most social scientists is that glossolalia (tongue-speaking) takes place when a person is functioning in some type of altered mental state. Wayne Oates, the prolific Baptist psychologist, described speaking in tongues as "a form of dissociation within the personality, in which a set of voluntary muscles respond to control centers other than those associated with consciousness."<sup>19</sup> Paul Kildahl, a Lutheran psychologist, says somewhat the same thing: "a psychologist must say the glossolalia is not completely under conscious control of the person who speaks in tongues."<sup>20</sup> Felicitas Goodman, who has done extensive study of glossolalists from many different cultural settings, differs only slightly in her conclusions:

In my terms then, when a person has removed himself from awareness of the ordinary reality surrounding himself he is in an *altered mental* state. The state of the glossolalist, of the meditating person, is in this sense an *altered mental state of consciousness* (in German *Ausnahmезustand*, an exceptional state). As a synonym emphasizing a different aspect of the same generalization. I use *dissociation* to characterize the subject's divorcement from ordinary reality.<sup>21</sup>

Goodman also refers to the state of the glossolalists as a "hyper-aroused trance."<sup>22</sup> William Samarin, who has also done extensive research into tongues, defines the phenomenon "simply as a pleasurable state of intense emotion whether natural or linked to an altered state of consciousness."<sup>23</sup> Stuart Bergsma, a former medical missionary, says that tongues are dangerous, "for the

dissociation, the depersonalization in glossolalia, goes off without being related to the wholeness of the person."<sup>24</sup> Even George Cutten, writing in 1927, refers to tongue-speaking as "dissociation of consciousness" or "disintegration of personality." Cutten agrees with contemporary analyses:

In terms more directly borrowed from the vocabulary of modern psychology, in considering speaking with tongues we have to do with a state of personal disintegration, in which the verbomotive centers of the subject are obedient to subconscious impulses . . . to use another term, dissociation of consciousness. Inability to remember a name is a dissociation of consciousness, and is a most common experience. When disintegration becomes so severe that the subconscious is in control, we have an abnormal condition. When the subconscious concentrates its energy on one motor or sensory function, this is likely to attract attention. We find this last condition in speaking with tongues.<sup>25</sup>

Whether tongues are called "dissociation," an "altered mental state," "loss of complete conscious control," "hyperaroused trance," an "altered state of consciousness" or "disintegration," it does seem that psychologists consider them to be explainable in terms not necessarily supernatural or spiritual. And regardless of the different conclusions drawn by psychologists concerning the subtleties of the tongues phenomena, they agree with each other concerning its basic form: the psychological state of the glossolalist is altered in some way so that he is functioning in a manner that is abnormal. In defense of the psychologists cited above, I should point out that all but one (Felicita Goodman) confess to be Christian, some of them (Oates, Cutten) with reputable theological credentials. These people have no "axe to grind" with religion in general or even with Christianity.

### Why Are Tongues Spoken?

Why should people seek this altered mental state? It is because tongue-speaking, like sleep or meditation, is a release from tension. Wayne Oates describes tongues:

In the experience of speaking in tongues there seems to be a conglomeration of several of these non-medical approaches to releasing the tension of the voluntary muscular situation of a person. There is certainly a buildup of tension, there is a hypnotic impact of a mass or a group, and there is an ecstatic release of tension.<sup>26</sup>

Kildahl comes to the same conclusion:

Emotionally, the experience [tongue-speaking] was one of

fantastic release, comparable in intensity to sexual orgasm, or to the sense of freedom just after an intense stomach cramp subsides.<sup>27</sup>

Others have referred to tongues as a "reassurance agent" over latent guilt feelings.<sup>28</sup>

The tension-relieving virtue of tongues is demonstrated by tongue-speakers themselves. Kildahl and Qualben discovered that in eighty-seven percent of the cases which they examined a personal crisis of some kind had preceded the initial experience of speaking in tongues.<sup>29</sup> Kildahl's studies have, of course, been challenged by tongue-speakers.<sup>30</sup> But by their personal testimonies they support Kildahl's suggestion. Rodney Lensch, a Lutheran charismatic, describes the experience which precipitated his seeking of the Baptism in the Spirit:

On this particular Sunday I found myself unable to even compose a sermon. By evening I had given up again. Nothing came. I was like a fountain gone dry. That night I went into the sanctuary and wept like a child before the altar. My self-confidence had been shattered and it appeared as if there was no honorable way to escape.<sup>31</sup>

Lensch's trauma is exactly the type of mental state to which Kildahl refers. Erwin Prange, another Lutheran, tells of a man who had taken the MMPI (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory) many times. The results of one test showed "some rather poor frustration tolerance together with chronic anxiety and guilt."<sup>32</sup> It was following this test that the man spoke in tongues for the first time.<sup>33</sup> Goodman transcribed from tapes some conversion experiences recounted by tongue-speakers. Each conversion experience always included speaking in tongues. In nine of the ten cases which were reported in full there is mention of some situation which caused trauma for the person who subsequently spoke in tongues. One man wanted to be a minister but could not; one was greatly worried over his work and lack of money; one was suffering from severe anemia in which she vomited up almost all she ate and became very thin; one, a pastor, had lost all his money in an illegal adventure, and his wife was unconverted; one had just experienced crop failure and the prayers of a priest of the Roman Church had gone unanswered; one experienced anxiety over drinking, playing cards, sleeping in the street; one had a son who was deathly ill, the family could not afford the medical expenses, and the mother was pregnant again with her ninth child; one had an unconverted husband and had spent some time in the hospital because she fainted often and

shook; one had just experienced the death of a father.<sup>34</sup> Goodman had no intention of demonstrating trauma before the initial tongue-speaking experience; she does not even point out this consistency. But her findings are quite similar to Kildahl's. These findings and the tension-relieving nature of glossolalia help to explain why tongue-speaking is so attractive and widespread in our country and in the world generally.

### How Are Tongues Spoken?

The sociological aspects of glossolalia suggest that tongues are learned.<sup>35</sup> Kildahl says:

It is our definite opinion that those who have the necessary psychological characteristics can *learn* to speak in tongues. This gives rise to the question, "If it is truly a gift of the Spirit, why must it be demonstrated and taught?"<sup>36</sup>

Kildahl bases this statement on a number of observations: (1) The tongue-speaker is always extremely dependent on some leader to whom he looks for guidance. (2) The tongue-speaker is very reliant upon external authority. (3) The tongue-speaking group displays an inordinate amount of group camaraderie. (4) Tongue-speakers tend to speak in tongues in the same manner as the one who introduced them to the tongue-speaking:

The importance of the leader was well illustrated by the fact that the style of glossolalia adopted by the group bore a close resemblance to the way in which the leader spoke. A linguist engaged in glossolalia research found that prominent visiting speakers affected whole groups of glossolalists. Although no two tongue-speakers sounded exactly alike, if the prominent leader spoke in a kind of Old Testament Hebraic style, those who were taught by him also spoke in this manner. If the leader of the group evidenced Spanish diction and mannerisms, his followers also developed that style. It is not uncommon for linguists to be able to tell which prominent itinerant glossolalist has introduced a congregation to tongue-speaking.<sup>37</sup>

(5) Kildahl was not aware of any instance of anyone speaking in tongues who had not first been told what they were or had been given a demonstration.<sup>38</sup> In another work Kildahl tells of five steps necessary in the process of "inducing someone to speak in tongues,"<sup>39</sup> which are very similar to the observations listed above. They include a magnetic relationship with the tongue teacher, an individual sense of personal distress, an understanding of the rationale of what tongue-speaking is, the presence

of a supporting group, and somewhere in the process an intense emotional atmosphere.<sup>40</sup>

Goodman's cross-cultural studies<sup>41</sup> show that Kildahl is not alone in his conclusions. She found that dissociation, the necessary psychological state for glossolalia, although achieved by some spontaneously, is usually learned, and is induced by what she calls driving.<sup>42</sup> Driving is the conscious effort on the part of the tongue leader and other tongue-speakers<sup>43</sup> to alter in the suppliant the normal rhythmic patterns of bodily functions. Some of these functions — walking, breathing — can be altered by anyone at will. Others, such as heartbeat, can be altered by certain people at will (e.g., subjects versed in *Hatha Yoga* and other eastern disciplines).<sup>44</sup> Driving in the tongues setting is described by Goodman:

Now: what seems to be aimed at implicitly at least, in driving as I have observed it is somehow to produce dissociation by affecting these rhythms, that is, those least amenable to conscious control such as brain patterns, possible by altering their shapes or interfering with their base frequency — making them faster or slower.<sup>45</sup>

Driving is the persistence of rhythmic music, hand-clapping, loud persistent prayers in a strongly accented pattern, loud incessant glossolalia which is rhythmic and patterned, and persistent shouted directions to the suppliant. This driving is almost always successful in the cases where the suppliant earnestly desires to speak in tongues. Goodman also shows that dissociation can be achieved by hyperventilation. Hyperventilation is rapid breathing in which more oxygen is inhaled than is exhaled. It results in a condition in which the brain has an imbalance of oxygen and carbon dioxides, and can, according to Goodman, easily lead to dissociation.<sup>46</sup> Once dissociation is achieved, glossolalia is possible. "To be sure, . . . vocalization can and does occur spontaneously. But for most the step is a hard learning task."<sup>47</sup> This "task" is facilitated by comprehensive indoctrination which creates intense desire, as well as more acoustical driving.

While the method of driving differs from place to place the results are proportional to the effort exerted by the drivers. After explaining the different methods of driving in the four cultural settings in which she worked, Goodman concluded:

In summary then, a comparison of the various congregations shows that the more concerted the effort, the sooner is the desired result attained. In Hammond [Indiana], only immediate associates are involved in a relatively easygoing

driving, and the returns are low. In Cuarta [Mexico City], and in Merida, both the congregation and the ministers and their helpers drive, but there is something about the spatial arrangements that cuts down its intensity. Dispersed as the supplicants are among others in the congregation, all praying, to be sure, but some in ordinary language, some in tongues, some directing their prayers directly at them, some not, the effect is diffuse. In Utspak [Yucatan], with the supporters of the supplicant arranged in a semi-circle around him and very close, and all of them involved in the same rhythmical driving pattern of the deafening "*sellalo, sellalo*," a favorable result is almost a foregone conclusion.<sup>48</sup>

The lack of spontaneity in tongues, conceded even by charismatics, also demonstrates their learned nature. Wayne Robinson, in his book, *I Once Spoke in Tongues*, tells how a woman was coached into tongue-speaking by repeating over and over again a religious tongue twister.

He [the pastor] asked her to stand and to follow him as he walked around the room. Meanwhile, she was to repeat verbatim the following words, "Blessed Jesus, suffering savior, save the sin-sick souls of sinful sinners. We wait, willingly, wantingly, wonderfully, wistfully right now!"

With the group cheering the marching pair, the pastor led the woman around the room repeating the words. Fast, then slow, then fast again. When she began to mix up the words, he sped up the pace. Soon she was standing with her arms lifted high and tears streaming down her face while she repeated strange sounds. To the watching group, the pastor announced that she had received the infilling of the Spirit.

What they were hearing, he said, was talking in tongues.<sup>49</sup>

Christenson also admits to using the repetition of "nonsense syllables" in order to "coach" people into tongues.<sup>50</sup> Some people have learned to speak in tongues apart from any religious context:

A linguist has reported that he has been able to teach a classroom of students to speak in tongues — without references to any religious beliefs about it. An actress once explained to me that verbal expression without using a known language was an important part of the training in her acting classes. She proceeded to speak a "language" for me which sounded exactly like glossolalia. She spoke somewhat different "languages" when she was asked to express joy, or warmth, or intensity, or sadness.<sup>51</sup>

The pattern suggested by this data is that tongues are not



inspired but learned. Obviously not every incident of tongue-speaking can be examined. Charismatics are quick to share their experience of spontaneous tongues or lack of previous indoctrination.<sup>52</sup> Researchers have found the opposite true often enough to conclude that no miraculous explanation of contemporary glossolalia is necessary.

Felicitas Goodman has offered a credible explanation of tongues from a physiological perspective. Noticing the high degree of agreement between the four groups she investigated, Goodman theorized:

Such agreement of pattern despite linguistic and cultural differences, to my mind, can be explained only if we assume that the glossolalia is not simply uttered while in dissociation but is an artifact of the mental state, or rather of its neurophysiological processes. It is thought, for example, that in epilepsy the cortex is driven by discharges from subcortical structures. I am proposing that something similar is happening during glossolalia. In some manner, the glossolalist switches off cortical control. Then, with considerable effort, at least initially, he establishes a connection between his speech center and some subcortical structure, which then proceeds to drive the former. Thereupon the vocalization behavior becomes an audible manifestation of the rhythmical discharges of this subcortical structure, resulting in the described pattern.<sup>53</sup>

Here is presented an attractive theory which seems to take into consideration all the ready data, which offers a physiological explanation for tongues along with the psychological, and which, noticeably, is without any reference to the miraculous.

### **The Language of Tongues**

Many researchers have analyzed tongues from a purely linguistic point of view. The consistent result is that tongues cannot be considered any form of cognitive language. John Kildahl made tapes of tongues and subjected them to the close scrutiny of Eugene A. Nida, the well-known linguist from the American Bible Society. Dr. Nida and his group of specialists knew a hundred and fifty aboriginal languages from twenty-five countries. They concluded that tongues were not languages.<sup>54</sup> Kildahl also cites the research of Charles Hockett, who detailed sixteen criteria for language. "The research of linguists clearly reveals that the spoken utterances of glossolalists do not meet these criteria."<sup>55</sup> Kildahl concludes that "in the history of tongues speaking there are no scientifically confirmed recordings of



anyone speaking in a foreign language which he had never learned."<sup>56</sup> Charles Smith, New Testament scholar from Grace Theological Seminary, concurs:

Numerous psychologists and linguists have listened to hundreds of tongues utterances and evaluated many hours of tongues recordings, but no recorded instance of religious tongues speech has ever contained a clear message in any language. A group of government linguists found tongues to be unrecognizable.<sup>57</sup>

William Samarin, who is often sympathetic to Neo-Pentecostalism, in his classic work *Tongues of Men and Angels*, concluded that the major features of tongue speech are that it "consists of strings of generally simple syllables" which "are not matched systematically with a semantic system" and are consequently "lexically meaningless."<sup>58</sup> Goodman, examining the tongues utterances of four cultures, concluded, "Glossolalia is lexically noncommunicative. The utterer of the glossolalia and his listener do not share a linguistic code . . . Glossolalia involves . . . the privation of the informative and communicative side of discourse; speech becomes musical sound."<sup>59</sup>

It is true that Don Basham, a leading Neo-Pentecostal, in response to magazine solicitation received over thirty letters from Neo-Pentecostal readers who claimed either to have spoken in a foreign language or heard one. But in no case were the tongues recorded and tested, nor were they confirmed. Ultimately, the question reduces itself to this: Shall we believe dozens of linguistic experts who know hundreds of languages from dozens of language families and who have listened to hundreds of tapes for hundreds of hours, or shall we believe Don Basham when he says that Rose Robertson says that her friends's husband says that Rose spoke Syrian?<sup>60</sup>

On the basis of its lack of cognitive meaning, analysts have interpreted glossolalia to be a regression to a previous level of linguistic maturity. George Cutten compared the learning of tongues to the manner in which a child learns to speak normal language. The different levels of speech for the tongue-speaker are (1) inarticulate sounds, (2) articulate sounds which simulate words, and (3) fabricated coined words.<sup>61</sup> Both Oates and Kildahl arrive at the same conclusion:

As speaking in tongues actually expresses itself, however, it is a childlike, unguided, and unpatterned kind of speech. It is untranslatable and is meaningful to the person experiencing it in much the same way that the first utterances of a small

child are meaningful to him. A study of speaking in tongues comparative with the development of language in the thought of the child, therefore, is appropriate here.<sup>62</sup>

The deep subordination to an authority figure required for learning to speak in tongues involves a type of speech regression. The ego is partially abandoned; that is, the ego ceases its conscious direction of speech. Subordination also involves emotional regression; without it there cannot be the unconscious, automatic, and fluent selection of audible syllables which constitutes glossolalia.<sup>63</sup>

### Why Tongues Are Widespread

The regressive and non-cognitive nature of glossolalia corresponds to the general indifference toward meaningful theological expression within the charismatic movement. Charismatics, in fact, seem to pride themselves for their non-theological approach to faith and practice. Larry Christenson boasts that "the Charismatic movement has introduced a new element into their framework or belief, what Emil Brunner calls, 'the pneumatic factor, the non-theological, the purely dynamic.'" <sup>64</sup> This "factor" results in the theological indifference for "whether the church doctrine has a background of Calvinism or Arminianism, this matters little, proving God is bigger than our creeds and that no denomination has a monopoly on Him."<sup>65</sup> The non-theological and experiential "oneness of the Spirit dims the [charismatic's] view of doctrinal differences."<sup>66</sup>

Thus, that phenomenon which is exalted as a sign of high spirituality is, in fact, a sign of theological poverty. Charismatics are often entrapped in a vicious circle. The more the charismatic speaks in tongues the more he relies on the "non-theological" aspects of his religion. To him "theology" and "doctrine" are signs of sterility or the truth "in deep freezers."<sup>67</sup> As he grows in his antipathy toward theology, tongues, the epitome of "non-theology," become ever more vital to him. The test of spirituality, which the charismatic easily passes, is not faithfulness to the doctrine of God's Word, but the possession of a religious experience. Oates has called this non-doctrinal approach to Christianity a "conspiracy of silence."<sup>68</sup> The churches, he bemoans, through social gospelism, over-emphasis on cake and coffee fellowship at the expense of Bible study, and doctrinal reductionism have deprived Christian people of any meaningful means of theological growth or expression. Instead of attempting a renewal of meaningful theological growth, the charismatic movement has offered Christians an opportunity for religious

expression and "edification" without the theological underpinnings that normally accompany these. Tongues in this context are, in fact, a concession of theological privation. The charismatic movement has merely substituted one "non-theological" activity for another. Oates contends that the religious needs of people, lacking coherent theological address, "may erupt into turbulent upheaval and expressions of pent up feelings such as we find in speaking in tongues." People who are denied any opportunity for cognitive growth and expression, both in the mainline churches and in the charismatic movement, "finally break forth and 'they have no language but a cry.'"<sup>69</sup> Theologically deprived people are forced to engage in non-theological exercises. The result is a mass exodus from mainline denominations or mass conversions within these churches.

### Conclusion

This evaluation of tongues should not be interpreted as a denial of the Spirit's power. The findings of modern psychology, sociology, and linguistics cannot be applied to the tongues of which Scripture speaks. The Biblical accounts are beyond linguistic investigation since no speech in these tongues was recorded, although three thousand witnesses understood them on one occasion (Acts 2) and Paul expects a translation in another situation (I Corinthians 14). Psychologically, it would be inaccurate to say that the apostles were in an altered mental state. Peter himself discounts drunkenness, and nothing in any of the relevant episodes indicates anything psychologically abnormal. Sociologically, at least in the book of Acts, the tongues of which Scripture speaks have none of the elements which modern tongues do. There is no evidence of coaching or of driving, no mention of tension which needed relief, nor of any trauma. There is no mention of leader dependency; in fact, the opposite is implied (cf. Acts 8 and 10). No mention of group camaraderie is made. No one seems to have been indoctrinated previously. In short, none of the present sociological or psychological manifestations inherent in the tongues of today are present in the Biblical narratives.

Hopefully, more research into the phenomenon of tongues will be done. Many questions still need to be asked. But on the basis of the extensive research already done we can conclude the following: Tongue-speaking is a regressive return to an earlier level of linguistic maturity. It is accomplished through a learning process in which, by various methods, people are taught to achieve an altered mental state and thereafter taught to speak in

tongues. It is a release from tension and an answer to personal stress and trauma. It is not a language, communicates no cognitive thoughts, and can be accomplished by almost any person who really wants to, Christian or not.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Walter Bartling, "The Congregation of Christ — A Charismatic Body: An Exegetical Study of I Corinthians 12," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, XL (February, 1969), pp. 67-80.
2. Donald Gee, in *Pentecost*, no. 45 (Sept., 1958), p. 17.
3. David J. DuPlessis, *The Spirit Bade Me Go* (Plainfield, New Jersey: Logos International, 1970), p. 40.
4. Larry Christenson, *Speaking in Tongues* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1968), p. 54. Some charismatic sympathizers claim that, "most glossolalists do not weave their entire theology of personal religion around this gift." Clark Pinnoch, "A Truce Proposal for the Tongues Controversy," *Christianity Today*, XV (October 8, 1971), p. 7. However, all leading Neo-Pentecostal writers maintain that tongues are essential to the full Christian experience. Cf. Howard Ervin, *And Forbid Not to Speak in Tongues* (Plainfield, New Jersey: Logos International, 1971), p. 30. Frances and Charles Hunter, *The Two Sides of a Coin* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell, 1973), p. 104. Dennis Bennett, *Nine O'Clock in the Morning* (Plainfield, New Jersey: Logos International, 1970), p. 20. Don Basham, *A Handbook on Tongues, Interpretation, and Prophecy* (Monroeville, Pennsylvania: Whitaker Books, 1971), p. 33. Ian Cockburn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Plainfield, New Jersey: Logos International, 1971), pp. 28-30. A. G. Dornfield, *Have You Received the Holy Spirit?* (St. Charles, Missouri: published by author, 1973), p. 12. Bob Buess, *You Can Receive the Holy Ghost Today* (Van, Texas: published by author, 1967), p. 36. Kenneth E. Hagin, *Why Tongues?* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Kenneth E. Hagin Evangelistic Association, 1975), p. 3. Rodney Lensch, *My Personal Pentecost* (Kirkwood, Missouri: Impact Books, 1972), pp. 49-50.
5. Cf. C. George Fry, "Pentecostalism in Historical Perspective," *The Springfielder*, XXXIX, 4 (March, 1976), pp. 183-193. This may seem harsh, especially since almost all Pentecostal denominations and Neo-Pentecostals formally confess a belief in the inerrancy of the Bible and its verbal inspiration. But the normative authority is implicitly denied when Biblical clarity is denied or when the principle of *sensus literalis unus est* is ignored. The Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, a Pentecostal lay group which believes "the Bible in its entirety to be the Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and conduct" concedes that there "are many differences in interpretation among genuine Christians." While the Bible may be true to charismatics, any appeal to it can be dismissed as only one of many "valid interpretations." Tract from Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International (no place, no date).
6. Carl G. Tuland, "The Confusion about Tongues," *Christianity Today*, XII (December 6, 1968), pp. 207-209. His exegesis, admittedly, was not the best. While it is possible that some in Corinth were "babbling," the tongues which were from the Holy Spirit were hardly unintelligible: (1) They needed translation (I Cor. 14:5). (2) They are compared to the cognitive but incomprehensible language of the Babylonians (v.21). (3) The word *glossa* in

Greek should normally be translated "language." Our word "tongues" is simply a carry-over from King James' English. (4) Paul, who was present in Ephesus when some of the disciples spoke in tongues (Acts 19), and probably wrote his first Letter to Corinth from Ephesus makes no indication that the tongues in Ephesus and in Corinth were different in essence. This argument is especially cogent since no distinction between the tongues of Acts 2 and Acts 19 is made by Luke.

7. Larry Collins, "Letter to the Editor," *Christianity Today*, XIII (January 3, 1969), p. 299.
8. Carl G. Connor, "Letter to the Editor," *Christianity Today*, XIII (January 17, 1969), p. 360.
9. Gordon L. Lyle, "Letter to the Editor," *Christianity Today*, XIII (January 17, 1969), p. 359.
10. Oral Roberts, "Letter to the Editor," *Christianity Today*, XIII (January 3, 1969), p. 299.
11. Howard M. Ervin, "As the Spirit Gives Utterances," *Christianity Today*, XIII (April 11, 1969), pp. 623-626.
12. Howard Ervin, *And Forbid Not to Speak in Tongues* (Plainfield, N.J.: Logos International, 1971), p. 56.
13. John Kerr, *The Fire Flares Anew* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), p. 59.
14. Cf. Erwin Prange, *The Gift Is Already Yours* (Plainfield, N.J.: Logos International, 1973), p. 13. Cf. also Michael Harper, *The Baptism of Fire* (London: Fountain Trust, 1968), p. 24; and Ian Cockburn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Plainfield, N.J.: Logos International, 1971), p. 46.
15. A.G. Dornfield, *Have You Received the Holy Spirit?* (St. Charles, Missouri: published by author, 1973), p. 12.
16. Frances Hunter, *The Two Sides of a Coin* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1973), p. 81.
17. Dornfield, p. 45.
18. Ian MacPherson, *Like a Dove Descending* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1969), p. 103.
19. Wayne Oates, "A Socio-Psychological Study of Glossolalia," *Glossolalia*, ed. Wayne Oates et al. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967), p. 93.
20. John P. Kildahl, *The Psychology of Speaking in Tongues* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 35.
21. Felicitas D. Goodman, *Speaking in Tongues* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), pp. 59-60.
22. *Ibid.*
23. William J. Samarin, *Tongues of Men and Angels* (New York: MacMillan, 1970), p. 203. Cf. also Charles Smith, *Tongues in Biblical Perspective* (Winona Lake, Indiana: BMH Books, 1973), p. 106.
24. Stuart Bergsma, *Speaking With Tongues* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1965), p. 17.
25. George B. Cutten, *Speaking With Tongues* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927), p. 160.
26. Oates, p. 95.
27. Kildahl, p. 46.
28. Bergsma, p. 16.
29. Kildahl, pp. 62-66.
30. "The Charismatic Movement and Lutheran Theology," a report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (January, 1972), p. 8.
31. Rodney Lensch, p. 4.

- 
32. Erwin Prange, pp. 127-131.
  33. *Ibid.*
  34. Goodman, pp. 29-55.
  35. Kildahl claims that ten million people could not fake the tongues experience, especially since tongues are apparently almost impossible to imitate. Kildahl, p. 35.
  36. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
  37. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
  38. *Ibid.*, pp. 50, 51, 70.
  39. John P. Kildahl, "Six Behavioral Observations about Speaking Tongues," *Gifts of the Spirit and the Body of Christ*, ed. J. Elmo Agrimson (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1974), p. 74.
  40. *Ibid.*
  41. Goodman investigated tongue-speakers from a Presbyterian congregation in Hammond, Indiana, and from Pentecostal congregations in Mexico City, Merida (which is the capital of the Yucatan territory), and a small Yucatan village. The towns in Yucatan had an altogether different cultural base than Mexico City, speaking a different language and engaging in different cultural mores.
  42. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
  43. *Ibid.*
  44. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
  45. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
  46. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
  47. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
  48. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
  49. Wayne Robinson, *I Once Spoke in Tongues* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1973), p. 79.
  50. Christenson, *Speaking in Tongues*, pp. 127-128.
  51. Kildahl, "Six Behavioral Observations," p. 76.
  52. John L. Sherrill, *They Speak with Other Tongues* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell, 1965), pp. 18-19. Cf. also Michael Harper, *As at the Beginning* (Plainfield, N.J.: Logos International, 1965), p. 66.
  53. Goodman, pp. 123-124.
  54. Kildahl, *Psychology of Speaking in Tongues*, p. 47. Cf. also Charles Smith, p. 95, and Watson E. Mills, *Understanding Speaking in Tongues* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1972), p. 11.
  55. *Ibid.*
  56. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
  57. Smith, p. 94. Cf. the reference to Qualben by Douglas Judisch, *An Evaluation of Claims to the Charismatic Gifts* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), p. 15.
  58. Samarin, pp. 127, 211.
  59. Goodman, p. 122.
  60. Don Basham, *The Miracle of Tongues* (Plainfield, N.J.: Logos International, 1973), p. 70.
  61. Cutten, p. 85.
  62. Oates, p. 97.
  63. Kildahl, *Psychology of Speaking in Tongues*, p. 53.
  64. Larry Christenson, *A Message to the Charismatic Movement* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1972), p. 22.
  65. Christenson, *Speaking in Tongues*, p. 99.

- 
66. Hunter, pp. 93-94. Cf. also Dennis Bennett, *The Holy Spirit and You* (Plainfield, N.J.: Logos International, 1971), p. 96.
67. David J. DuPlessis, p. 18.
68. Oates, p. 78.
69. *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.





# Luther and the Confessions

Wilbert Rosin

Students of theology and church history may wonder at Lutherans' intense interest in their confessions and at Lutheran convictions that their confessions are important for the total church, and also for the unchurched. This can be understood in part by examining Luther's stance on confessional theology in general and his influence upon the documents that emerged. Luther himself was interested in a three-level movement: personal faith, the public declaration by the individual, and the individual Christian's statement of faith or public confession along with his fellow believers. We all know about Luther's "Here I Stand" speech and the great moments in which he himself publicly confessed. But sometimes we forget that Luther was very important also for the first public confessions for Lutherans. At Worms in 1521 he stood alone. At Augsburg in 1530 many evangelicals, city representatives, and princes stood by him. He himself had to stay at the Feste Coburg, though in spirit he was at Augsburg with the confessors. The Augsburg Confession was the product of Melancthon's pen. But scholars now appreciate to what extent Luther contributed to the Augsburg Confession through his preparatory writing on the sacraments and other questions and through his constant urgent correspondence from the Coburg to Augsburg in which he discussed very substantial doctrinal matters and urged the evangelicals to stand fast.

Only the Formula of Concord of the Lutheran Confessions was written after Luther's death. The other specifically evangelical Confessions of the Lutheran Reformation, such as the Catechisms, the Smalcald Articles, the Augsburg Confession, and the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, were all done within Luther's own lifetime, written by him or composed with his very active participation. So it is basically and generically wrong to drive a wedge between Luther and confessional statements of Lutheranism. When Melancthon said in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession (IV, 385), "No faith is firm which does not reveal itself in confession," he was reflecting Luther's position that what is in the heart must be orally expressed.

As early as 1509 Luther was moving in the direction of the *verbum evangelii vocale* (the spoken word of the Gospel). As a *sentenarius* Luther stressed the Word of God in his commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*. Through that whole tortured

decade from 1509 to 1519 he developed his ideas of conversion, of justification by faith, and of confession. What Melanchthon did in writing the Augsburg Confession and, of course, his Apology of the Augsburg Confession was basically to make a public statement of what Luther, he, and other evangelicals believed. Consider, for example, Melanchthon's statement of his *Loci* of 1521: "For Christ is properly known from these things, since to know Christ is to know his benefits. It is not, as they say, to know his natures or the modes of incarnation."<sup>1</sup> This central thesis of Luther's faith, namely, that Christian faith consists of trusting in the *promissa dei et beneficia Christi*, the promises of God and the benefits of Christ, is the heart of the Confessions. The emphasis on Law and Gospel in Luther's theology and in the Confessions is of decisive importance for Luther and for Lutheranism precisely because of Luther's new evangelical understanding of justification. If we are looking for continuity, we may begin with Luther and Melanchthon and follow through to the Formula of Concord in 1577.

As Hermann Sasse put it in his *Variata Semper Varianda*, "Whatever weaknesses one may find in the Formula of Concord, without it the Lutheran Reformation would have perished at that time in a chaos of varying opinion. The great 'We believe, teach, and confess,' with which each of its doctrinal decisions begins, restores the *magnus consensus* of the Augsburg Confession of 1530 which had been lost in the endless discussions within the Smalcald League until its dissolution and then in the doctrinal disputes . . . The much-maligned Book of Concord at that time preserved the Sacrament of the Altar in the world, and, with the Sacrament, the Gospel."<sup>2</sup>

What the formulators of the Formula of Concord really had in mind was the basic concern of maintaining unity and establishing harmony in the Protestant confession. That was essentially the *Lutheran* confession in the first instance, but they corresponded about this confession with people also in other communions.<sup>3</sup> If we turn to the Solid Declaration, we find some magnificent statements of the purpose of the Confessions. Harmony is the badge of authentic Lutheranism. We read in Article XI (95-96): "We have a sincere delight and a deep love for true harmony and are cordially inclined and determined on our part to do everything in our power to further the same. We desire such harmony as will not violate God's honor, that will not detract anything from the divine truth and the holy Gospel, that will not give place to the smallest error but will lead the poor

sinner to sincere and true repentance, raise him up to faith, strengthen him in his new obedience, and thus justify and save him forever through the sole merit of Christ.”

It is quite clear from this statement that the whole concern of the formulators of the Formula of Concord as Lutherans and as evangelicals was the same as Luther's concern when he made his first confession at Worms and underlined the common confession at Augsburg. Any attempt to separate Melancthonian confessionalism from Luther's confession is really a distortion of historical fact. Luther was very much involved and the people who formulated the Formula of Concord were very much in harmony with Luther's essential concern with the benefits of Christ and the purposes of the Gospel. What kind of harmony did they want? It was not a kind of peace-at-any-price statement at all. It was, as they expressed it in the Solid Declaration (Article XI, 95-96), a harmony that would last because it was solidly based on the Scriptures, and they did not cite Luther's authority except incidentally, nor did they argue from purely rationalistic grounds but rather always referred to the authority of Scripture and essentially the Gospel message carried by the Scriptures.

On confessing the Confessions, the Solid Declaration speaks of Christian freedom in those church customs and practices that God has neither commanded nor forbidden as a precious gift of God. Such freedom is to be closely guarded against unwarranted liberty on the one hand and deadening legalism on the other hand. Article X (10) states, “We believe, teach, and confess also that at the time of confession [when a confession of the heavenly truth is required], when the enemies of God's Word desire to suppress the pure doctrine of the holy Gospel, the entire congregation of God, yes, every Christian, but especially the ministers of the Word as the leaders of the congregation of God [as those whom God has appointed to rule His church], are bound by God's Word to confess freely and openly the [godly] doctrine, and what belongs to the whole of [pure] religion, not only in words but also in works and with deeds.” There is then no gap between the *lex credendi* (the law of believing) and the *lex orandi* (the law of open confessing). Article II (16) says: “And after God, through the Holy Spirit in baptism, has kindled and wrought a beginning of true knowledge of God and faith, we ought to petition Him incessantly by the same Spirit and grace, through daily exercise in reading His Word and putting it into practice, that He would preserve faith and His Heavenly gift in us, strengthen us daily until our end. Unless God Himself is our teacher, we cannot study

and learn anything pleasing to Him and beneficial to us and others."

The question then for the present day is to what extent the Lutheran Confessions are an adequate statement in terms of completeness and to what extent they are adequate in terms of expression of essential truths, given the changes in theological discourse and philosophical language. Here is where we come to the heart of the matter. It has been said that the problem of authority is the Achilles heel of Protestantism. The hermeneutical problem, the method used in the interpretation of Christian truth, is a central problem, perhaps *the* central problem, in contemporary theological discourse. That the Confessions are very important for contemporary theological discourse is now widely acknowledged. Confessional statements are recognized not simply as important statements of individual religious philosophers but as statements of the community of God, namely, the church. Thus, in many of the recent books which have been devoted to the study of the Confessions there have been expressions of appreciation of the importance of the Confessions for the church today. For example, in a recent book edited by Wenzel Lohff and Lewis Spitz, *Widerspruch, Dialog und Einigung; Studien zur Konkordienformel der lutherischen Reformation*, there are such articles as the one by Friedrich Wilhelm Kantzenbach, "Modelle konfessioneller Hermeneutik und die Funktion der Konkordienformel im Neulutherthum" (pp. 277-296), in which Kantzenbach, who is a well-known Luther and Melancthon scholar, discusses confessional hermeneutics and the function of the Formula of Concord in modern Lutheranism. Joerg Baur has an essay in that same volume, "Kirchliches Bekenntnis neuzeitliches Bewusstsein" (pp. 315-335), in which he even explores the relation of the Confessions to Hegel and other formative philosophical minds.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Robert Stupperich, editor, *Melancthons Werke in Auswahl*, II, 1 (Guetersloh, 1952), p. 7, lines 9-12.
2. *Lutheran Theological Journal* V (August, 1971), p. 49.
3. See Lewis W. Spitz and Wenzel Lohff, eds., *Discord, Dialog and Concord. Studies in the Lutheran Reformation's Formula of Concord* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), part II: "Historical Essays. The Response to the Formula of Concord — Lutheran, Scandinavian, Anglican, Dutch Reformed, French Reformed, and Catholic."

# Theological Observer

## FELLOWSHIP AND MERGER: SOME LUTHERAN COMMONPLACES

According to a widely held attitude, pulpit and altar fellowship is a fairly innocuous gesture: the really serious business is organizational merger — properties, presidencies, politics! So it was argued, at the time of the ill-fated declaration of church fellowship between the American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in 1969, that, since there was no thought of merger, many points of conflict could safely be left to one side. “Mere” church fellowship, after all, could always be retracted and so required only minimal agreement, it was implied. Only if merger itself were under consideration would the differences have to be studied more thoroughly, for that would be much more difficult to undo.

From a Lutheran point of view this light-weight estimate of fellowship, in comparison with merger, is perverse. Precisely the opposite ought to be the case. It is pulpit and altar fellowship, not parliamentary machinery, which defines churchly boundaries. When two churches declare mutual pulpit and altar fellowship, they thereby become one church theologically. For they have thereby agreed to share unrestrictedly in each other’s administrations of the divine mysteries of salvation, the life-giving gospel and sacraments of Christ. Organizational regulations are pitiful trifles by comparison. The joint jurisdictional arrangements of merger may or may not follow fellowship — they are an optional detail, governed by the Christian liberty of the Bride of Christ. It is shallow, bureaucratic externalism to hold otherwise.

These considerations of principle find ready application in the turbulent realm of current Lutheran union efforts in the United States. There is much ado about the decision to merge the ALC, LCA, and AELC into one new body. But more significant than this external reorganization of the three uniting bodies — after all, they have been one church, through altar and pulpit fellowship, for years — was their decision to accept “interim sharing of the Eucharist” with the Protestant Episcopal Church. The goal clearly remains that spelt out by LCA Bishop James R. Crumley, Jr., before the Missouri Synod Convention in St. Louis on 8 July 1981:

I suspect that the next round of dialogues will propose full intercommunion. I hope so, for I consider our divisions at the Lord’s table scandalous and something to be overcome. We propose to take official action to implement agreements reached in confessional conversations. The same will be true of our relationships with the Reformed, Methodist, and other Protestant denominations, and even, I hope, with the Roman Catholic church.

Such massive renunciations of the Lutheran church and confession are unlikely to occasion much surprise, largely because they will not be recognized as such. No informed person, of course, believes that such miraculous ecumenical progress happens by the way of doctrinal agreement. The Anglican Thirty-Nine Articles, for instance, despite England’s early and close ties with the Wittenberg Reformation, embody the Calvinistic rejection of the Real Presence of Christ’s body and blood (Articles XXVIII and XXIX). Is this fact no longer relevant just because a handful of professorial diplomats are able to devise more pleasing language in the course of a “dialogue”? And what can “doctrinal agreement” possibly mean in the case of churches which are in principle “pluralistic” or latitudinarian? That the limits of this “pluralism” are rather ample in the case of

both "Lutheran" and Episcopal partner-churches is well known. The rankest Bultmannian heresies freely exist in both.

On the Lutheran side, theological consciences have for years been chloroformed by things like (1) *Marburg Revisited* (1966) (2) Warren Quanbeck's *Search for Understanding* (1972), commissioned jointly by the ALC and the LCA, which asserted that in the new climate of diversity, Reformed and Lutheran theologians "can recognise each other as fully Christian and orthodox" (p. 68); (3) the Lutheran World Federation's conception of "reconciled diversity" (1977), which envisions full church fellowship alongside "the legitimacy of the confessional differences and therefore the need to preserve them"; and (4) the ALC-LCA Communion Practices Statement of 1978, which recommends reception of the sacrament in non-Lutheran churches as "proper because of the universal nature of the church." Perhaps one should mention here too the uncritical acceptance in the ILCW *Contemporary Worship, 2: Services: The Holy Communion* (1970) of the Anglican Gregory Dix's "four actions" scheme of the sacrament, with offering, thanksgiving, breaking the bread, and reception as the constitutive elements! Compare with this formalism the Formula of Concord's understanding of what is essential: Consecration, distribution, and reception (FC VII).

Given the general state of religious illiteracy and the undisputed reign of "up-beat" public relations in the controlled and manipulative media of modern bureaucratic churches, it seems unlikely that the enormity of these developments will be perceived by the rank and file of the merging Lutheran church-bodies, at least until it will be much too late. How grateful the present writer would be were this prediction to be proved wrong by events! The plight of the confessionally sound pastors and people, mainly of an older generation, who can see what is happening but find themselves unable to stop it, must be agonising indeed.

What is sadly clear in all this is that the merging churches have abandoned all pretence of continuity with the standard Lutheran understanding of church fellowship, as it was stated, for instance, in the *Minneapolis Theses* (1925) of the old American Lutheran Church:

Where the establishment and maintenance of church fellowship ignores present doctrinal differences or declares them a matter of indifference, there is unionism, pretence of union which does not exist.

They agree that the rule, "Lutheran pulpits for Lutheran pastors only, and Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants only," is not only in full accord with, but necessarily implied in, the teachings of the divine Word and the Confessions of the evangelical Lutheran Church. This rule, implying the rejection of all unionism and syncretism, must be observed as setting forth a principle elementary to sound and conservative Lutheranism.

Where this principle is thrown to the winds, would it not be more honest to abandon the Lutheran name altogether?

K. Marquart

# Homiletical Studies

## THE FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Jeremiah 33:14-16

November 28, 1982

Chapter 33 closes the prophecies of future blessings which began with chapter 29. Unlike the lying prophets, Jeremiah does not minimize God's wrath against sin and the severity of God's judgment (vv 4-5), but he also speaks of Israel's and Judah's peace resulting from the forgiveness of their sins (vv 6-13). Jeremiah's vision of good things goes beyond the return of the chosen people from exile to "those days" and "that time" (v 15) when the Messianic Branch will spring forth from David's line. The members of the Messiah's kingdom will not only call Him "The Lord Is Our Righteousness" but they, unrighteous sinners though they are, will be declared righteous (Ro 3:21-26; 1 Cor 1:30). They will have access to the throne of God through the Messiah-King's mediation, prefigured by the sacrifices of the Levitical priests. In verse 17 the reference is to the eternal kingdom of the Messianic King and in verse 18 to the perpetual priesthood of the Messiah who is a priest forever and able to save those who draw near to God through Him (He 7:21-28).

The central thought of the text is that we are called righteous by God. The goal of the sermon is that the hearers will be confident of their righteousness in Christ. Our problem is that we often make our deeds the basis for a God-pleasing righteousness. The means to the goal is that Jesus is our righteousness.

*Introduction:* God's good word to us today is that the Lord is coming. The Epistle and the Gospel tell of Jesus' coming on Judgment Day. His coming in judgment is a good word for us only because of the kind of Lord He is. Jeremiah points to His coming as a righteous Lord.

### Jesus is a Righteous Lord

- I. He was perfectly righteous (v 15a).
  - A. The people of Judah and Israel yearned for a truly righteous king.
    1. Their kings almost without exception had been unrighteous and had led them to similar behavior.
    2. God promised them a lineal descendant of King David who would be completely upright.
  - B. Christ demonstrated a perfect righteousness.
    1. He was conceived and born without sin.
    2. He never committed sin (1 Pe 2:22).
  - C. His perfect righteousness makes our unrighteousness glaringly evident. Yet, the incredible thing is that
- II. We are called righteous in Him (v16).
  - A. We do not make ourselves righteous.
    1. We cannot become righteous before God by our efforts (Is 64:6; Ps 14:3).
    2. Jesus by His holy life, innocent death, and confirming resurrection gained a righteousness for us.
  - B. God imputes Christ's righteousness to us who believe in Him (II Cor 5:19).
    1. We have Christ's perfect righteousness (1 Cor 5:30; II Cor 5:21; Php 3:9).
    2. We are the "Judah" who have been saved to dwell securely without fear of the judgment.



Knowing the Lord's security moves us to make life more secure for all people.

III. He uses us to execute righteousness (v 15b).

- A. In our country, as in the Israel and Judah of Jeremiah's day, there is flagrant unrighteousness.
  1. Discrimination against minorities in housing and jobs.
  2. Graft and cheating in high and low places.
- B. We who have been made righteous are to be instruments of righteousness in the world.
  1. Through various citizens' groups, mediation committees, and voting we can influence political and economic power structures in the cause of justice.
  2. Inspired by Christ's unrelenting pursuit of justice when He lived among us and energized by His daily declaration of us as righteous in His sight, we strive to bring about righteousness in our community, state, and nation until that day when Christ comes to judge the world in righteousness.

*Conclusion:* Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise to Jeremiah. God's good word to us today is that Jesus has come, continues to come, and will come at the end of time as our righteous Lord.

Gerhard Aho

## THE SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Malachi 3:1-4

December 5, 1982

"My messenger" (v 1) points to John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, spoken of already by Isaiah in 40:3, and specified by Christ Himself as the herald of His advent (Mt 11:10-11). "The Lord whom you seek" and "the messenger of the testament" are designations of the Messiah. Christ came "suddenly," only six months after His forerunner. Then, eight days after His birth Christ was presented in the temple (Lk 2:22).

Those who fail to heed the Baptist's message of repentance and who consequently despise the Messiah's mercy toward sinners will not be able to endure His judgment (v 2). The people of Israel had expected the Messiah to judge the heathen but they themselves were to be judged first. Judgment begins at the house of God, with the priests, the sons of Levi (v 3), who ought to have set an example for the people. Yet Christ's judging wrath is not a blind fury that merely destroys. Like a refiner's fire that separates the precious metal from the dross, and like a fuller's soap which, with its alkali, cleanses newly shorn wool and newly woven cloth of their natural oils, so Christ's purifying has as its purpose; correction and improvement. He restores His people to a holy fear and a clean devotion. He makes His people new so that they can perform genuine service, offering up their lives as pleasing sacrifices to Him (v 4). Christ is patient with sinners; that is why they are "not consumed" (v 6). He works persistently so that Christians, the "Judah" and "Jerusalem" of the present day, would present "right offerings," as "pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old."

The central thought of the text is that Christ's purpose is not the destruction but the purification of sinners. The goal of the sermon is that the hearers will offer God-pleasing service. The problem is that we sometimes think God expects no service at all. The means to the goal is the patient love of God which moves us to God-pleasing service.



*Introduction:* Offerings are a way of expressing our relationship to God. The people of God in Malachi's day presented offerings of animals and crops while we tend to think of offerings as mainly money. Yet offerings include much more — thoughts, words, deeds, our whole selves. The persistent problem in Malachi's day was that the people's offerings displeased God. The same problem often plagues our offerings. What is the solution? The text tells us

### How God Makes Our Offerings Pleasing to Him

- I. He purges our evil.
  - A. By laying bare our sin, as a refiner's fire brings out the dross in gold and silver and a fuller's soap the unwanted oil in wool (v 2b).
    1. Our sin of substituting ritual for repentance.
    2. Our sin of thinking that God tolerates sin.
  - B. By condemning our sins.
    1. By means of the Law preached by John the Baptist (v 1) and by faithful preachers since that time.
    2. So that we fear His wrath, knowing that if His wrath were vented on us we could not endure (v 2a).

God makes our offerings pleasing to Him by bringing us to the awareness that we are sinners before Him. God purges our evil as He lets us see the magnitude of it and as He puts in us the desire to be rid of it. God, however, does not confront us with our evil to destroy us but to purify us. God makes our offerings pleasing to Him as

- II. He purifies us for service.
  - A. By forgiving us.
    1. Christ is the messenger of a testament of grace, not of retribution (v 1b).
    2. That testament is expressed in baptism which bestows on us the forgiveness Christ earned for us (Lk 3:3).
    3. It is because Christ is a forgiving Lord that we delight in Him (v 1b). As forgiven sinners our offerings are acceptable to Him.
  - B. By continually enabling us to present right offerings.
    1. He helps us focus on His love for us so that we can respond more and more with loving actions (Php 1:9).
    2. He helps us think about the excellence we have in Him so that we can more and more approve and do what is excellent (Php 1:10).

*Conclusion:* How we can delight in the Lord who comes to us again in this Advent season! This Lord, to whom we offer ourselves, Himself makes our offerings pleasing. He purges our evil so that He can purify us for service.

GA

### THE THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Zephaniah 3:14-18a

December 12, 1982

Note the differences in the translations of the beginning of verse 18. The text is properly 3:14-18a in the RSV, but 3:14-17 in the KJV and NIV.

The preacher will want to refresh his memory of the world situation at Zephaniah's time. Assyria was at its zenith and little, beyond Zephaniah's prophecy which few heeded, presaged Nineveh's imminent fall. In Jerusalem the wickedness of Manasseh and Amon had yielded to the righteousness of Josiah. The boy king may well have been strongly influenced by Zephaniah who was himself probably of royal blood. At least fifty years have passed since the

ministry of Isaiah, and Jeremiah would not rise until the end of Zephaniah's work. The book of Zephaniah is a compendium of his life work. We need to remind ourselves that most of his preaching and writing was unwelcome prophecy of the day of the Lord and of judgment on both the nations and Jerusalem. Against this dark background the call to rejoice in our text is startling.

Our audience too might well be startled to hear the Advent call, which normally blends anticipation with repentance, here so unreservedly joyous. Here is no false tinsel Christmas. Here is none of the uninformed emotion of children shielded from this evil world's dark side. Rather the Holy Spirit, through Zephaniah, challenges us to recognize that

### **The Church Rejoices Because God Rejoices**

#### **I. God Himself has reason to rejoice.**

##### **A. He has ratified His names among us.**

1. He is the Lord (vs 15, 17).
2. He is the King of Israel (v 15).
3. He is "God with us" (v 15; Eze 37:26-28; Mt 1:23; Is 7:14).
4. He is your God (v 17).
5. He is love (v 17; Jn 4:8; Dt 7:8; 10:15; Jr 31:3; Ro 8:39).

##### **B. God's love for us removes all reason to fear.**

1. He casts out our enemies (v 15b; Dt 6:19; Mk 1:34).
2. We have no need to fear evil (v 15c).
3. He has taken away the judgments against us; even His own judgment against us is removed for Christ's sake (v 15a).

When our God Himself is rejoicing the Church cannot stand with limp hands (v 16; Is 35:3; He 12:12).

#### **II The Daughter of Jerusalem, the Church, rejoices with all its heart (v 14; Is 12:6; Zch 2:10).**

##### **A. Even when times are dark and evil . . . (v15).**

1. Judah was threatened by foreign powers and by its own apostasy (Zph 1:2-3:13).
2. External and internal forces threaten the Church's joy now.

##### **B. Yet, the church rejoices.**

1. Judgments against both old and new Israel are satisfied by Christ, the victorious Warrior (v 17; Is 63:1; TLH 209).
2. The Lord quiets us with His love (v 17; Ps 116:7).

Our joy as we prepare to celebrate the first Advent of our Lord is not artificially manufactured but is rooted in facts that cause God Himself to rejoice.

Warren E. Messmann  
Rushville, Indiana

### **THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT**

**December 19, 1982**

**Micah 5:2-4**

There are almost as many opinions on the meaning of "Ephrathah" as there are commentators. But the consensus is unanimous that "Bethlehem" means "bread-house." Incarnation means, in part, that the infinite God who is a spirit, came to live in the world of human senses. The Word became a baby sensible to

and sensible of human sight, hearing, touch, taste, and feeling. The text suggests that out of all the stimuli which bombard our senses in the Christmas season we want, above all, to

### **Behold the Bread of Life!**

#### **I. God Himself is the Baker.**

##### **A. He chooses the time.**

1. Times of trouble seem unlikely (v 3; ch 4:9, 10).
2. He planned the "Bake Day" before any of the people involved knew about it:
  - a. Before Micah, writing 800 years before "Bake Day."
  - b. Before David (1 Sm 17:12; Lk 2:4), the first conquering king of Israel.
  - c. Before Ruth gleaned Bethlehem's fields and became a gentile ancestor of Jesus through her second husband (Ru 4:11).
  - d. Before Rachel bore Benjamin and died at Bethlehem (Gn 30:23, 24; 35:18-20).
  - e. Before Adam and Eve fell and heard the promise (Gn 3).
3. God "greased the pan" from eternity (v 2b; Ga 4:4,5).

##### **B. God chooses the place.**

1. In men's view, Bethlehem seems unlikely (v 2a).
2. In God's economy, Bethlehem is His choice (Is 10:20-22; Ho 11:8; Mt 2:6).

God mixed the ingredients, stoked full of divine wrath the furnace of the cross, and brought forth the Bread of Life.

#### **II. Come! Savor the Bread of Life.**

##### **A. This is lasting Bread.**

1. Mother's bread is soon gone.
2. The Bread of Life is eternal (v4b; Eze 34:13-15).

##### **B. This is nourishing Bread.**

1. Jesus so describes Himself (Jn 6:32, 33, 35, 40).
2. Even when we are "punched down" as a loaf of bread must be, the yeast of God's love raises us up again (cf. Jn 6:47-51).

##### **C. This is satisfying Bread.**

1. The "short'nin bread" of this world leaves us even more hungry.
2. God's Bread of Life is strong, majestic, secure (v 4; Is 40:11; 45:22).

WEM

### **CHRISTMAS DAY**

**Isaiah 62:10-12**

**December 25, 1982**

Advent touches Christmas with an intimacy which defies separation. This is especially true when preaching on an Old Testament text for the celebration of Christmas. The language of Isaiah leans forward to the New Testament events with clarity and certainty. The Christmas story recorded in the Gospel leans backward for prophetic support. The celebration of Christmas can use Advent language advantageously. All our celebrations are three legged — one in the past, one in the present, and the other in the future. Christmas has its roots in the prophecies, fulfillment in the event itself, and blessed effects for all ages to come.

*Introduction:* No other holiday gets more preparation than Christmas. Then, once the day is here, all celebration seems to evaporate into thin air. This does not happen to the Christian. Our preparation is part of the celebration and the rejoicing at the birth of God's Son continues. The arrival of our salvation is so important that our hearts join the believers of all ages in shouting:

### **Salvation is Here!**

- I. Its way was prepared.
  - A. Preparation was made for a world held captive.
    1. The children of Israel suffered a national captivity more than once. Each case was a dreadful experience.
    2. Sin, which led to Israel's downfall, is the universal captor. We all know and feel this terrible bondage.
  - B. Preparation was made with a promise of deliverance.
    1. Isaiah painted a much needed picture of captives marching out of bondage, carrying a flag of freedom, traveling on a special highway.
    2. Isaiah prophesied in this figurative way that the world's Savior from sin would lead His people out of bondage.
- II. Its coming is bold.
  - A. A manger scene is humbly hiding a powerful event.
    1. That is God's Son in the stable (cf. the Gospel lesson).
    2. He boldly joins the human race to save it from temporal and eternal captivity. He is the One who brings salvation.
  - B. What He does and gives is already with Him in the manger (11b).
    1. His judgments against sin are as good as done.
    2. What He will earn by His life, death, and resurrection are ahead of Him, but the promise is as good as kept. There is no doubt God's Son will be victorious. He will hand salvation to believers.

Salvation can come only to those in trouble. Christmas has such tremendous meaning today because our troubles are no less intense than those of long ago. Christmas is here because salvation is here.

Lowell F. Thomas  
Fort Wayne, Indiana

### **THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS**

**Jeremiah 31:10-13**

**December 26, 1982**

When the Sunday after Christmas is the day after Christmas, we have the opportunity to celebrate the same event three days in a row. The hush of Christmas Eve gives way to the festival sounds of Christmas Day. Our celebration continues on this Sunday, emphasizing the blessedness of God's people. There is a prosperity rooted in the ransom provided by the Messiah. We must not let the food, drink, animals, growing plants, and dancing folks get in the way of the Gospel proclamation. We can certainly appreciate the expression of spiritual richness in terms of physical feasting. After all, we are real people celebrating that

### **The Lord has Ransomed His People**

- I. He came Himself to do it.

- A. His people were conquered by foes stronger than they.
  - 1. God permitted an enemy to scatter the Israelites and to take their country from them.
  - 2. Their sin was the cause of this scattering. We dare not grow weary of hearing the warnings of God against unrighteousness.
  - 3. They could no more overcome their spiritual depravity by themselves than they could undo their exile.
- B. He came as a shepherd who gathers and cares for the people.
  - 1. This shepherd was born among the animals in a stable.
  - 2. Later on, He would call Himself the Good Shepherd (Jn 10).
  - 3. The worldwide unity of Israel (the New Testament church) was to be a spiritual one in the Redeemer. Geographic borders were of no importance to the gracious embrace of God.
- C. The Lord sacrifices himself to redeem the people.
  - 1. Sacrificial activity was well known to the Old Testament people.
  - 2. This Shepherd laid down his life for the sheep. The Babe in the manger is headed for the cross.
- II. Now His people rejoice.
  - A. It is a celebration of abundance.
    - 1. Spiritual abundance is pictured by physical well-being and demonstrations of joy.
    - 2. We rejoice in a similar way in our abundant salvation offered to us in the water of baptism and in the bread and wine of the Holy Supper. Both tie us to the Shepherd's Body through the power of the Word. Our celebration is one of faith in the promises bestowed.
  - B. It is a celebration for all people.
    - 1. Those who do not know about the ransom cannot celebrate.
    - 2. We get to shout the news to the whole world. Epiphany is just around the corner and we can hardly wait to get there.
    - 3. Make sure you have the meaning of the celebration straight: The Lord has ransomed His people. The telling is part of the celebration.

The celebration of Christmas cannot end until everyone hears about Jesus, the one, great, final ransom.

LFT

## THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

January 2, 1983

Isaiah 61:10-11

*Lutheran Worship* lists Isaiah 61:10-62:3 as the Old Testament text for this Sunday in all three years of the three-year cycle. Isaiah 62:1-5, however, occurs just two weeks later as the Old Testament text for the Second Sunday after Epiphany in Series C of the three-year cycle, which forms the basis for this year's homiletical studies. The current study, therefore, will restrict the text to the last two verses of Isaiah 61.

In the first nine verses of Isaiah 61 the speaker is the Messiah (cf. 61:1-2 and Lk 4:18-21), who describes the purpose and results of His mission. The purpose is the establishment of the new testament (v 8) and the proclamation of the gospel

(vs 1-3). The results are the joy (vs 3, 7) and righteousness (v 3) of Christians, the establishment of the New Testament church (v 4), its extension to the Gentiles (vs 5,6,9), and the priesthood of all believers (v 6). In verses 10 and 11, on the other hand, the speaker is the church, responding with great joy to all that the Messiah has accomplished on her behalf. Thus, the rejoicing of verse 10 is connected with "the oil of gladness" (v 3) and "everlasting joy" (v 7); the "robe of righteousness" (v 10b) with the "oaks of righteousness" which are the "planting of the Lord" (v 3); the "praise" of verse 11 with the "mantle of praise" (v 3); the "nations" of verse 11 with the "foreigners" of 5 and the "nations" of 6 and 9. The bridegroom's headdress — symbolic of joy — mentioned in verse 3 similarly reoccurs in 10c. The word *p'er* is rendered "beauty" in verse 3 and "ornaments" in 10c by the King James Version. The Revised Standard Version and New American Standard Bible, with more consistency, use "garland" in both cases, but "turban" would be a more precise translation (Brown-Driver-Briggs, p. 802). Thus, the first clause of 10c, if translated literally, would read "as a bridegroom acts as a priest [with respect to] a turban," *khn* in the piel signifying "act as a priest." The meaning is that the bridegroom on his day of joy wore a special sort of turban usually worn only by priests (just as today bridegrooms and brides usually wear special garments which they never wear otherwise).

The "righteousness" (*tzdhaqah*) of 10b does not refer to the righteous acts of Christians. It is a "robe" placed upon us and stands in parallel position to "salvation" in the previous clause. Thus, it is the imputed righteousness of Christ derived from His vicarious obedience and satisfaction.

*Introduction:* Most of us probably received one or more articles of clothing as Christmas presents a little more than a week ago. Some of these clothes may wear out within a matter of months. Some may last for years. Some could conceivably endure for generations. Only God, however, can give us and has given us

### Clothes Made to Last Forever

- I. Righteousness ("a robe of righteousness," v 10b).
  - A. We have no righteousness of our own.
    1. We were conceived in sin.
    2. We have sinned much in thought, word, and deed.
  - B. Christ has wrapped us in a robe of His righteousness.
    1. A robe woven for every human being upon
      - a. The warp of Christ's perfect obedience to the divine law which we have broken.
      - b. The woof of Christ's suffering and death to make amends for our sins.
    2. A robe placed upon every Christian through
      - a. The proclamation of the gospel and administration of the sacraments throughout the world (v 11) and, thereby,
      - b. Through the creation of faith in every Christian by the Holy Spirit ("my God," v 10a).
- II. Salvation ("garments of salvation," v 10b).
  - A. Our salvation is based upon the righteousness of Christ described previously because, when God looks at Christians, He sees
    1. Not our sinfulness deserving eternal punishment (like soiled and rotten garments).
    2. But rather the righteousness of Christ (like clean and fresh garments; cf. Ga 3:27; Eph 5:25-27).

There is a proverb, "Clothes don't make the man"; and the proverb is certainly true in its intended sense that what a man is and does is much more important than what he wears. With respect to the "garments" of which Isaiah 61 speaks, however, clothes do make the man. The robe of Christ's righteousness makes him who wears it the heir of eternal life with God.

B. Our salvation leads to

1. Joy (v 10a). Many of the Christmas cards which we received during this last month probably contained a message something like this: "May the joy of Christmas be yours throughout the New Year." Most people, however, have already put away the joy of Christmas along with the cards and decorations. Yet Isaiah 61 gives us good reason to keep the joy of Christmas all year long.
2. Praise (v 11).
  - a. In private, to be sure, but also
  - b. In the presence of others ("before all nations") — attending congregational services, telling those outside the church of the righteousness in the sight of God which Christ has won for mankind, etc.

III. Glory (v 10c).

- A. Our glory is now visible only to the eyes of faith.
  1. The church seems to be losing its influence in the world.
  2. Individual Christians may be poor, unemployed, rejected, sick, etc.
- B. Our glory is, nevertheless, real.
  1. A glory assured by the Word of God (e.g., the priestly turban and bridal jewels of verse 10c).
  2. A glory, like our salvation, based upon the righteousness of Christ (v 10b, c).
  3. A glory imparted by God Himself through the gospel and sacraments (v 10b, c).
  4. A glory which Christ will make visible to all when He comes again.

Douglas McC. L. Judisch

## THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

January 9, 1983

Isaiah 42:1-7

The Greek word *epiphaneia* means "manifestation"; the Feast of the Epiphany and its season celebrates the manifestation of God in human flesh. Indeed, the central aspect of Epiphany was originally the celebration of the birth of Christ. In the fourth century, however, the observance of this event shifted to December 25, leaving Epiphany to commemorate two major events in which the deity of Christ was particularly evident — His adoration already in infancy by the magi and His baptism at the beginning of His public ministry as the Messiah. In the Eastern church Epiphany became the major baptismal occasion of the year, and Slavic Christians of the Greek rite call the day "Feast of Baptism" or "Feast of Light" (referring to the spiritual enlightenment worked by baptism). Unfortunately, in the Western church the connection of Epiphany with Christ's baptism receded so far from view that we were left without any commemoration of one of the most important events in the history of salvation. It is to fill this

gap, presumably, that *Lutheran Worship* has named the First Sunday after Epiphany "The Baptism of our Lord" and provided appropriate propers.

The passage selected from Isaiah is quoted or used at least fifteen times in the New Testament. The speaker being quoted by Isaiah in verses 1 to 4 and 6 to 9 is God the Father, the leading person of the Godhead with respect to the work of creation and preservation (v 5). The "Servant" (1a) of whom God the Father speaks in the first four verses is the Messiah, who, according to His human nature, was to become a humble servant (cf. Php 2:7-8). It is this same servant to whom the Father turns to address in verses 6 to 9. The Messiah would, indeed, be the only completely faithful servant of God, obeying Him impeccably ("in righteousness," v 6) and fulfilling perfectly the redemptive role for which He was "chosen" (v 1b) and "called" (v 6) by God ("faithfully," v 3; v 4). It is for this reason that God "delights" in Him (v 1b).

When God the Father says, "I have put My Spirit upon Him," He uses the prophetic perfect to describe the future anointing of the Messiah, according to His human nature, with the Holy Spirit in a unique way (Ac 10:38; Is 11:2; 61:1; Lk 4:16-21). Thus, all three persons of the Trinity are mentioned in one verse ("Servant . . . I [as indicated by the first person verbal forms] . . . Spirit"); each is distinguished from the others, but all cooperate in the accomplishment of the salvation of men. It follows, therefore, that God puts His Spirit upon the Messiah, not in the usual measured manner, but "without measure" so that "the entire fulness of the Spirit . . . is communicated to Christ according to the flesh that is personally united with the Son of God" (FC-SD VIII: 72-75; cf. the whole section). This limitless possession of the Holy Spirit receives emphasis, above all, at the time of Christ's baptism, which was His official induction into His public ministry (cf. the Gospel of the day and its parallels, Mt 3:13-17; Mk 1:9-11; Lk 3:21-22; Jn 1:29-34). The events connected with the baptism of Christ likewise stressed the delight of the Father in the Son and the cooperation of all three persons of the Trinity in the work of redemption.

According to Isaiah 42, the point of the Messiah's investiture with the Holy Spirit would be to "uphold Him" (v 1), to "hold" Him "by the hand," and to "watch over" Him (v6) with respect to His Messianic service. The purpose of His labors would be to "bring forth judgment to the nations," the prominence of this theme appearing from its triple occurrence (vs 1, 3, 4). This *mishpat* is not the condemnation of sinners (which was already present on account of God's very nature as a just monarch). It is the judgment which only the Messiah could produce — a verdict of innocence by virtue of God's imputation of all human sins to Christ and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to all "nations" (v 1) on the face of "the earth" (v 4).

The announcement of this universal justification is the Messianic *torah* for which the Gentiles were inwardly yearning (v 4). The word *torah* is usually translated "law," but its basic meaning is really "instruction," and here the object of human longing is obviously not the law but the gospel. Through the proclamation of the gospel (whether directly or through His representatives) the Messiah was to strengthen the weak (v 3). Verse 3 pictures a weak faith (1) as a reed (water plant) already "cracked" and so almost broken and (2) as the wick (of an oil lamp) which is burning feebly and so on the point of extinction. The point is that the Messiah's proper work would be to save, not to destroy. Through the gospel He would also enlighten the spiritually blind and free those imprisoned in sin — in other words, create saving faith in unbelievers (vs 7-8; cf. Is 61:1; Lk 4:16-21).



The justification conveyed by this gospel would proceed from the Messiah's flawless "righteousness" (v 6), the humility of His ministry (v 2; Mt 12:15-22), and His vicarious death ("a testament to the people," v 6). The last event is implied by the word *b<sup>e</sup>rith*, usually but not aptly translated "covenant." A *b<sup>e</sup>rith* is basically a guarantee, an oath-bound obligation undertaken by someone to do something. Sometimes this obligation is made on condition of reciprocal action by a second party; in such cases the *b<sup>e</sup>rith* is to some extent, at least, a covenant. Here, however, the reference is to the oft-repeated unconditional promise of God to bestow righteousness upon the world through the death of His Son — in other words, the new testament (Mt 26:28; Mk 13:24; Lk 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; He 9:15-22). Here the Messiah is equated with the new "testament," since not only is He the testator (who dies to put His will into effect), but His righteousness is also the inheritance bequeathed to the will's beneficiaries.

*Introduction:* In various tales of yore a monarch disguises himself as a servant in order to escape attention for one reason or another. In many of these stories, however, the servant's speech or bearing makes somebody aware that he is, in actuality, a king. As we read the first part of Isaiah 42, we have the same experience. We immediately ask this question concerning the one of whom God speaks and whom He then addresses: Are we in the presence of

#### Servant or Sovereign?

- I. He is, in actuality, a sovereign.
  - A. According to His divine nature, Christ is Lord of the universe.
    1. Who has participated from all eternity in the interrelationships of the persons of the Triune God.
      - a. Begotten by the Father (Nicene Creed, Article 2), as the Father testifies at His baptism (Mt 3:17; Mk 1:11; Lk 3:22; Jn 1:30, 34).
      - b. Participating with the Father in the spiration of the Holy Spirit (Nicene Creed, Article 3: "who proceedeth from the Father and the Son").
    2. Who has participated with the Father in His work (v 5) of
      - a. Creation (Jn 1:3; Col 1:16) and
      - b. Preservation (Col 1:17).
    3. Against whom (with the Father and the Holy Spirit) we have rebelled.
      - a. As a race almost from the time of creation.
      - b. Individually.
        - i. From the time of conception.
        - ii. In thought, word, and deed.
    4. Whose wrath (being one with the wrath of the Father and the Holy Spirit) we have necessarily aroused by our rebellion.
      - a. Because of His holiness.
      - b. Because of His justice.
  - B. Even according to His human nature, He is Lord of the universe.
    1. By virtue of a necessary communication of divine attributes (omnipotence, omniscience, etc.) to His human nature.
      - a. Occurring at the time of His incarnation (conception).
      - b. Being attested by various events commemorated during the Epiphany season (adoration by the magi, miraculous events connected with His baptism, transmutation of water into wine, stilling of storms, transfiguration, etc.).

2. By virtue of His reception of the Holy Spirit (v 1).
  - a. With all His gifts in a measureless manner (Is 11:2; 61:1; Lk 4:16-21).
  - b. As attested by the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove at the baptism of Christ (and initiation into His public ministry; Mt 3:16; Mk 1:10; Lk 3:22; Jn 1:32-33).
- II. Yet He did truly become a servant.
  - A. Denying to Himself during His state of humiliation the full and constant use of the divine characteristics penetrating His human nature.
    1. Coming into the world as an infant born in humble circumstances.
    2. Conducting His public ministry in as humble a manner as possible (v 2; Mt 12:15-21).
  - B. Desiring to effect the justification of mankind (vs 1, 3, 4).
    1. A justification consisting in a verdict of innocence in the sight of God (Rom. 5:18-19).
    2. A justification accomplished by the Messiah's redemptive role.
      - a. By means of His perfect obedience to the will of God (vs 3c, 4, 6a).
      - b. By means of His vicarious suffering and death (v 6c).
    3. A justification conveyed to people through the gospel (v 4).
      - a. A gospel designed to save sinners by creating and strengthening faith in Christ (vs 3, 6, 7).
      - b. A gospel connected with water in the sacrament of baptism (Eph 5:25-26; SC, IV).
        - i. Baptism was instituted by Christ Himself in the name of those same three persons of the Trinity (Mt 28:19) whose cooperation in the accomplishment of salvation is so manifest in the account of Christ's baptism.
        - ii. The power of baptism is based upon the baptism of Christ and the public ministry which it initiated. The relationship between Christ's baptism and ours may be compared to that between a negative and the prints made from it in photography or a mould and the statues made from it.

DMcCLJ

## THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Isaiah 62:1-5

January 16, 1983

The broad, fundamental application of the message is two-fold. First, God's confirmation of His love for us is meant to invigorate us by the Spirit's power to become a kind of "show case" to the nations of the world. The Lord means for the unbelieving people of the world to learn something about Him seeing us and hearing the Gospel message. Secondly, God's unrestrained rejoicing over us as His bride is altogether because of His gift of Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit. So the concept of marriage with its accompanying mutual joys is appropriate only because of what God has done in Christ and in giving His Spirit. Such unrestrained love and rejoicing expressed by God over His bride, the church, is the greatest motivation for the church to become in practice what the Lord holds it to be, namely, holy, faithful, strong, filled with gratitude and praise.

### God is the Church's Bridegroom

- I. His love is restless and compelling.
  - A. He cannot contain His love for His bride; He must express it (v 1).
  - B. He cannot endure the reproach of having her righteousness obscured (v 1, "until her vindication goes forth").  
*Application:* God awaits the audible response of the bride. We claim to love Him above all things. Say it! Praise Him! He longs for our restless expression of loving concern when, in our presence, His name is blasphemed or profaned or obscured. Speak out!
- II. He will give His bride a new name.
  - A. "My delight is in her" (v 4, Hephzibah).
  - B. "Married" (v 4, Beulah).
- III. He wants all the world to know His bride and His love for her.
  - A. Her salvation goes forth . . . as a burning torch (v 1).
  - B. All kings see her glory (v 2).
  - C. No more is she termed "forsaken" (v 4).  
*Application:* (1) The Lord counts on us to be His spokesmen today. Proclaim Christ! (2) The assurance of His love for us is meant to bring delight to our hearts as He delights in us (v 5). In this assurance we are also enabled to be the kind of bride in which the Lord may rejoice, His servants in all that we do.

R. A. Haak  
Anoka, Minnesota

### THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Isaiah 61:1-6  
January 23, 1983

The text is Messianic and speaks specifically of Jesus' coming as Savior of the world. Jesus quotes from this portion of Isaiah in Luke 4:18-19, stating that the very day He quoted this Scripture was the day it was fulfilled in the hearing of His audience. Thus, the meaning of Isaiah's prophecy is to be found in the redemption brought by Christ. Verses 4-6 speak in figurative terms of the New Testament church and its glory, setting the stage for chapter 62, where the church is pictured as the bride of Christ.

#### Proclaim Jesus!

- I. Tell what His coming means in freeing us from sin.
  - A. As we remember our sins we should expect any news from God to be bad. Instead, we have "good tidings."
  - B. Jesus binds up the broken-hearted.
    1. By restoring what was lost through sin.
    2. By releasing those held captive by sin.
    3. By proclaiming God's favor instead of His anger.
- II. Tell what His dying means in delivering us from death.
  - A. Jesus' death and resurrection change death into a doorway to abundant life.
  - B. Mourning is changed into comfort and celebration of victory.
  - C. Despair is changed into praise.
  - D. A wasted, meaningless life is changed into a life that demonstrates the power of God and His victorious presence.

### III. Tell what His coming means for the church.

- A. The ruin produced by sin was rebuilt and repaired by Christ.
- B. Gentiles (people of every nation) are being added to its work-force and to the chorus of those who praise the Lord.
- C. With the addition of the people of every nation comes their wealth also. All is to be used in the ministry of the Lord and to His praise.

*Conclusion:* Oh, how the people of the world long for such a message! What a joy and privilege to proclaim it.

RAH

## THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Jeremiah 1:4-10

January 30, 1983

For clarity translate "I knew you" as "I chose you" (v 4). Jeremiah's call to the prophetic office is scarcely identical with a man's call to the New Testament ministry. The prophetic call came *directly* from God; the pastoral call comes indirectly from God through the church. The prophets taught infallibly by divine inspiration; the pastor must conform his teaching to the words of God written down by the prophets and apostles. Nevertheless, if these distinctions are made, what Jeremiah says concerning the prophetic office can serve as the basis for speaking of the pastoral office, since both involve the proclamation of God's Word to the world.

We know that it is as important to win a soul-winner as it is to win a soul. But how do we explain to people how God calls men into the ministry? Reviewing my notes written after interviewing hundreds of men called into the ministry, I have isolated three stages describing the dynamics which accounted for their desire to serve the church. These same three stages occur in Jeremiah's account of God's call into the office of prophet.

### God's Call Into the Ministry

#### I. Recruitment: He influences early experiences.

- A. "I chose you" (v 5).
  - 1. God elected Jeremiah to function as one of the prophets chosen to bring God's message of judgment and mercy to his generation.
  - 2. God elects us to salvation before the foundation of the world, and the aspiration to the ministry receives motivation from this gracious election.
- B. "I set you apart" (v 5).
  - 1. God consecrated Jeremiah as one in a long line of priestly servants.
  - 2. God sets us apart for the ministry by a sequence of consecrating events — including baptism, confirmation, and ordination.
- C. "I appointed you" (v 5).
  - 1. God appointed Jeremiah as a prophet to the nation to influence its destiny with judgment and grace.
  - 2. God appoints us by calling us as pastors of congregations, commissioned missionaries, etc.

#### II. Rescue: He encourages the hesitant excuse-makers.

- A. He rescues us from lack of confidence.
  - 1. Jeremiah: "I am only a boy." God to Jeremiah: "Do not say, 'I am only a boy.'"

2. God gives Jeremiah and us tasks to accomplish. "You will go on the errands on which I send you." Vocational imperatives in the New Testament include the words of Jesus: "As the Father sent me, so I send you." Vocational involvement gives experience which makes us mature and rescues us from childish hesitancy.
- B. He rescues us from speechlessness.
  1. Jeremiah: "Ah, my Lord God! Look! I do not know how to speak" (v 6). A British survey of human anxieties showed concern about speaking before an audience to be the greatest.
  2. God to Jeremiah: "You will say what I tell you to say (v 7). Jeremiah and the other prophets, like the apostles, taught by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We have the Word of God written down by the prophets and apostles to serve as the basis of our teaching and so to allay our anxieties.
- C. He rescues us from fear.
  1. Jeremiah had to face gigantic opposition and total social upheaval. Scholars allege that he did not marry for fear of the suffering which was to come upon the families of Judah during the wars and occupations.
  2. God's presence rescues us. "do not be afraid of them! For I am with you to rescue you." (v 8).
  3. Jesus said to His disciples and us: "I am with you always, even to the end of the age.
- III. Resource: He provides the message.
  - A. God's Holy Spirit touches our lives in various ways.
    1. Jeremiah: "God stretched out His hand and touched by mouth" (v 9).
    2. The Word with its dynamics of Law and Gospel touches people's lives as a resource of gracious "help in time of need" (He 4:16).
  - B. God provides a resource in the substance of our message.
    1. The words which God moved Jeremiah to speak and write by divine inspiration centered in the promise of the Messiah (e.g. 33:15-16).
    2. Our message, since it is based upon the Word of God (the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures), likewise centers in the Gospel of the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ — His saving birth, death, and resurrection.
  - C. God provides a resource in the challenge for our message.
    1. God's call to Jeremiah: "See! I have made you an overseer this day over nations and kingdoms" (v 10).
    2. Three and a half billion people who need to hear the message of salvation are challenging us; the harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few.

Harold H. Zietlow

## THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Isaiah 6:1-8

February 6, 1983

*Introduction:* The ship of modern civilization is on a collision course with the reality of God. One church leader said, "We find it hard to proclaim the Word of God as law and gospel because our generation finds no meaning in the term "God." God shook up a similar back-sliding generation when he commissioned Isaiah as His prophet. When a generation drifts toward self-destruction, we trust in the prophetic message that God makes Himself known.

### God Makes Himself Known

- I. As One who inspires reverence.
    - A. The revelation of God through His Word fills us with awe.
      1. He has revealed Himself to and through the prophets and apostles.
        - a. He appeared and spoke directly to Isaiah and the other prophets.
        - b. He reveals Himself to us through the words of the prophets and apostles in Holy Scripture.
      2. He enables the subjective reception of His revelation.
        - a. Isaiah saw and heard directly
        - b. We accept the inspired words of Isaiah and the other prophets by faith.
    - B. The revelation of God through the nature of this world and its history fills us with awe.
      1. He fills the whole earth with His glory (v 3).
      2. He shapes the course of history.
  - II. As One who offers us forgiveness.
    - A. He awakens us to our need for forgiveness.
      1. "Woe is me! For I am lost . . ." (v 5).
        - a. The holiness of God strikes Isaiah with an awareness of his limits in contrast to God's purity and perfection.
        - b. The holiness of God awakens a sense of meaninglessness and despair in our modern generation when it gets a glimpse of its situation through the preaching of law.
      2. "I am a man of unclean lips" (v 5).
        - a. The holiness of God awakens moral guilt in each individual as he examines his conscience.
        - b. The holiness of God exposes our whole generation as compromising the moral will of God in a descent into social self-destruction.
    - B. He provides us with forgiveness.
      1. His mercy satisfies our need for a righteousness not our own.
        - a. The burning coal from the altar of God's grace touched Isaiah's lips (vv 6-7).
        - b. The tangible gifts of Word and Sacrament touch our lives in our worship services and elsewhere.
      2. His words make forgiveness a convincing reality for us. "Your guilt is taken away and your sin forgiven" (v 7).
  - III. As One who calls us into service.
    - A. The Lord's voice of vocation.
      1. "Whom shall I send?" (v 8). Who is the person for the job (qualifications)? What is the job for the person (needs)?
      2. "Who will go for us?" (v 8). The search is for motivated volition and for commitment ("for us" implies God-directed service as opposed to one's individual motives).
    - B. The servant's answer of commitment.
      1. "Here am I!" (v 8). I am available with qualifications to serve and with the attitude of commitment to the Lord's service.
      2. "Send me" (v 8). Lord, sustain me in my decisive motivation. Lord, empower me with the energy, health, and time to get the job done.
- Conclusion:* The three ways in which God made himself known to Isaiah reveal the majestic, forgiving, sustaining God whom we joyously confess and serve.

Harold H. Zietlow

## THE LAST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Deuteronomy 34:1-12

February 13, 1983

Curiosity about the precise location where Moses received his "bird's eye" view of the Promised Land has long prompted archeologists to look for the exact site; however, the significance of this text is not primarily archeological. Clearly, the passing of Moses marks a dividing point in the emerging nation of Israel. He takes his place in the line of distinguished patriarchs (v 4), men whose lives were powerfully intertwined with the ebb and flow of Israel's history. Moses' purpose had now been fulfilled. It was time for him to be removed from the scene, not because life was finished with him (v 7) but because God was finished with him, even as He had said (see Nu 20:12). His career had been memorable, to say the least (vv 10-12), yet God would use another man to lead Israel into the land He had promised to her for so long. It was God, not one man like Moses, who would remain Israel's source of stability.

The central thought of the text is that, while great men may come and go, God is always the master of the history of His people, the One in control, the stabilizing force who grants leadership and uses leaders in the most effective way possible. The goal of the sermon is that the hearers would be sure that God can at all times be counted on to keep His promises (v 4). The problem is that human successes, great as they appear to be, may temporarily blind people to the ever-controlling hand of God, who always has the last word. The means to the goal are God's pleasure and grace which are eternally reliable.

*Introduction:* Historical commentators frequently play the game of proposing to name the greatest U. S. President, the most powerful general or war leader in history, the shrewdest politician of the century. While it may be possible to come up with the candidates for these "greatness awards," it must be noted that all of them are human and come to an end. Even the great leader of Israel, Moses, whose importance in history is unquestioned, had to die. His death occurred according to the terms set down by a God, who is Himself the eternal source of stability of His people. Moses served well for 120 years, but God is master of all forever. Deuteronomy 34 is truly a case of

### A Concluding Career but a Continuing Control

- I. Human achievement can be memorable.
  - A. The career of Moses was unequalled in Israel.
    1. He knew the Lord "face to face" (v 10).
    2. He served the Lord with signs and wonders (v 11).
    3. He led the people with power (v 12).
    4. He died without weakness (v 7).
  - B. The leadership of Moses was remembered in Israel.
    1. The people mourned at his passing (v 8).
    2. The people respected his chosen successor (v 9).
- II. Divine government will be eternal.
  - A. God's guidance of His people is reliable.
    1. He promised the land of Canaan to His people beginning with Abraham (v 4).
    2. He brought His people to the land under the leadership of Moses (vv 4,11).
    3. The reliability of God's guidance is seen most clearly in Christ.
      - a. Who is the very image of God (2 Cor 4:4).

b. Who is God's final reliable word to which people must listen (Lk 9:35).

B. God's control over His people is constant.

1. He provides the right leaders for the time (vv 4,9,10).

2. He oversees and at the right time concludes the careers of these leaders (vv 4,5).

3. He remains with His people from leader to leader and generation to generation to assure the fulfillment of His promises (vv 1-4).

a. All God's promises find their fulfillment in God's chosen one, Jesus Christ, who said, "I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt 28:20).

b. Christ is the Gospel light that lightens our way to eternal glory.

*Conclusion:* The end of Moses' memorable career did not cause the fortunes of God's people to collapse. The true Head of God's people is God Himself, who in Christ exercises reliable and eternal control.

David E. Seybold  
Fredonia, Wisconsin

### THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

Deuteronomy 26:5-10

February 20, 1983

The text contains the words spoken by the Israelites as they presented their first-fruit offerings, the tithe of produce for those in need (see vv 12,13). God's people were to recite a kind of formula of remembrance (vv 5ff) as they presented their offering, retelling the deliverance from oppression during the Egyptian captivity and the blessing of inheriting the Promised Land.

The central thought of the text is that God's overflowing generosity should be remembered in the presentation of our offerings. The goal of the sermon is that the hearers would be moved to give by remembering God's goodness. The problem is that much of our giving is done without proper remembrance, with the result that giving turns into "coughing up" money or grudgingly giving our "fair share." The means to the goal is God's wonderful mercy and generosity which move us to give genuinely.

*Introduction:* Children sometimes have to be told repeatedly to perform certain actions because they may not yet understand why these actions are so important. They may not yet grasp the vital need for protecting their health through proper hygiene, so they have to be asked time after time, "Did you remember to brush your teeth?" or "Did you wash inside your ears?" Part of maturity is to understand why these activities are important and to do them willingly and regularly. Such is the case with Christian giving as a way of worshipping God. If we are to give willingly and regularly, it is essential to join our giving with the remembrance of God's giving. We are encouraged, then to

### Remember God in Our Giving

I. As a merciful God.

A. He showed mercy to His people of old.

1. Watching over Jacob (v5).

2. Hearing the Israelites' cries for deliverance (v 7).

3. Giving them a land flowing with milk and honey (v 9).



- B. He has shown mercy to us.
    - 1. Sympathizing with us when Satan tempts us (He 4:15).
    - 2. Helping us through Christ (He 2:18).
    - 3. Bestowing His riches upon us when we call to Him (Ro 10:12).
  - II. As a powerful God.
    - A. He showed His power to His people of old.
      - 1. Making them a great nation (v 5).
      - 2. Delivering them with a mighty hand (v 2).
    - B. He has shown His power in our lives.
      - 1. Defeating Satan with His mighty Word which He has given us (Lk 4:1-13; Ro 10:8b).
      - 2. Assuring us of eternal salvation (Ro 10:9).
- Conclusion:* To give without remembering is pointless. Our giving will be genuine when as we give we remember God's mercy and power. Then our giving will also be a worshipping of the Lord our God.

DES

## SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

Jeremiah 26:8-15

February 27, 1983

Jeremiah's experience in this text is an example of the treatment which the world accords in every age to Christ and those who loyally follow Him (Mt 10:22-25; Lk 9:21-25; Jn 15:18-21). Christ and His disciples, indeed, are often despised and rejected by those who claim His name, as St. Paul laments in Philippians 3:18. Verse 1 gives the historical setting for this pericope (see 2 Kgs 23ff. and 2 Chr 36ff. for addition details). This was not the first time Jeremiah had warned against the people's misplaced trust in the temple and their faithless religion (cf. Jr 7), reminding them of God's destruction of Shiloh, where the tabernacle was located and the ark of the covenant housed in the days of Joshua and the Judges. Many scholars believe Shiloh was destroyed around 1050 B.C. when the Philistines defeated Israel in the days of Eli (cf. 1 Sm 4:10-22). At any rate, Shiloh's destruction remained a solemn warning to God's people against rebellion (see Ps 78:59-66). Verse 8: It is the priests and prophets who lead the people against God's prophet. The sentence of death with which they threaten Jeremiah is an emphatic one (the Hebrew has a *qal* imperfect preceded by an infinitive absolute). Verse 9: It is significant that in repeating Jeremiah's "sermon" the angry mob deliberately deletes the "gospel" contained in Jeremiah's original words, namely, that God would have compassion on the nation if they would only repent (cf. v 3). Verse 10: It is the secular princes who come to Jeremiah's defense. Verse 13: In the face of almost certain death Jeremiah boldly calls for repentance. Repentance can never be postponed; it is now or never (2 Cor 6:2). One must never condition God's mercy upon man's repentance or good works; the gospel of God's free election of Israel is implied by the suffix attached to "God" ("the Lord *your* God"); also God's personal name is used in this verse, recalling God's great mercy and grace (see Ex 34:6 for the significance of this name). The word rendered "repent" in this verse means "to be sorry," "to have compassion"; no change of mind on God's part is implied. Verse 15: Jeremiah warns the people (the verb is plural) that should they carry out their intention against him they will be staining their hands with innocent blood, reminding us of the Savior's own trial when the people cried out, "His blood be on us and our children" (Mt 26). Jeremiah was delivered on this occasion (Jr 26:24), Christ was not (cp. Mt 26:26).

*Introduction:* Throughout the centuries God has spoken His Word to mankind. His Word has usually been despised and rejected by people secure in themselves. The Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that in these last days God has spoken to us directly by His Son (He 1:2). Christ, God's incarnate Word, was and is still met with rejection even as the prophet Isaiah wrote centuries before, "He is despised and rejected of men."

### **Despised and Rejected by Men**

- I. God's word is often despised and rejected by those who are called God's people.
  - A. Jeremiah was opposed, not by the surrounding pagans, but by the "priests and prophets," who, of all people, should have known better.
    1. They were comfortable in their misplaced trust that as long as the temple stood they were safe (Jr 7).
    2. They wanted God's word silenced among them (v 8).
  - B. Our Lord met with rejection and opposition from the priests and scribes of His own day who were concerned only with the political security of their nation (Jn 11:48). They wanted God's word silenced as they cried, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"
  - C. Jesus is still despised and rejected by men today, for as St. Paul sadly laments, "Many live as enemies of the cross of Christ" (Php 3:18). Do we also try to silence God's word in our lives because we are too comfortable in our misplaced trust, whether this be in money, popularity, good health, family, or whatever? Do we find our security in these things rather than in Christ our Lord and so silence Him in our lives by neglecting His Word and Sacrament?
- II. God's Word is despised and rejected by men to their own eternal detriment.
  - A. God threatened to destroy Jerusalem as He had once done to Shiloh (vs 9:6). God carried out His threat when the Babylonians armies destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B.C.
  - B. Christ also warned those who despised Him during his ministry that their house would be forsaken (Lk 13:35). In 70 A.D. Jerusalem was once again sacked and destroyed, this time by the Romans.
  - C. St. Paul warns those today who despise Christ, "Their end is destruction" (Php 3:19).
- III. God's Word, though often despised and rejected, remains the sinner's only real security and eternal comfort.
  - A. Through Jeremiah, God still offered the people forgiveness and hope (vs 3,13), for God is always merciful.
  - B. In the person of His eternal Son God pleaded for Jerusalem (Lk 13:34), He pleaded for His enemies from the cross, and in His dying moments forgave the sins of the penitent thief.
  - C. Our Savior still extends to us today His full forgiveness and mercy. He seals His love to us with His body and blood in the Sacrament and offers us this certain promise: "Our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly bodies to be like His" (Php 3:21).

*Conclusion:* May we never despise and reject God's Word of love to us in Christ our Savior, but cling to Him in faith until He returns for us on the Last Day and we sing, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"

Steven C. Briel  
Winfield, Kansas

## THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

Exodus 3:1-8b, 10-15

March 6, 1983

Who is the "angel of the Lord"? In verse 4 He is clearly identified both as Yahweh and as God. G. Stoeckhardt comments, "The Angel of the Lord . . . is the Son of God." Jewish rabbis as well as Christian exegetes have seen in the burning bush a picture of God's presence with His people in their suffering and humiliation (Rashi). In Christ God has taken upon Himself our griefs and sorrows (Is 53). Verse 5: The place was holy because God was there. Verse 6: "Moses was afraid" — the text does not mean that he was afraid in the sense of feeling deep awe or respect, but that he was fearful, perhaps terrified. Verse 7: "I have seen is preceded by an infinitive absolute for emphasis — "I have really or surely seen." In this verse God still calls the people "*My people*." God never forgets or forsakes His chosen ones even though all experiences may point to the contrary. "I know their sufferings" — the word rendered "know" is the Hebrew verb which implies much more than mere intellectual knowledge about someone or something; it implies an intimate relationship; it is the verb used to express the intimacy of the marital union (cf Gn 4:1). The word rendered "sufferings" is the same word used by Isaiah when he writes about the suffering Servant, "He carried our sorrows." In Christ God is intimately acquainted with all our afflictions, for in taking into Himself our nature He "bore our griefs and carried our sorrows" (Is 53). Verse 12: God gives Moses a sign that His word will be carried out; God always buttresses His Word with visible signs (e.g., the New Testament sacraments). In "you shall serve Me" the Hebrew uses the second person plural, referring to Moses and all the people. Verse 15: God calls Himself "I AM," in Hebrew a *qal* imperfect (used in the New Testament to refer to Christ, cf. Jn 8:58 and Jn 1:18 especially).

*Introduction:* People seek all kinds of saviors today from their problems and disappointments in life. The introit for today reminds us that there is only one real Savior from all our afflictions — our Lord God. It is to Him we are to look for salvation.

## Look to Your Lord Alone for Salvation

- I. He knows all our sufferings and afflictions.
  - A. God knows that it is really our sin which has separated us from God who is the only source of real happiness; that our sin has brought down on us all our problems.
    1. Moses, who had once thought of himself as self-sufficient (cf. Ex 2:11-15), realized how imperfect he was as he stood before the holy God in the burning bush; he was unable to draw near.
    2. None of us can of ourselves draw near to this holy God either. He is a consuming fire and we are imperfect sinners; we must flee from God in terror.
  - B. God must come to us, as He has done in the person of Christ.
    1. Many have seen in the burning bush a picture of God's presence with His people in their afflictions.
    2. "God so loved the world . . . that He gave his only-begotten Son."
    3. This Son which God gave us is the Lord God Himself.
      - a. He is the messenger of God to us (i.e., the "angel of the Lord") but also true God (v 4).
      - b. He is the great "I AM" (cp. Jn 8:58).

4. In Christ God has shared in all our afflictions and sorrows intimately, as Isaiah writes, "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows" (cp. also He 2:14-18).
- II. He has delivered us from our afflictions.
- A. He has conquered and scattered all our enemies.
    1. Through Moses God destroyed Pharaoh and His armies; at the Red Sea He delivered the Israelites from certain destruction.
    2. On the cross we see our Lord God battling all our spiritual enemies, enduring our curse. Rising from the dead, He has shown Himself the mighty Victor over sin, hell, the devil, and death.
  - B. He has prepared for us a paradise in which we will be free eternally from all which troubles and afflicts us in this life.
    1. He promised the children of Israel a land flowing with milk and honey, a good land and a "broad" land (i.e., room for everyone).
    2. Our Lord has promised us, "I go to prepare a place for you . . . in My Father's house are many rooms" (Jn 14).
  - C. He has given us a downpayment of this heavenly feast to encourage us in our hope.
    1. He gave Moses a "sign" that His promise would be fulfilled (cf. v 12).
    2. He has given us also a "sign" that His promises will come to pass. In the sacrament of His body and blood we are given a foretaste of the heavenly feast to come.

*Conclusion:* There is no other savior besides our Lord God. Let us look to Him alone for salvation.

SCB

## THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Isaiah 12:1-6

March 13, 1983

The six verses which make up Isaiah 12 are a sequel to the preceding chapter with its description of the blessings in the Kingdom to be established by the "root of Jesse" (11:10). "In that day" (v 1), of the Messiah's reign, His subjects will give thanks that though they have deserved God's wrath He is no longer angry with them and they can trust Him to be their strength (vv 1-2). The salvation the Messiah brings is an inexhaustible well (v 3), and for this salvation God's people are to give Him thanks in such a way that people everywhere will come to know how good and merciful God is (vv 4-6).

The central thought of the text is that God's people give thanks for God's salvation. The goal of the sermon is that the hearers will thank God for His great and good deeds. The problem is that we too often see more reason to complain than to give thanks. The means to the goal is that God has worked out a salvation which meets our greatest need.

*Introduction:* Our thanks often get buried in complaint. There is much to complain about. God's people in Isaiah's time had reason to complain under the yoke of the Assyrians. Yet they also had reason to thank God as they looked forward to the day of Christ's coming. We, the inhabitants of Zion (v 6) for whom "that day" has come, see more clearly than did the people of Isaiah's time how great in our midst is the Holy One of Israel.

### We Have Reason to Give Thanks to God

- I. For comforting us.
  - A. God's anger has turned away from us (v 1).
    1. He had reason to be angry because of our sin.
    2. But Christ bore that anger for us on the cursed tree of the cross.
  - B. God through Christ has provided an inexhaustible salvation (v 3).
    1. God never stops showing mercy to undeserving prodigals like us (see Lk 15:11-32).
    2. What God has done for us in Christ is like a life-giving spring that continually refreshes (Jer 2:13; Jn 1:16; 4:10; 7:37f.).
- II. For strengthening us.
  - A. We can trust God to strengthen us in our weakness.
    1. We feel our weakness in times of trouble and are sometimes afraid of what might happen to us (v 2a).
    2. God chose what in the world's eyes is foolish, low, and weak (see I Cor 1:27-30) to show how powerful He is. Our weakness allows His strength to come in.
  - B. He strengthens us to thank Him.
    1. We thank Him by reflecting on His great and good deeds.
    2. We thank Him by letting others know about His deeds through our support of the mission program of our church (v 4).

*Conclusion:* We Christians have reason to give thanks to the God of our salvation whose comfort never ceases and whose strength never fails us.

Gerhard Aho

### THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Isaiah 43:16-21

March 20, 1983

In the immediately preceding verses (vv 14-15) God announces the coming destruction of Babylon and the redemption of Israel. God had proved His might as "the Creator of Israel," and He can deliver His people (v 13). As He once made a way in the sea, delivering His people by extinguishing Pharaoh's army with a single "breath" as if quenching the wick of a lamp (vv 16-17), He can still commandeer the forces of nature to make now a way in the wilderness (v 19). As He led His people out of their Egyptian bondage through the Red Sea and then through a "howling wilderness" (Dt 32:10), so now He will make a way for them through a still more desolate tract. We do not know by what route the Israelites returned from Babylon, but they must have crossed arid and difficult desert. Yet the restoration of God's chosen people was not an end in itself but one more step in creating a people of God much greater than the offspring of Abraham according to the flesh. God has set out to do "a new thing" (v 19), a miracle so marvelous as to cause the former things to fade from memory (v 18). Not that God's people should erase from memory what God had done for them earlier, but they were to look to the future and not just to the past. The nation God had created was not to be buried in Babylon; it could expect a future that would eclipse the things of old, for God would gather a people from the ends of the earth (v 5f.) to declare His praise (v 21). God making rivers in the desert and wild beasts honoring Him (v 20) is picture language to describe the completeness of the new spiritual creation. The immediately following verses indicate that what God is about to do is not a reward for Israel's achievements but an undeserved gift. Instead of pleasing the Lord they had "burdened" Him with their sins and "wearied" Him with their iniquities (v 24).

The central thought of the text is that God's creation of a world-wide people of His own is a new and marvelous thing. The goal of the sermon is that the hearers will see themselves as part of this new creation. The problem is that we sometimes brood too much on what we are in our old creation. The means to the goal is that God by His grace and power has made us His new people.

*Introduction:* We like new things, be they objects like clothes, cars, or homes, or experiences like physical vitality, advancement, or parenthood. Yet the new may not always be more enjoyable and useful than the old. God, however, is doing a new thing which is always superior to the old. God wanted the Israelite captives in Babylon to see this new thing which was springing forth. He wants us to see the new thing He is still doing.

### See the New Thing God is Doing!

#### I. In making us His people.

##### A. The Israelites were God's "chosen people" (v20).

1. God did not choose them because of any excellence in them.
  - a. They had wearied God with their hypocritical offerings (vv 22-23).
  - b. They had burdened God with their sins (v 24), rebelling against Him (see Lk 20:10-12).
2. God made them a great nation purely out of grace.
3. God's restoration of their nationhood was a pure gift (v 14).

##### B. We today are God's chosen people.

1. We are included in the many God has gathered from all over the earth.
2. God's grace extends beyond one ethnic group or nation.
3. God's grace comes to us in His Word which is like refreshing water for us in the parched desert of our sins (vv 19-20).

See the new thing God is doing in gathering us also into a universal community of the redeemed.

#### II. In letting us experience His power.

##### A. God demonstrates His power today more spectacularly than when He drowned Pharaoh's army (v 16).

1. Christ by His death and resurrection vanquished the powers of darkness (Col 2:15).
2. This same power of the risen Christ (see Php 3:10) has made us God's people.
3. Raising many spiritually dead to life is the most marvelous miracle (Jn 5:20,24,25).

##### B. God's power demonstrated in Christ's resurrection is working in us to enable us to declare God's praise (v 21b).

1. We declare God's praise as we share Christ's suffering (Php 3:10).
2. We declare God's praise as we refuse to brood over our misery and look instead to the prize that lies ahead (Php 3:13-14).

There is no need to dwell on past sins or to brood on present miseries, for God has not only made us His own but He enables us to live as His people. See the new thing God is doing in letting us experience His power.

*Conclusion:* We may feel the lack of many new things in our life, be they objects or experiences. But there is one new thing in which all of us Christians have a part. This new thing God is doing is the most marvelous of all things.

Gerhard Aho

**PALM SUNDAY**  
**THE SUNDAY OF THE PASSION**  
**Deuteronomy 32:36-39**  
**March 27, 1983**

Our text takes us back to the Old Testament time of Moses' "swan song," in which he reviews God's past guidance and blessings and points to what the people can expect from God in the future.

The central thought of the text is that God deals with His people as it is necessary because He loves them. The preacher's goal is to lead God's people to repentance for shying away from God's gracious guidance and to strengthen their dependence on Jehovah. The problem is that we so easily allow little gods to intervene between God and us. The means to the goal is the eternal, effective love of God.

*Introduction:* As we today stand on the threshold of Holy Week, we begin our meditation on Christ's special work by celebrating His triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The zestful songs of praise to the Son of David remind us of another song of praise — by Moses, as he prepared God's people for entrance into the promised land. Our text, part of that song of Moses, is a portrait of

**How God Deals With His People**

- I. God is in control.
  - A. This is true despite what we may be tempted to think — in view of persecutions, religious cultists, etc.
  - B. God (Jehovah) alone is able to destroy or make alive (v 39).
  - C. God's control is shown in His dealings.
    1. With Israel — both in the Exodus and in allowing their enemies to harass them (v 35).
    2. With us.
- II. God disciplines.

God allows difficulties and calamities:

  - A. To expose our helplessness (v 36b);
  - B. To expose our sin, especially our misplaced trust in other gods (v 37-38; Jdg 2:11-15; Mt 23:35).
- III. God loves.
  - A. He is moved with compassion for His people in their desperate need (v 36; Jdg 2:16,18; Ho 6:1).
  - B. In love He directs us back to Himself (He 12:5-6; Re 3:19; Jas 15:2).
  - C. God reveals Himself as the eternal God of love (v 39a; Ex 3:14; Is 46:4; Re 1:8).
    1. God's timing is always precise (Ga 4:4).
    2. God's method is always best (Jn 8:24).

*Conclusion:* Today's text is directed to the church of Jesus Christ, to us who profess Christ's holy name. We are constantly pressured to follow the false gods of our own efforts and the idols of society. We are reminded that God is ever in control. Even when He disciplines us, He is guiding us closer to Himself in love.

Lloyd Strelow  
Covina, California

**MAUNDY THURSDAY****Jeremiah 31:31-34****March 31, 1983**

The Lord's Supper is the particularization of a new guaranty of pardon and peace through the person and work of Jesus Christ. Read Hebrews 8 as a commentary on this concept, as well as for enlightenment on the text.

The central thought is that God will bless His people with a new and better guaranty than that given through Moses. The goal is that the hearers will receive God's forgiving love and be bound to Him as their Lord. The problem is that we often are bound to our own deals and use God only when it is convenient for us. The means to the goal is the Sacrament of the Altar whereby God binds us to Himself.

*Introduction:* In introducing a five year warranty, one of the major American automobile makers asks how he could expect others to buy his product if his company were not confident of its own product. Consumers like warranties and guaranties. Such guaranties are really a legal obligation of the manufacturer to the consumer. Far exceeding the best human guaranty, our text presents

**A New Guaranty**

- I. It is a needed guaranty.
  - A. Israel invalidated the old guaranty.
    1. It was made during the Exodus, especially at Sinai.
    2. It was repeatedly disregarded by Israel (Jr 7:23-26; 11:10).
  - B. Our need is great.
    1. We desire warranties for watches, toys, typewriters, blenders, etc.
    2. People especially want to be assured that God loves them.
    3. Yet our sin works uncertainty and separation from God. Why do we have a confession of sin before we partake of Holy Communion?
- II. It is a valid guaranty.
  - A. It is given by the Almighty Himself (v 33a).
  - B. God has demonstrated His faithfulness in the past (v 32).
  - C. It is sealed by the shed blood of Christ (Jn 1:17).
- III. It is a blessed guaranty.
 

It brings His love (v 33) — all that being "their God" implies.

  - B. It gives the forgiveness of sin through Christ (v 34c; 2 Tm 1:9-10).
    1. Won on Calvary.
    2. Sealed to us in Holy Communion.
  - C. It produces inner motivation and renewal (v 33).

*Conclusion:* Tonight we observe vastly more than the initiation of another church rite. Here we have the personalization of the new guaranty prophesied by Jeremiah and brought into full reality by our Lord Jesus through the shedding of His blood on Calvary. God will not retract His guaranty of love. Let us thank God for His Gospel guaranty and receive it in His Supper with frequency and faith!

Lloyd Strelow

**GOOD FRIDAY****Isaiah 53:4-12****April 1, 1983**

The primary theme in Isaiah 53 is atonement effected by the suffering of the Servant. The atoning work originates not with men but with God. No one in



history fulfills the role of the Servant other than does Jesus of Nazareth. Only He was adequate to effect the atonement of the whole world. As it is written in 1 Peter 2:21-25, "Christ also suffered . . . He Himself bore our sins . . . By His wounds you have been healed . . . For you were straying like sheep."

*Introduction:* We in our land go to great ends to assure that innocent people are punished for crimes they have not done. We assemble juries, administer polygraph tests, seek witnesses, for fear that an innocent person might suffer unjustly. We would rather see a guilty one go free than have an innocent one unfairly punished. Yet the message of Good Friday as foretold by the prophet Isaiah is that

### **The Innocent One Willingly Suffers for the Guilty**

#### **I. He was innocent.**

##### **A. He was not guilty.**

1. He bore the sins of others, not His own.
  2. He accepted the pain and agony of suffering people.
- ##### **B. The world assumed He deserved the punishment.**
1. They did not recognize His servant role.
  2. They did not recognize their own need.

*Transition:* An innocent one was sent to suffer for guilty people, but there was no other way. The guilty could never have survived the horrors of the suffering. Only one was adequate and they crucified Him, Jesus Christ.

#### **II. He suffered willingly.**

##### **A. He accepted the wounds on our behalf.**

1. The wounds of our sinful nature would have been fatal for us if the Innocent One had not taken our place.
2. He did it *for us*. Paul says, "One will hardly die for a righteous man . . . But God shows His love for us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Ro 5:7).

##### **B. His suffering worked healing for us.**

1. The punishment he endured restored for broken man wholeness with God.
2. His wounds offered healing to the sin-caused wounds of every other person.

*Transition:* He suffered, was wounded, bruised, punished for the guilt of others. The cross is the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. Jesus has taken on flesh to be the Servant. It is the wounds caused by a crown of thorns, the bruises caused by a mocker's staff, the pain of a body suspended between heaven and earth, the blood that pours from nail-pierced hands, that speak to the guilty; "this is done for your healing, for your salvation."

#### **III. He suffered for the guilty.**

##### **A. We are the guilty.**

1. We have gone astray from birth.
2. We continue to stray daily in thought, word, and deed.

##### **B. The only hope for the guilty is faith in the Innocent One.**

1. The innocent Servant did all for us.
2. The merits of His work are granted to those who receive Him in faith.

*Conclusion:* Luther says of these verses that they are the golden foundation of the Christian faith. The punishment was laid on Him that we might have peace.

Wm. G. Thompson  
Utica, Michigan

---

## THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD EASTER SUNDAY

April 3, 1983

Exodus 15:1-11

The exodus motif provides some magnificent imagery for communicating the message of salvation. Numerous analogies can be drawn between the event of Israel's release from captivity and the New Testament events surrounding Jesus' death and resurrection. While one should be cautious not to fall into allegory, the crossing of the Red Sea and the resurrection of Jesus Christ offer some splendid points of intersection.

*Introduction:* "I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously . . ." These words sound as if they could have sprung from the heart and lips of a Peter or a John as they heard the good news, "He is Risen." But, in fact, these words are those of Old Testament believers, Moses and the children of Israel. They sang for joy because that which had appeared to them as an impassable barrier became a pathway to freedom, safety, and new life. On this Easter Day we have cause to join them in their song for through Jesus Christ the impassable barrier of the grave has become

### A Pathway to Freedom and New Life

- I. We have been freed from bondage.
  - A. The children of Israel rejoiced; they were free.
    - 1. The children of Israel had been in captivity for four centuries, the burden of slavery becoming more repressive each day.
    - 2. Moses was sent by God as His chosen one to lead the people from their bondage. By the miracle of God, the Israelites were allowed to leave Egypt.
  - B. God has also worked our freedom from bondage.
    - 1. As the children of Israel were in bondage to a foreign power, we are in bondage to the foreign power of sin and death. They are foreign because God did not create them.
    - 2. God sent Jesus as the leader to guide us from bondage to freedom. One greater than Moses came through God's power, with God's commission to release God's people.

*Transition:* Both were sent to lead, but both Moses and Jesus had a great barrier that had to be overcome if their people were to be truly free.

- II. We have a final barrier to overcome.
  - A. The Red Sea appeared to be a dead end.
    - 1. When the children of Israel arrived at the Red Sea, where could they go? The sea in front, the soldiers behind — it seemed hopeless.
    - 2. God intervened with power and grace. He gave Moses the power to open the Red Sea. What had appeared an impassable boundary was now a pathway to freedom.
  - B. The grave may appear to be a dead end.
    - 1. The ultimate challenge of man's life is to face the darkness of the grave. We cannot turn back, we cannot avoid it. Is there any hope?
    - 2. God's grace also intervenes in this dilemma of man. Jesus Christ, God's own Son, at the commissioning of His Father, opens the grave. Death could not hold Him. He opens the grave for all believers that they may pass from the bondage of this sin-ruled world to the freedom of God's eternal kingdom.

*Transition:* The children of Israel were led through the sea to safety and new opportunities. The grave is transformed by Jesus Christ so that it now serves as a pathway to the eternal freedom of God's heaven.

III. We have new life by God's grace.

A. The children of Israel were led to the promised land.

1. Awaiting the children of Israel was a land where they could live freely to God's glory.
2. God in His mercy had been faithful to His promise to them.

B. The Christian is led to God's heaven.

1. Awaiting the believer is God's heaven, the land promised, the place where God's children will be eternally free and able to praise Him fully.
2. God in His mercy worked through His Son has been faithful to His promise.

*Conclusion:* God opened the impassable Red Sea that the children of Israel might be free from bondage. He has opened for believers the impassable grave that they might be free from the bondage of sin and death. I will sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously.

Wm. G. Thompson

## THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

Acts 8:26-40

April 10, 1983

Our Lord clearly indicated that His men were to witness to Him throughout the world (Mt 28:19; Lk 24:47; Ac 1:8). This text is a demonstration of what happens when the Great Commission is taken seriously. Philip was eager to serve his Lord (Ac 8:5, 27). The Ethiopian was searching for truth (vv30-34). Philip proclaimed the Gospel message (v35) and the Ethiopian was moved by the Spirit to request baptism (v 36). Although verse 37 is most likely not in the original text, it is certain that the Ethiopian made a similar confession of faith, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (v 37).

The central thought of the text is that we have a Gospel message to communicate to our world. The goal of the sermon is that the hearers make use of their opportunities to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

*Introduction:* Messages are important. A secretary takes an urgent message while her boss is out to lunch. If the message is not delivered, financial ruin may result. Government diplomats shuttle between nations carrying important messages. If these messages are not properly communicated, hopes for peace and cooperation in the world may be hindered. However, all these human messages are of little value when compared to the message God has for us. His message is

### The Only Message That Matters

I. The message is found in Scripture.

A. The message is the Gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Tm 3:15).

1. The whole Scripture points to Jesus (Jn 5:39).
  - a. Christ is in the Old Testament (vv 32-35; Is 53; Lk 24:25-27).
  - b. Christ is in the New Testament (Mk 1:1; Jn 20:30,31; 1 Cor 1:23).
2. Jesus is the Lamb of God (v 32; Jn 1:29).
  - a. He is the Lamb sacrificed for us (He 9:12, 14, 26).
  - b. He is the Lamb risen in victory (Ac 2:23, 24; Re 5:12).

- B. This message is connected with the Bible in a unique way.
  - 1. Other so-called sacred books present other messages.
  - 2. The inspiration of the Bible assures us of the truth of the Gospel (1 Cor 1:18-21; 1 Cor 2:7-10).
- II. The message is communicated through us.
  - A. God is counting on us.
    - 1. We have been commissioned.
      - a. Philip received a personal directive (vv 26, 29).
      - b. We have received directives addressed to the church in general (Mt 28:19; Ac 1:8).
    - 2. God has no other plan.
  - B. Are we being faithful?
    - 1. Philip was a faithful messenger (vv 27, 30, 35).
    - 2. Do we share his zeal?
- III. The message is employed by the Holy Spirit.
  - A. The message does not need our genius.
    - 1. We are not manipulators who "sell" the Gospel (v 35; 1 Cor 3:5-9).
    - 2. The message stands by itself (Ac 12:24; Ro 1:16; He 4:12).
  - B. The Holy Spirit converts through the message.
    - 1. The Holy Spirit brings people to faith in the Gospel (Jn 1:12, 13).
      - a. The Spirit moved the Ethiopian to request baptism (vv 36-38; 1 Cor 12:3b).
      - b. This same Spirit works through the Gospel message today (Jn 15:7, 8; 1 Pet 1:23).
    - 2. The Holy Spirit fills us with joy.
      - a. This joy comes from believing in Jesus Christ (v 39b; Ac 8:5-8; Ga 5:22).
      - b. This joy is a precious treasure (v 27; Is 35:10).

*Conclusion:* The Ethiopian had no idea that he was to receive such a marvelous message as he began to return home. His encounter with Philip changed his life. Now he had received the Gospel message in faith and he was ready to communicate that message to others. May God keep us faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and may He encourage us to be faithful communicators of the Gospel message.

Lawrence Mitchell  
Bloomington, Indiana

## THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

Acts 5:27-42

April 17, 1983

Nowhere does Jesus say that our witness to Him will be universally accepted or appreciated. Our Lord says quite the opposite, "They will deliver you up to the tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake" (Mt 24:9). This text shows the opposition faced by the disciples and the determination they had to follow their Lord's command (v 29).

Today there is little risk that Christians in America will be put on trial for their faith; yet, in one sense our world does sit in judgment on our Christian witness. When Christians dare to speak up for Jesus Christ, the world judges us guilty and the result is often unpleasant. Yet we dare not give up witnessing and join the world. Our Lord's command is more important than any human command. Our Lord's verdict is more important than any human verdict.

The central thought of the text is that Christians are called to witness no matter what persecution they may face. The goal of the sermon is that the hearers remain faithful to the Great Commission even in the face of persecution.

*Introduction:* In recent years courtroom dramas have involved almost every segment of American society. No one is immune to being tried before a jury — not senators, congressmen, teachers, doctors, or lawyers. Christians have a long history of standing trial. Jesus Himself stood trial and so did His apostles. Even in today's world it is still clear that Christians are on trial.

### Christians on Trial

- I. The charge is made against Christians.
  - A. Christians are accused of giving witness to Christ (v 28; Ac 4:18).
    1. Other crimes destroy life.
    2. This crime creates life.
      - a. It proclaims Jesus as Savior (v 30).
        1. The apostles did not preach themselves (2 Cor 4:5).
        2. The apostles preached the crucified and risen Christ (Ac 4:33).
      - b. It means sinners can be forgiven (v 31; Ac 10:43).
        1. God's forgiveness refreshes us now (Ps 32:1; Ac 3:18,19; Ro 8:1).
        2. As forgiven people we will live forever (Ro 4:25-5:2; Ro 6:22-23).
  - B. God commands what men forbid.
    1. The command to witness is clear.
      - a. It was given to the apostles (Ac 1:8; 5:19,20; Mt 4:19).
      - b. It is given to us (1 Pe 2:9).
    2. The command cannot be negated.
      - a. The will of men may oppose God's command (Ac 4:1,2,18).
      - b. The will of God is most important (vv 29,38,39; Ac 4:19,20).
- II. The verdict is announced.
  - A. The apostles were found guilty.
    1. The evidence was overwhelming (Ac 4:33; Ac 5:12-16,25).
    2. The council was agreed in its verdict (v 33).
  - B. Is there any evidence to convict us?
    1. Do our words and actions give witness to our life in Christ (Mt 5:14-16)?
    2. Are we afraid of witnessing to someone we know (Mt 10:32,33; Mk 8:38)?
- III. The sentence is determined.
  - A. The apostles were beaten (v 40).
    1. This was no surprise (Mt 10:16-23).
    2. They could rejoice in the midst of suffering (v 41; Mt 10:24).
  - B. We may be treated unpleasantly.
    1. Not all will appreciate our witness (Mt 10:24).
      - a. Some may refuse to hear (Ac 24:24,25).
      - b. Some may mock us (Ac 26:24).
    2. We can still rejoice.
      - a. It is an honor to suffer for Christ (1 Pe 4:13-16).
      - b. God has His own good sentence for those who are faithful (Mt 10:22; Mt 25:21; Re 2:10b).

*Conclusion:* In most courtrooms the defendant hopes to be declared "not guilty." However, only as the Christian is judged guilty by the world can he know that he serves the Lord well.

Lawrence Mitchell

### THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

Acts 13:26-33

April 24, 1983

The proclamation of the Gospel in the Roman colony of Pisidian Antioch was undertaken by Paul and Barnabas at no small risk to their own welfare (2 Cor 11:26). Moved by the Spirit (13:2,9), it was Paul's intention to pursue God's Old Testament people (v 26). Thus, Luke shows Paul putting into practice the program clearly stated by him in Romans 1:16: "to the Jew first and also to the Greek." Only after the approach to the Jewish community fails because of their stubborn rejection does Paul address the Gospel to the Gentiles (v 46). The setting for this proclamation in the synagogue is similar to that in which Jesus spoke to those assembled in the synagogue at Nazareth (Lk 4:16ff). Paul binds himself to his hearers with appealing works (v 26). The "message of salvation" is inseparably linked to the "Savior" spoken of in verse 23. He alone delivers and rescues sons of Abraham and Gentiles alike.

Paul minces no words when he highlights the truth that the criminal ignorance of both people and rulers (v 27) was responsible for the Savior's death (cf. 3:17, 1 Cor 2:8; Lk 23:34). His death was, however, the threshold to the victory of the resurrection (vv 30-31). The "messiahship" of Jesus, foretold by the Psalmist (Ps 2:7), is authenticated by the resurrection. The resurrection is not simply a temporary event or brief reprieve; it is rather the bold statement of our Lord's permanent conquest of death, sin, and the evil one.

Paul has more than good advice for people. His message is one of rescue to those whose sins have washed them overboard. It is this fact which leads him to make the bold statement, "we bring you the Good News" (v 32). This central thought of the text underscores the importance of proclaiming the message of the resurrection in order that people might believe in Christ. Our human dilemma becomes obvious in our stumbling slowness to proclaim the message or to believe it. Nevertheless, the Good News does prevail; it overcomes our reticence and unbelief, opens our eyes to the need of others, and enables us to share the message with others.

*Introduction:* A host of competing messages clamor for a hearing in our time. Only the message of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ offers the power to save us. Ours is

#### A Matchless Message to Proclaim

- I. This message is firmly rooted in the activity of God.
  - A. The history of God's Old Testament people. (Verses 16-25 reviews significant historical events which reveal God's dealing with His people).
  - B. The voice of the prophets appointed to be the Lord's spokesmen (v 27).
  - C. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead by the power of God the Father (vv 30-31).
- II. This message is intended for every generation.
  - A. It claims the attention of all.
    1. The family of Abraham (vv 26,32).
    2. Proselytes of the community at Antioch (v 26).
    3. The family of man in our time (I Tm 2:4).
  - B. It meets the harsh opposition of many.
    1. The mind of man fails to grasp or acknowledge the significance of the Gospel (v 27).
    2. Estrangement from God leads to the miscarriage of justice (vv 28-29).

- III. This message deserves to be proclaimed with confidence.
- A. God's promise can be trusted (v 32).
  - B. The Good News mediates the forgiveness and victory of the resurrection to all who believe (v 26).
  - C. Those who believe in the risen Christ proclaim the Gospel to others and live a life empowered by it (vv 15,31).

*Conclusion:* What a matchless message God has entrusted to us! The message of the resurrection of Jesus Christ transcends all others. It kindles a living faith which makes the people of God unashamed to proclaim it to others.

Eugene Krentz  
Ann Arbor, Michigan

### THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

Acts 13:44-52

May 1, 1983

The Gospel makes its way in the real world, a world in which the harshness of events and the hardness of human behavior must be contended with (v 45). God understands the real world because His own Son felt the brunt of man's fury. This pericope sweeps away the illusions that people or preachers might have about how the Gospel will be received. The seeming success of the mission of Paul and Barnabas was evidenced in the broad response of the citizens of Antioch (v 44). But success was shortlived; the passion of the Jews inflamed by the multitudes (v 45) ultimately led to the expulsion of Paul and Barnabas from the city (vv 50-51; cf. 2 Tm 3:11).

The difficult thing for the Jews to grasp was the unsettling announcement that the Gentiles were also the objects of God's grace and mercy. No timidity was evident in the reaction of Paul and Barnabas to the protestations of the Jews. Luke refers to the boldness of Paul and Barnabas (v 45) and their appeal to the prophet Isaiah (Is 9:6) for the support of their mission. The Jews were doing battle with the prophet and with Jehovah who appointed Jesus to be the Messiah who would illumine the Gentiles (v 47; Jn 8:12; 9:5). Gentiles were to be numbered among those who belong to the company of saints; this fact incited the Jews to anger but the Gentiles to joy (v 48). The tragedy of Antioch is that what began so well ended with Paul and Barnabas shaking from their feet the dust (v 48) which would remain as a witness against the Jews in Antioch (cf. Mt 10:14; Mk 6:11; Lk 10:11).

This pericope underscores the thought that the Word of the Lord is, as Luther noted, "like a passing shower" and that we must give heed while the time is opportune. God has His own strategy for gathering the lost unto Himself. He does not allow His Word to remain idle in the marketplaces of the real world. The Word, sharper than a two-edged sword (He 4:12), stabs us awake in order that we might be freed from judgment and a preoccupation with the insignificant.

*Introduction:* In the real world the distance between seeming success and unsettling disappointment can be very short. Those who are close to Christ cannot afford to live under the illusion that people stand ready and waiting to embrace the Gospel. But we must take heart because the word about Jesus Christ and the cross is still

### The Real Word in the Real World

- I. In the real world the Word is easily cast aside.
  - A. Superficial appearances are not evidence of the acceptance of the Word or of faith in the Savior which it presents (v 44; Mt 13:3-23).
  - B. Passionate emotions are stumbling blocks to hearing or believing the Word (vv 45,50).
    1. Jealousy leads to contradiction of the message (v 45).
    2. Jealousy results in persecution of the messenger (vv 45,50).
  - C. Rejection results in self-judgment (vv 46,47,51).
    1. It thwarts God's intention to seek and save sinners (v 46).
    2. It spurns the new life offered in Christ (v 46b).
    3. It leads to an unwillingness of God's people to exercise their calling (v 47).
    4. It destroys the opportunity to have the Word proclaimed (v 51).
- II. In the real world the Word is shared with outcasts.
  - A. God has selected them to be His people (v 48, Is 43:1; Ro 1:6; 8:30).
  - B. Outcasts are offered God's mercy and new life in Christ (v 47; Jn 1:4; 10:28; Ro 6:23).
  - C. They embrace the Word and manifest the life of faith (vv 48,52).
    1. They rejoice before the Lord (Ro 14:17).
    2. They are filled with the Spirit (Ro 8:14; 1 Jn 3:24).

*Conclusion:* In the real world God is not defeated by those who oppose His Word. Our Lord has overcome the world and the Gospel accomplishes His purpose. The real Word is and will remain the power which points those who live in a real world to a real Savior.

Eugene Krentz

### THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

Acts 14:8-18

May 8, 1983

The bold proclamation of the Jerusalem apostles in the face of Jewish opposition (Ac 5:12, 17-32), the dramatic conversion of the persecutor Saul to be a bold proclaimer of the Gospel (Ac 9:1-20), and the kerygmatic proclamation of Paul in Pisidian Antioch (Ac 13:15-16a, 26-33) in the face of rejection (Ac 13:44-52), serves as introduction to an evangelical healing in Lystra where there is a gross misunderstanding of the message by the natives in our text (Ac 14:8-18) and a violent persecution afterwards by the fickle crowd (Ac 14:19-20). Paul's message ("preaching the Gospel," v7) works faith in the heart of the Lystra man crippled from birth. Responding to Paul's command, the man jumps up and walks, healed by God's grace (vv 8-10). The local populace with their anthropomorphic religion begin talking in the Lycaonian dialect unfamiliar to Paul and Barnabas. Summoning the local priest of Zeus, they begin offering sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas whom they revere as Hermes and Zeus in human form (vv 11-13). Rending their garments in horror when they realize what is happening, Paul and Barnabas refuse the praise for themselves and ask the Lycaonians to turn from idolatry to the living God, who provides rain and abundant crops. Their words scarcely avail (vv 14-18).

*Introduction:* The proclamation of the Gospel has power to change lives and meet needs, but many people look for outward evidence of the Gospel at work and fail to credit the grace of God in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.



Nevertheless, like Paul and Barnabas we twentieth-century Christians are to be persistently involved in

### Proclaiming a Misunderstood Gospel

- I. For specific human need.
  - A. Paul's proclamation of the Gospel met the deepest needs of the Lystra cripple.
    1. The man had specific needs — salvation from sin as well as help for his physical paralysis.
    2. He heard the Gospel and by God's grace believed.
    3. He was physically healed by the same grace of God.
  - B. The proclamation of the Gospel still meets our deepest needs today.
    1. We have specific needs — salvation from sin as well as help for a host of mental, emotional, social, and physical problems.
    2. We have heard the Gospel and by God's grace in our Baptism believe ("Peace I leave with you," etc., Jn 14).
    3. We find help for our other needs by the grace of God. (God removes some problems now, but He gives us the power to endure the others until He removes them all in the life to come).
- II. Despite an idolatrous reaction.
  - A. The Lycaonians tried to offer pagan sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas, identified as Zeus and Hermes in human form.
    1. They saw only the man healed and not the Gospel of forgiveness which greatly exceeded that healing in importance.
    2. They rejected the Gospel and continued in their crude idolatry as they turned the messengers of the Gospel into idols.
    3. They persisted in their unbelief even after Paul and Barnabas clarified the Gospel of the living God.
  - B. Modern Lycaonians offer adulation to human beings who are instruments of God.
    1. People today, including well-meaning church-goers, often want to see already in this life all the blessings which will ultimately (in the life to come) flow from the forgiveness of sins. (Too often we desire "success stories" and a theology of glory at the expense of a changed heart and a theology of the cross.)
    2. People today often reject the Gospel and continue in their idolatry, turning the messengers of the Gospel into idols. (Often people glorify Christian television personalities, the pastor, or some more mature Christian instead of the living God.)
    3. People today persist in their unbelief even after the messengers of the Gospel clarify it.
- III. Through a clarifying response.
  - A. Paul and Barnabas refused adulation and redirected the Lycaonians to the Gospel of the living God. (Compare John the Baptist — "He must increase, but I must decrease." Also note Jesus' refusal to be a "Bread King.") They continued the proclamation of the Gospel unabated.
  - B. The messengers of the Gospel, themselves spiritual cripples saved by grace alone and healed by the Gospel, are empowered to refuse adulation and redirect idolatrous people to the Gospel of the living God. We continue the Gospel proclamation unabated.

*Conclusion:* The Gospel of Jesus Christ continues to change lives even though misunderstood by many. Changed by that Gospel, we persist in proclaiming it.

SJC

## ASCENSION DAY

Acts 1:1-11

May 12, 1983

Luke addresses part two of his work to Theophilus, recalling the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He describes the forty-day post-resurrection period (Ac 1:1-3). He describes Jesus' final instructions to the disciples involving the promised full bestowal of the Holy Spirit and the spread of the kingdom from Jerusalem to Rome, the end of the earth (Ac 1:4-8). Jesus' ascension and the cloud (cf. Lk 9:34) leave the disciples gazing into heaven. The two messengers in white (cf. Lk 24:4) point them to Jesus' physical return at the Last Day.

*Introduction:* Columbia, our nation's first space shuttle, was launched on several important missions. Each involved careful preparation on the ground for the astronauts, important final instructions, the lift-off from the ground, and the mission itself with a return to earth to signal completion of the mission. Throughout the flight, ground crews and scientists participated fully in the mission. On this Ascension Day we Christians recall the last forty days of Christ's post-resurrection life on earth and His glorious ascension into heaven. Standing on the Mt. of Olives with the wide-eyed disciples, we discover that we are

### Launched on the Mission of Our Ascended Christ

- I. By a forty-day reminder of His mission (vv1-3).
  - A. The disciples witnessed the Risen Christ with His nail-pierced hands.
    1. They needed His words and deeds to shore up their shaky faith and feeble understanding of His mission.
    2. They heard Him speak again of the Father's plan and of His role as the Suffering Servant in a sinful world.
    3. They observed His life, death, and resurrection as victory over sin.
  - B. Through the Word we also witness the risen Christ with His nail-pierced hands.
    1. We need His words and deeds to shore up our shaky faith and feeble understanding of His mission.
    2. We hear Him speak of the Father's plan and of His role as the Suffering Servant in a sinful world.
    3. We observe His life, death, and resurrection as victory over sin.
- II. By His final words of instruction and promise (vv 4-8).
  - A. Jesus prepared the disciples for their mission launch with these words:
    1. Wait for the promise of the Father (the power of the Holy Spirit).
      - a. They realized how their own power had failed.
      - b. They waited in prayer for the Holy Spirit to empower them for their mission as apostles.
    2. Witness to Me as King in word and deed from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth (Rome).
      - a. They had denied Him as King in word and deed.
      - b. They were limiting to Israel the spread of His kingdom.
  - B. Jesus prepares us for our mission launch with these words:
    1. Wait for the promise of the Father (the power of the Holy Spirit).
      - a. We often find our own power failing miserably.
      - b. The Holy Spirit empowers us through the Word and Sacraments for our mission as the church.
    2. Witness to Me as King in word and deed from your local setting to the ends of the earth.

- a. We often deny Him as King in our daily lives by what we say (or fail to say) and do (or fail to do).
- b. We often limit to our own little groups the spread of the kingdom.
- III. By His glorious ascension and promised return (vv 9-11).
  - A. Jesus empowered the disciples for their mission by ascending into heaven to rule the universe and promising His physical return.
    - 1. The disciples were dumbfounded at first by His ascension.
    - 2. They were redirected to Jesus and to their mission by the two messengers.
  - B. Jesus empowers us for the same mission.
    - 1. We are initially discouraged by His ascension.
    - 2. We are redirected by the Word to Jesus and to our mission.

*Conclusion:* Christ's world-wide mission lies before us. Ground preparation is complete. The power of the Spirit is available. For you and for me, it's launch time!

SJC

## THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

Acts 7:55-60

May 15, 1983

*Introduction:* Usually we think of a "martyr" as a heroic figure who died for his faith. But the more basic meaning of the Greek *martus* is "declaration." In the martyrdom of Stephen, the emphasis is on the message and the One behind it.

### The Meaning of Martyrdom

- I. Christ is not gone (vs 55-56).
  - A. We think He is.
    - 1. Stephen had great courage. If we had been in his shoes, we might have been prone to think, "If only Jesus were here!"
    - 2. We often act, indeed, as if Jesus is gone. In the wake of the ascension, people have wondered if He is unable (*finitum non capax infiniti est*) or unwilling to help them, or even whether He can do the job as well as they.
  - B. But He is not.
    - 1. Stephen was an eyewitness of the resurrected Jesus at the very time he stood before the council.
    - 2. Jesus is in glory, His "natural habitat" as God. But He is also the exalted Man, at the right hand of God — standing out of concern for Stephen. He is the Son of Man, who died "for the people" (Jn 11:50) but now vindicated and in a position to fulfill Matthew 26:64.
    - 3. Christ Himself reminds the council of this fact. He provides the climax and conclusion of Stephen's address. When the council opposes His witness, they oppose *Him*.
- II. The world has not forgotten, but it still attacks us (vs 57-58).
  - A. It rejects.
    - 1. The message (see verse 57a and contemporary anti-Christian movements).
    - 2. Christian people (see 57b-58a — being a Christian may not always help you win and keep friends).

B. It wrongs.

1. By being unfair to Christians. Stephen did not get "due process." What about Christians today?
2. By direct attack on Christians' "body and life." Stephen was stoned. Who knows what might happen to us?

III. Yet we follow Him (vs 59-60).

A. The martyr, like Stephen, dies in and for Christ.

1. In Christ we have died (Ga 2:20; Col 3:3). Christ's death is the basis on which God forgives us (v 60).
2. Our sufferings for belonging to Christ are an external confirmation that we do, indeed, belong to Him — Jn 15:18-21.

B. The martyr lives with Christ.

1. At death our souls immediately are "with Christ" (v 59; cf. Phm 1:23; 1 Pe 4:19), neither gone nor forgotten.
2. Christ's resurrected body is a token of our resurrection.

C. The martyr speaks for Christ.

1. Stephen held an auxiliary office, but he was active in witnessing and giving an answer for his hope (cf. Ac 6:1-10). We can be, too.
2. When Stephen spoke of Christ, Christ was there (anything but *gone*) to save. So it is when we proclaim Him (Mt 28:19-20).
3. Christ works through His Word, albeit sometimes in strange ways. After Stephen died, the Word was scattered throughout the region by persecution. Who knows whom God may touch through our witness, or precisely how He will do it?

*Conclusion:* Interestingly, "Stephen" means "crown." Stephen became a martyr, but God makes us "martyrs" so we can become "Stephens." (See also Hebrews 13:13-15.)

K. Schurb  
Ft. Wayne, Indiana

## Book Reviews

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF BIBLE DIFFICULTIES. By Gleason L. Archer. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1982. Cloth. 476 pages.

Archer needs no introduction in conservative Protestant circles. With baccalaureate degrees in both theology and law and a Harvard doctorate, he has the credentials to tackle a book whose title includes the word "encyclopedia." The Christian cause of conversion is not furthered simply by providing answers to those who attack the veracity of its message; however, since Origen the church has recognized the apologetic task as necessary for preserving the authentic gospel. Many in the Missouri Synod have used Arndt's *Bible Difficulties*. It is not entirely suitable in answering problems which have arisen in the last generation in critical Biblical studies. Archer's *Encyclopedia* is the most useful work to cross this desk in answering the newer problems.

Each book of the Bible receives one chapter in the *Encyclopedia*. Not only are the problems usual for such books handled — for example, the reconciliation of the Matthean and Lucan genealogies — but problems relating to Mosaic authorship, evolution, and women's ordination (in a masterly study) are thoroughly discussed. In the Genesis chapter human sacrifice, evidence of Hittite culture, and immorality are discussed. Several years ago a debate arose on whether or not Matthew had embellished the Palm Sunday account by adding another burro in order to make it appear as if the Zechariah 9:9 prophecy was being more closely fulfilled. Archer's answer is that, while the Zechariah passage does speak of only one animal, Matthew does provide an accurate eyewitness account in reporting that two animals were actually involved. He was not fabricating another animal to fit the Hebrew parallelism of Zechariah. A pastor with inquisitive Bible class and confirmation students will want to have this book at hand to handle those embarrassing questions which pop up out of nowhere and whose solutions seem out of reach. Archer writes with sound scholarship in an always understandable style. References for those desiring to search further are provided. Pastors placing this excellent volume on their own shelves may also want to make another copy available in church libraries. A caveat about the author's millennialism and Zionism must be added. Matthew 24:34 with its promise of Jerusalem's destruction in the near future is understood as a prediction of the survival of the Jewish race as the nation of Israel. A closing article on the 144,000 takes the number as a reference to the Jews who finally believe. Archer has authored a best-seller which will guide pastors and laity through some difficult questions.

David P. Scaer

JESUS AND THE GOSPEL. By William R. Farmer. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1982. Cloth 300 pages. \$21.95.

William Farmer of the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University has made a name for himself by taking positions contrary to the accepted dogmas in critical New Testament studies. In his *Last Twelve Verses of Mark* he defended their authenticity as coming from the original author of Mark himself, though they were added at a later date. Dr. Farmer also defends the Griesbach theory of the Matthean priority by placing Luke second and Mark third. Rather than having Matthew and Luke use Mark and "Q" in composing their gospels, Luke definitely uses and then expands on Matthew. The two-source hypothesis is so overly refined as to be meaningless. Mark, written as an introduction to Christianity rather than a complete theology, uses Matthew and

Luke at those places where they agree. Less than thirty verses are original to Mark. Farmer treats the apostolic and postapostolic periods as a composite. Instead of isolating data, he marshals the information into an organic story of how the oral teaching of Jesus developed first into the gospels and then finally into a canon with a formalized order in the fourth century. The author uses the same data and methods that the form critics have employed, but he finds them leading to other conclusions. Several years ago I heard F.F. Bruce urge that the periods between Jesus and the writings of the first New Testament documents and between the close of these writings and their being collected be given more attention. Farmer has done this and has provided a great service to both New Testament and ancient church studies. At times the author speculates, as, for example, with respect to the office of the Christian prophet, who allegedly spoke officially and ecstatically for Jesus in the early church. Throughout, however, the author is fascinating, even for those who have grown weary of much of New Testament study as mere and somewhat useless disconnected theories.

Farmer maintains that for about fifty years after the life of Jesus, the oral sayings of Jesus assumed different forms according to the needs of the different churches in their circumstances. The actual dates for the gospels are up for grabs and not worth debating. These oral sayings were authoritative for church life. Jesus' sayings in Hebrew and Aramaic were translated into Greek with the Jerusalem apostles Peter, John, and James guaranteeing that the original meaning was preserved. James, who came from Jesus' household, knew Jesus' use of language, and Peter, as the premier apostle, was acquainted with the teaching as it was first given. Matthew is responsible for the creation of the gospel genre, modeled after the Greek encomium, a type of eulogy for great men in the Hellenistic world. Matthew does not copy the Greek style slavishly or mechanically. The other three evangelists followed this style. Rather than moving from the simpler Mark to Matthew, Farmer finds it more plausible to move from the more Jewish and Palestinian and complex Matthew to the Roman Mark. It does seem reasonable that the Jewish Matthew is much closer to Jesus than Gentile-oriented Mark. Luke copied and altered Matthew's pattern. His gospel was necessitated by a church which was rapidly becoming Gentile and by a desire to preserve materials omitted by Matthew. Luke with such stories as the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan soon replaced Matthew in influence. It is not difficult to disagree with Farmer's contention that Luke's style is more attractive than Matthew's. Take, for example, the birth and resurrection narratives. Mark serves as bridge between Matthew and Luke and unifies them. Petrine influence in Mark's gospel can be detected in the way that this gospel's outline follows Peter's recorded sermons in Acts. Along with these three gospels, other "gospels" circulated in the church. These three and not the others were recognized as authentic because they conformed to the oral teaching of Jesus as given by the apostles and the description of the suffering of Jesus in these three gospels set the standard for their own suffering. If they were martyrs, Jesus was seen as the first and faithful "martyr." The Gnostic gospels stressed the miraculous in the life of Jesus and denied that He had actually suffered. Farmer is also quick to point out that, as the gospels and the writings of Paul were written, they were considered along with the Old Testament as the Christian Scriptures. Farmer takes his canonical discussion right up through Constantine and the fourth century. Until the end of that century no firm order existed and certain books like Hebrews and Revelation were doubted in some parts of the church.

Constantine and his legalization of the Christian religion were responsible for the rigid canon which was never again questioned until Luther and the

Reformation. Farmer posits the view that Constantine determined to follow Alexander's unrealized dream of one god, one empire, one religion and used Christianity with its commitment to martyrdom and to a sacred book to accomplish this purpose. He succeeded. Eusebius, ordered by the emperor, distributed fifty officially certified Bibles to the bishops. The arrangement in Constantine's Bibles soon closed the canonical issue. The reader is easily persuaded by Farmer to question Constantine's conversion and to call it an "inspiration" to bring about an empire unified not only in government but also in religion. The emperor cult failed to bring unity. Constantine took the authority of a bishop and even settled problems outside of his domains. In a footnote Farmer sees the pope as the successor of Constantine. This opens some wide avenues of theological thought.

The reader cannot help but be intellectually stimulated by Farmer's ideas even if he cannot agree with them at every point. Impressive lists comparing Mark's embellishments with Matthew's straight-forward style are more proof for an early Matthew and a late Mark. But in attempting to demonstrate that Mark is late Farmer provides several pages of Marcan mistakes. But is it really wrong to call Herod Antipas a "king" instead of a "tetrarch"? Still Farmer's point is valid that Matthew is more precise than Mark. Farmer has not written a devotional book, but he has made more vivid the early church situation in which the words of Jesus eventually would become the canonical Scriptures. The Spirit active in Jesus and in the preservation of His words was the same Spirit who motivated the martyrs in their death for Jesus. The modern church has something to learn here. Conservative Christians sometimes miss this continuity. The book's last sentence says it best of all: "The faith for which they lived and died was inextricably bound up with their confidence in the divine inspiration of the New Testament Scriptures, which sustained and nourished their faith both in life and in death." Fortress Press is congratulated for making Dr. Farmer's impressive study available. It can be read several times with profit.

David P. Scaer

**BORN AGAINISM: PERSPECTIVES ON A MOVEMENT.** By Eric W. Gritsch. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1982. Paper. 111 pages.

Current Lutheranism, has been touched and perhaps even infected by the born-again movement. Gritsch provides an immediately useful introduction to the problem from what he understands as a Lutheran perspective. The five chapters discuss millennialism, fundamentalism, Biblical authority from the fundamentalist view, the charismatic movement, and the born-again experience, also known as the baptism of the Holy Spirit. As a historian Gritsch is well equipped to trace the movement's origins in the Anglo-American religious movements of the eighteenth century which saw first in Israel and then in the United States a divine purpose in accomplishing the world's redemption. In the third chapter, the one focusing on the question of authority, Gritsch sees Biblical authority as derived from and existing for the sake of the Gospel. The latter claim is true enough, but hardly the former. For Gritsch the Bible's uniqueness rests in being a type of first witness to the Gospel's efficacy. But the suggestion that the doctrines of Biblical inspiration and inerrancy are correlatives with the born-again movement only muddies the water. Gritsch is surely not suggesting that adherence to such doctrines is un-Lutheran and makes one a born-again Christian, or is he? If one can skip the chapter on authority, one can benefit from seeing the contemporary phenomena as the culmination of a two-century process, a process in which Lutherans played a real role and which now, however, presents great dangers to them. *Born Againism* is an informative and



well documented general introduction to the movement. A second edition might include chapters on the political implications of the movement and its utilization of the mass media. Fundamentalists are accused of looking for rational certainty in the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy but at the same time are chastised for an experience-based religion. Is there a contradiction here? The claim that fundamentalism has its origins in the Aristotelianism of Luther's doctrine might be pushing a point too far in order to play one's own saw. It is about time that fundamentalism and the related phenomena be brought up for discussion with our people. For this Gritsch lays the groundwork. If Gritsch's own bias against the traditional view of Biblical authority can be passed over, his assessments are worth reading.

David P. Scaer

EIN UNERWARTETES PLAEDOYER. Seit 1977: Addenda ad Formulam Concordiae. By W. M. Oesch. Theologische Hochschule, Oberursel, Germany, 1981. Paper. 96 pages. No price given.

The sainted Dr. W. M. Oesch was an American-born German scholar. At the beginning of World War II he replaced Dr. Martin Naumann in the church at Hamburg. With the founding of the seminary at Oberursel Dr. Oesch became a recognized theologian on the German scene, representing a conservative theology. During the troubled decades of recent Missouri Synod history his voice was often heard on this side of the Atlantic in *Inter Nos* and other epistles. Since the beginning was made of an organization of gnesio-Lutheran seminaries throughout the world, Dr. Oesch took an interest in possible additions to the Lutheran Confessions. The four hundredth anniversary of the Formula of Concord prompted discussion of such addenda. Dr. Oesch cites Dr. Eugene Klug, Dr. Richard Klann, and Dr. Lewis Spitz, Jr., but especially Dr. Neelak Tjernagel, who delivered a "Twentieth Century Tribute to the Formula of Concord" at Mankato. Of his twenty-two closely printed pages, Tjernagel devoted the last five to an appeal for addenda to the Formula of Concord.

It must be granted that the age of confessions has never been closed. The Presbyterian Confession of 1967, the 1973 "Statement of Biblical and Confessional Principles," and "Faithful to Our Calling, Faithful to Our Lord" give ample evidence. Recently the World Council of Churches has also advanced the idea of a new Ecumenical Confession by the year 2000. The reader becomes aware of an on-going theological development. Represented also are the "Arnheim Theses" and the "Leuenberg Concord." Dr. Oesch in this "Unexpected Plea: Addenda ad Formulam Concordiae" provides an extensive review of the theological developments in Europe and America in parallel columns. It is in the style of Kahn's "Der innere Gang der Lutherischen Kirche," which covers several centuries. Dr. Oesch reveals a comprehensive understanding of the church on both sides of the Atlantic.

In the concluding Part III Dr. Oesch offers various suggestions as to matters which need to be considered in confessional addenda. In an age of gigantic perversions the author urges that in a joint effort scholars on both sides of the Atlantic prepare addenda regarding Holy Scripture. He proposes that authors ranging from Calov to Malentin Ernst Loescher be considered. He suggests that if Dr. Sasse had read the work of Dr. Robert Preus, he might not have been misled by German neology into the opinion that men like John Gerhard had distorted their theology through Aristotelian terms and antique mythology. Dr. Adolf Hoenecke is offered as a commendable guide. In Christ it becomes clear that both Old and New Testaments are a communication of God with man.



Dr. Oesch also calls for addenda on the doctrine of the two kingdoms, the formal and material principles of theology, the *tertius usus legis*, and apologetic matters. The historico-critical method, already two hundred years old, must be treated. Ernst Troeltsch and George Ebeling are mentioned as modern advocates of it. This is an ambitious program and apropos to our times. It reflects the conservative character of the independent Lutheran churches of Germany, France and Belgium, and Sweden.

Otto Stahlke

**HOLINESS AND THE WILL OF GOD: PERSPECTIVES ON THE THEOLOGY OF TERTULLIAN.** By Gerald Lewis Bray. New Foundations Theological Library. John Knox Press, Atlanta, 1979. 179 + xii pages.

Perhaps of all the Church Fathers Tertullian is the one who most has the capacity to exasperate and to please. In his intellectual and moral energy he must have been an imposing figure; at least that is the way he appears in his writings. All of his writings, even those of rather arcane interest (i.e., "On the Veiling of the Virgins"), evince an active mind and a burning soul, both amply served by devastating wit and polemical prowess. This along with Tertullian's obvious importance for the development of western Christianity has made him an object of recurring scholarly interest.

But like other objects of study, Tertullian must be interpreted; and he is not easy to interpret. The disparate character of Tertullian's writings (Bray divides them according to content into five categories, pp.3-6) makes difficult the question of the center and structuring principle of Tertullian's thinking, or whether there even is one. How is Tertullian to be interpreted? In a most illuminating chapter Bray traces the fate of Tertullian in the hands of his interpreters (pp. 8-31). As in the interpretation of the Bible itself, the image of Tertullian often has been created after the image of his interpreters. Generally neglected during the Middle Ages due to his supposed Montanism and the general legacy of Augustine, Tertullian was again appreciated in the late Middle Ages by those who represented the anti-clerical, anti-Roman ferment of that time.

Modern study of Tertullian, however, began with the pupil of Schleiermacher, August Neander (early nineteenth century). Starting here, Bray very nicely summarizes the various cultural and intellectual fashions which have governed the scholarly view of Tertullian—personality as the key to understanding a person's thought (Neander, von Harnack), developmental school (Ernst Noeldechen), sociological school (Paul Monceaux, W.H.C. Frend), *Sondersprache* school (Christine Mohrmann), emphasis on lexical study (Rene Braun), historical and cultural context as interpretive key (T.D. Barnes)—and Bray rejects each, although not without appreciation, as insufficient to understand Tertullian.

Instead of these approaches to Tertullian, Bray offers his own key to the interpretation of Tertullian: "The student who would understand Tertullian must understand above all that his life was the pursuit of holiness in the presence of the living God" (p. 31). It is the great merit of Bray's book that it presents Tertullian as a *Christian* thinker who is working out the practical implications of that which is specifically Christian rather than as a typically ancient Latin thinker who makes certain Christian adjustments in his thought. The result is a well-written, well-argued book which, while iconoclastically rejecting many operative assumptions of modern scholarship (Bray denies that Tertullian was

ever a Montanist, pp. 55-62), presents a cohesive picture of a theologian actively engaged with his contemporaries but basing himself on the firm authority of Christian revelation.

"It was Tertullian's concern for sanctification which determined his approach to theology and which formed the main theme of his writings" (p. 66). In the chapter, "The Man and His Times" (pp. 32-65), Bray establishes this concern as central to Tertullian by examining his attitude toward paganism, the early church's experience of martyrdom, the development of church dogma, and Montanism. Then in successive chapters Bray analyzes the nature of holiness in the writings of Tertullian (pp. 66-94), the authoritative bases Tertullian uses to elucidate his concept of holiness (pp. 95-123), and the character of the holy life according to Tertullian (pp. 124-152).

The pith of the book lies in these last three chapters, and they are informative, thought-provoking chapters indeed. The central importance Bray attributes to the doctrine of the soul for Tertullian's anthropology and therefore for his notion of sanctification (pp. 73-83) is undoubtedly correct. Similarly, his discussion of the relation between soul and flesh in Tertullian (pp. 83-94) is beneficial. Highly problematic, however, is Bray's comparison between Tertullian and Irenaeus concerning the source and cause of sin and evil. Certainly, as Bray contends, for Tertullian sin arose entirely through the disobedience of man's free will. However, to assert that "Irenaeus thought that ultimately human sin was due to finitude" (p. 89) is mistaken. For Irenaeus to have asserted man's finitude as the root source of evil and that man "as a creature was virtually bound to sin from the start" (p. 88) would have played into the hands of his gnostic opponents. Bray fails to appreciate the recapitulatory thrust of Jesus' temptations and of the cross as perfect obedience in Irenaeus' thought.

Bray's discussion of the *regula fidei* in Tertullian's writings and of its relation to Scripture is good. The use of a *regula*, a normative proposition which guided the interpretation of a particular statute that was unclear or open to various understandings, was common in Roman jurisprudence, and Tertullian adopted this usage, presenting summary statements of the faith (*regulae*) to aid in the interpretation of the Bible (pp. 97-104).

"Tertullian saw the unfolding of salvation as a historical process in three distinct phases, which correspond to the Old Testament, the Incarnation of Christ and the Pentecostal reign of the Holy Spirit" (p. 104). It was this triadic dispensational view which provided Tertullian a theological basis for his understanding of the work of the Paraclete and therefore of the character and content of Christian discipline and asceticism. Bray nicely summarizes this feature, but he ought have devoted more space to this central idea in Tertullian's thought.

For Tertullian, the holy life was essentially a life of chastity. While chastity obviously has reference to the sexual behavior of the Christian, "chastity" has much broader application and can be generally defined as "reasoned restraint, governed by a will fortified with the indwelling presence of the Paraclete" (pp. 130-131). Bray demonstrates the Latin origin of the close link Tertullian draws between holiness and chastity and concludes: "Tertullian regarded Christian moral teaching as the natural fulfilment of pagan Roman beliefs, as well as of the Old Testament law" (p. 139).

This book is a welcome addition to the study of Tertullian and a healthy corrective to much recent scholarship on him.

William C. Weinrich

HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS. VOLUME I: FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT TO AUGUSTINE. By George Wolfgang Forell. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1979. 247 pages. \$12.50.

George Forell, professor of religion at the University of Iowa, is well-known as a Christian ethicist of distinction. His book, *Faith Active in Love*, is still profitable reading. That a thinker of his obvious competence should tackle the monumental task of writing a history of Christian ethics is welcome indeed. As the cover notes, it has been over fifty years since a general history of Christian ethics has been presented in English. This book is the first of three volumes and covers the first five centuries of Christian ethical thought. Professor Forell clearly attempts to meet a need.

However, if one expected a comprehensive, coherent history of Christian ethical thought, the book will disappoint. First of all, the scope of the book (some 170 pages of text) is too short to accommodate the material requisite for an adequate survey. Secondly, although an effort is made to place the ethical teaching of major early Christian thinkers in their historical and theological contexts, the result nevertheless remains on a rather superficial descriptive level and does not explain why Christian ethics took the form they did. In other words, there is little, if any, serious attempt to correlate developing Christian doctrinal thought with developing Christian ethical thought. Two examples of this lack may suffice to demonstrate the point. The full ethical implications of the early church's confrontation with Gnosticism is not appreciated (this in spite of the discussion on pages 70-72). The church's insistence on God as Creator, on the incarnation, and on the resurrection of the flesh as the goal of God's salvific working had immense importance for the church's understanding of its ethical life and obligations. In this regard there is a good statement in Ignatius of Antioch. Concerning the docetists, who deny the reality of Christ's flesh, Ignatius writes: "They have no care for love, nor for the widow, the orphan, the oppressed, the imprisoned or the released, the hungry or the thirsty" (Sm. 6:2). More attention to Irenaeus in this regard would have been helpful as well. Secondly, the correlation between the doctrine of the church (ecclesiology) and Christian ethics is virtually ignored. An understanding of the church as a community of holy people has clear ethical foundation and orientation. Just such a problematic was behind the favor Tertullian showed toward Montanism, the schism of Hippolytus, the schism of Novatian, and the schism of Donatism — and this problematic remains today in holiness groups and certain sectarian Baptists.

There are other shortcomings. The chapter on Tertullian (pp. 44-60) is strangely unbalanced. While Forell correctly identifies the centrality of the concept "idolatry" for Tertullian and the centrality of creation in his work against Marcion, inexplicably no mention is made of the foundational importance of the Paraclete for Tertullian's understanding of the Christian life. This frankly is a huge oversight. One misses as well a good discussion on asceticism and virginity as ethical ideals (here greater attention could have been given to Jerome and Gregory of Nyssa) and also a good discussion on the problem of church and state (Ambrose—although this problem is broached in the chapter on Augustine). Finally, the very subject selection is disappointing. Given the scope of the book, Clement of Alexandria and Origen do not require individual chapters. They share a common outlook. I do wonder why Irenaeus and Ambrose are not featured more prominently, and also a later Alexandrian like Athanasius.

Of course, we do not wish to expect more from a book than it was intended to offer. And if Professor Forell has his university students or the general lay public

in mind as his audience, then this book is a reasonable introduction to certain early Christian ethical thinkers and is worthy of a reading. The chapters on Origen (pp. 75-92), John Chrysostom (pp. 129-53), and Augustine (pp. 154-80) are especially good. And Forell offers ample quotations from the Fathers, enabling them to speak for themselves. Indeed, the quotation selection is excellent. Attractive as well is the easy style of Forell and his ability to put a point clearly. A helpful bibliography and indices conclude the book.

William C. Weinrich

**LAYMAN'S BIBLE BOOK COMMENTARY. VOLUME 13: HOSEA, JOEL, AMOS, OBADIAH, JONAH.** By Billy K. Smith. Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1982. 153 pages.

The *Layman's Bible Commentary*, planned to appear in 24 volumes, appears to be Broadman's counterpart to the 25-volume *Layman's Bible Commentary* published some years ago by John Knox Press. The Broadman commentary series was also designed for laymen who might find *The Broadman Bible Commentary* written for pastors and scholars too difficult. Two volumes of the Southern Baptist *Layman's Bible Commentary* deal with the twelve minor prophets. The author of the volume on the first five minor prophets is Billy K. Smith, Associate Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. The author has attempted to show what the message of each book meant for the times in which the prophets lived and then to indicate what these books have to say to twentieth-century men and women.

Professor Smith appears to espouse the interpretation of those scholars who use the historical-critical method. Passages in Hosea, Joel, Amos, Micah, and Jonah which the New Testament understood as being prophetic of the Messianic age are not accepted as such. For Smith, Joel and Obadiah are not the earliest prophetic writings: Joel is assigned to a time around 400 B.C., and Obadiah was composed after the fall of Jerusalem (587 B.C.). Jonah was written in the fifth century to counteract the narrowminded stance taken by Nehemiah and Ezra against mixed marriages. The Book of Jonah is not an historical account, says Smith: "He [i.e., the author] used the historical, nationalistic Jonah to represent the narrowness, intolerance, and exclusiveness of the returned exiles" (p. 138). The author claims that the smallest book in the Old Testament, Obadiah, has interpretative problems way out of proportion to its size. This commentary gives more evidence for the permeation of the historical-critical method into the seminaries of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Raymond F. Surburg

**DECIDE FOR YOURSELF. HOW HISTORY VIEWS THE BIBLE.** By Norman L. Geisler. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1982. 115 pages.

Dr. Geisler, Professor of Systematic Theology at Dallas Theological Seminary, deals with an important theological issue, which has divided the Protestant world for quite some time. What is the origin of the Bible? To what extent is it inspired? Does inspiration preclude the possibility of error? Since the publication of the two books by Lindsell in 1976 and 1979, the question of the nature of the Bible has spawned numerous volumes representing diametrically opposed positions. In this ten-chapter book the author has presented by means of quotations the views of the early fathers, the medieval fathers, the

Reformers, the fundamentalists, neo-orthodoxy, the liberals, the evangelicals, and the neo-evangelicals. The opening chapter gives the key Bible verses that are crucial for the establishment of the Bible's own teachings about itself.

Geisler sets forth the views of the different schools of thought with a minimum amount of editorial comment, encouraging the reader to decide for himself. The position that the author would advocate is the one given in chapter 7, which affirms that the Bible was verbally inspired by God even to the point of modern precision. This would be in agreement with the stance of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as stated in its *publica doctrina*. Those who have been impressed by C.S. Lewis and consider him a sound Biblical theologian should read chapter 9 (pp. 91ff.), where Geisler has shown from the writings of Lewis that the British apologist cannot be classified as having held a view of the Bible that was faithful to its claims. This book should be useful in pointing up the theological differences which characterize the present theological scene.

Raymond F. Surburg

**A READER'S HEBREW-ENGLISH LEXICON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. VOLUME 2: JOSHUA - 2 KINGS.** By Terry A. Armstrong, Douglas I. Busby, and Cyril F. Carr. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1982. 102 pages.

This book is volume 2 of what is planned to be a four-volume set, designed to help students of the Old Testament to translate rapidly. The authors hope that it will give Hebrew students the same kind of help as Kubo's *Reader's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* gives New Testament students. *The Reader's Lexicon* saves the reader time in supplying him the lexical information needed for accurate translation. Words that occur fifty times or less in the Old Testament are listed verse by verse in the order of their occurrence. Those vocables that occur more than fifty times are given in an appendix. The definition of the words are derived from Brown, Driver, and Briggs (*Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*), but the publisher informs us that they have also been checked for meaning in context. The number at the end of the entry gives the page number in BDB where the definitions may be found. *The Reader's Lexicon*, besides listing the meaning of given words, also gives the respective frequencies both in a given book and in the whole of the Old Testament. Gerhard Lisowsky's *Konkordanz zum Hebraischen Alten Testament* has been utilized for the verb, noun, and adjective frequencies. For words in other categories the authors depended upon Solomon Mandelkern's *Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae Hebraicae*.

The authors believe that *A Reader's Lexicon* as an exegetical tool will permit its users (1) to estimate accurately the work involved in any given word study they might wish to pursue, (2) to find easily the correct page of the standard Hebrew lexicon of the Old Testament for further investigation. The three authors, all graduates of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, are providing a valuable tool for Hebrew language study.

Raymond F. Surburg

**CHI RHO COMMENTARY SERIES. PSALMS.** By J.T.E. Renner. Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, Australia, 1980. 191 pages.

The Chi Rho Commentary series has been initiated by lecturers at Luther Seminary, North Adelaide, Australia, and sponsored by the Lutheran Church of Australia. H.P. Hamann, V.C. Pfitzer, and J.T.E. Renner are the editorial committee chosen to supervise this project. It is planned to publish two

commentaries a year. Thus far the following commentaries have appeared: Galatians by Hamann, Hosea by Renner, Hebrews by Pfitzer, James-Jude by Hamann.

The Chi Rho Psalms Commentary does not contain a discussion of all the 150 psalms, but a selection of fifty of them. The text used in this commentary is the Revised Standard Version. Each psalm is dealt with according to the following pattern: text, form, time of writing, exposition according to paragraph units, and theological thrust. Renner often reflects the theological position of German higher-critical scholarship, having earned his doctorate at Heidelberg.

The psalm superscriptions are said to be later additions, although it should be noted that the present Massoretic text treats them as an integral part of the psalm. The identification of the author does contribute to the correct interpretation of a psalm. In following Hermann Gunkel, C. Westermann, H.J. Kraus, Renner has incorporated interpretations which contradict the New Testament. The Psalms, according to these German scholars, do not contain Messianic predictive passages; the Messianic psalms are simply considered to be royal psalms. Renner does refer to the fact that the New Testament writers quoted from various psalms and saw Christ in them, but that, according to Renner, was not the intent of the original writer. Thus, the New Testament authors reinterpreted these psalms and found in them what they wished. Here is a different kind of hermeneutics than that followed by Luther, Reu, Lenski, Maier, Kretzmann, Stoeckhardt, and many other Lutheran exegetes, who rejected the historical-critical method as it existed when they lived and wrote.

Everard Leske, in the preface, states that the writers chosen to write the Chi Rho commentaries accept "without reservation the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as a whole and in all their parts, as the divinely inspired, written, and inerrant Word of God, and as the only infallible source and norm for all matters of faith, doctrine, and life" (Constitution of the Lutheran Church of Australia) and stand under a personal commitment to the Lutheran Confessions. This confessional commitment supposedly enables the authors to use the best of the modern biblical scholarship, but also frees them from the errors and excesses of biblical criticism which are abroad today even in popular commentaries. How does rejecting the New Testament's interpretation of Old Testament Messianic passages qualify as being in harmony with the inerrancy of the New Testament? It would appear to this reviewer that this commentary has not escaped the errors of the historical-critical method.

Raymond F. Surburg

**DANIEL. THE DAILY STUDY BIBLE SERIES.** By D.S. Russell. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1981. 234 pages.

*The Daily Study Bible* on the New Testament, written by William Barclay, was found to be very popular in Great Britain. Its popularity prompted the Saint Andrew Press of Edinburgh to extend it to the Old Testament. The General Editor is John C.L. Gibson. The same pattern found in the New Testament series has been adopted for the Old Testament. The publishers contend that this study Bible is invaluable for group discussion as well as for private study.

D. S. Russell, former Principal of Rawdon College and Joint Principal of Northern Baptist College of Manchester, England, is the author of the volume on Daniel, whose composition Russell places in the second century B.C. The author of the Book of Daniel was not the prophet Daniel but some anonymous writer who wished to encourage the persecuted Jews in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes to resist the Hellenization attempts of the Syrian monarch. This



commentary sets forth the higher-critical stance on the Book of Daniel which can be found in any of the liberal commentaries cited on pages 233-234 of Russell's bibliography. One conservative commentary is mentioned, namely, that of Edward Young. Although Robert Dick Wilson, Boutflower, Young, Yamauchi, Whitcomb and others have answered the various objections that have been raised relative to the problems found by critical scholarship, these answers are ignored and the same old standard objections are repeated and presented as unanswerable. The Messianic interpretation of Daniel 7:13-24 and 9:25-27 are rejected.

One can, however, agree with the assertion of Russell that "Daniel is a fascinating book which speaks as profoundly to our day as when it was first written . . . its message declared unequivocally that the sovereign Lord God was in control not only of history but also of the end of history." The Book of Daniel offers trust, hope, and reassurance for God's people in any century.

Raymond F. Surburg

**THE TRANSLATION DEBATE: WHAT MAKES A BIBLE TRANSLATION GOOD?** By Eugene H. Glassman. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1981. 131 pages. \$4.25.

The debate which this book discusses is the old question as to whether the Scriptures should be rendered as a translation or as a paraphrase. The entire thesis of this book can be summarized from two sentences on pages 21 and 22: "I do not believe that translation and paraphrase are either undesirable or alternatives. . . . About translation and paraphrase I would also ask whether the question is one of either/or or rather one of both/and. I am convinced that the latter is the correct point of view." The author of this little book points out that ever since the days of Jerome anyone who attempted a translation of the Scriptures was subject to severe criticism. Jerome, Tyndale, and the translators of the King James Version were severely criticized in their day for their rendering of the Scriptures into another language. Therefore, the debate is not a modern phenomenon. The author points out that Luther's principles of translation involve a number of points which we today call paraphrase. He also states that Etienne Dolet's principles of translation (Luther's contemporary) are still applicable today. Glassman is himself well acquainted with the problems involved in translation, for he has assisted in the revision of the Bible in Urdu, a Hindustani language spoken in West Pakistan.

Either Glassman is unaware of Beck's *An American Translation* or purposely avoided it. Nor, oddly enough, does he discuss *The New King James Bible*. Though this book was published in 1981, perhaps Glassman wrote it before the NKJB was published in 1979. It would seem that Glassman's favorite translation is that of J. B. Phillips. He says on page 30: "Clearly Phillips has produced one of the most readable and meaningful versions of the New Testament in present-day English." The problem with this statement is that hardly anyone any longer uses or refers to Phillips' translation. There is much food for thought in this little book. Scholar and layman alike can read it with great benefit. It is recommended, although we don't agree with everything which Glassman says. The best basic principles for good translation are still the Lutheran rules of interpretation. Glassman does not mention these principles.

Harold H. Buls

CHRIST ABOVE ALL, THE MESSAGE OF HEBREWS. By Raymond Brown. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1982. 272 pages. Paperback. \$5.95.

First of all the reader must be informed that this Raymond Brown, principal of Spurgeon's College, London, is not the same man as Raymond E. Brown, S.S., the Roman Catholic scholar who authored the two volumes of the Gospel of John in the Anchor Bible series. The author of this volume on Hebrews (in "The Bible Speaks Today" series), a simple but thorough exposition, not a commentary in the traditional sense, is plainly Calvinistic in his theology. It is clear that he is conservative in his theology and wants nothing to do with the negative work of the high critics.

Both pastor and layman, if warned about the Calvinism can read this book with profit. Brown writes in his preface: "It is the clear, Christocentric message of this letter which makes it an extremely important document for our time." He goes along with Luther in saying that probably Apollos was the author of this book. Brown wants nothing to do with modern religious pluralism and insists on the necessity of God's salvation in Christ. He writes (page 48): "There is more about Christ's ministry on earth in this letter than in any other New Testament book outside the gospels." He is constantly saying in this volume that mere religious conviction is not enough because Christ's sacrifice is the only means for the salvation of mankind. He warns the frustrated and disappointed in our society about turning to the cults and eastern religions for answers. He reminds us that "adversity is rarely a vicious enemy; it is often a valuable ally. It reminds us of the imperishable things which matter most of all" (page 193).

This does not mean that we subscribe to everything in the book. With reference to Hebrews 10:14 Brown says: "Salvation is a continuing process; we are being made holy." Hebrews 10:10-18, in which section *hagiozo* is a synonym for the Pauline *dikaioo*, is speaking of the universal atonement, not progressive sanctification. Brown does not consider Psalm 8 Messianic (page 55). With reference to Hebrews 5:9-10 Brown quotes Calvin (page 102): "He did this for our benefit, to us the instance and the pattern of His own submission . . . If we want the obedience of Christ to be of advantage to us, we must copy it." This destroys the Gospel in this passage. On page 111 Brown plainly says: "Those who are committed to a Reformed or Calvinistic doctrine of grace rightly emphasize God's sovereignty and have been careful to point out that once a person is saved, he is always saved." Page 139 brings this synergistic observation: "We must constantly renew our trust in him, knowing that he will never fail us." On page 154 he speaks of the limited pardon of Old Testament saints. It was surely not limited. In keeping with this idea he says (page 156): "Under the law one could never be sure of forgiveness." Brown's Nestorianism comes out on page 184: "Now he [Christ] lives in heaven . . . These verses [10:19-22] explain how we must enter the holy place of prayer." Furthermore, this last statement implies that the message itself is not the means of grace.

We have cited sufficient instances to show that, despite many good things in this volume, the theology of this volume is Calvinistic. But it is well written and well outlined. Once in a while it is a good idea for a pastor to read a book which comes from a different persuasion simply to sharpen himself in distinguishing the truly Biblical from that which is not so.



THE NEW KING JAMES BIBLE: NEW TESTAMENT. Thomas Nelson, Nashville, Tennessee, 1979. Paperback, \$4.00.

The King James Version still outsells all other English versions of the Bible. But, as everyone knows, during the last forty years a number of translations have been produced and the English-speaking world is in confusion, attempting to determine a single version best suited to all Christian denominations. The King James Version was revised for the third time in 1769. That is the version we know today. The New King James Bible is the fourth revision of the original King James Version. The entire New King James Bible, both Old and New Testaments, was published by Thomas Nelson this year. This review, however, limits itself only to the New Testament. The reviewer will leave the appraisal of the Old Testament translation to others who have more expertise in assessing that part of the New King James Bible.

Anyone who is acquainted with the study of textual criticism is aware of the fact that scholars have changed their minds about the conclusions made by scholars about 1880. The twenty-sixth edition of Nestle's Greek New Testament states (page 47): "The nineteenth century was the age of the uncials; the mid-twentieth century was the age of the papyri — this marked a striking advance over the nineteenth century. Now we are entering the age of the minuscules." No one is saying that we should now go back to the *Textus Receptus*, but we are closer to this text than we have been for a century. The Greek text of the *Textus Receptus* is variously called the Byzantine, Koine, or majority text.

The English-speaking world is at a loss because of the plethora of English translations during the last generation. How often people ask: "Which translation of the Bible do you recommend?" Attend a Bible class, even a small one, and you find five or six translations used in the same Bible study. People are at a loss and confused. It is just possible that the NKJB will help bring order out of this chaos. For years an international and interdenominational team of 119 scholars, editors, and church leaders have been working on this updated King James Version. All participating scholars had to sign a document of subscription to the plenary and verbal inspiration of the original autographs of the Bible. And these scholars were aware of the fact that the nineteenth-century text suffers from over-revision. The traditional Greek text is much more reliable than previously supposed. Therefore, this edition of the NKJB comes at a most opportune time.

At John 3:13 the words "even the Son of Man who is in heaven" are preserved. We say "preserved" because, since the beginning of the century, they have been deleted by scholars. Look at Luke 9:54-56, where text critics have deleted three phrases and clauses for one hundred years. In verse 54 "just as Elijah did," in verse 55 "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of," and in verse 56 "For the Son of Man has not come to destroy men's lives but to save them" are all restored. For one-hundred years commentators have agonized over the deletion of these phrases or clauses. The bracketed words at Luke 22:19-20, 22:43, and 23:34 have been restored. Luke 24:12, which Wescott-Hort relegated to the apparatus, has been restored in NKJB as well as in the twenty-sixth edition of Nestle's Greek text. The pericope concerning the adulterous woman in John 8 is included without comment as well as the ending of the Gospel of Mark. At Hebrews 10:34 the reading of the *Textus Receptus* has been preserved: "For you had compassion on me in my chains."

From this point on we limit our remarks to one entire book so that the reader can examine matters for himself. Galatians is a short book but requires careful work in translation. The translators of the NKJB have done their homework

well — in fact, have improved the KJV in places. At 1:13 the NKJB has "Judaism" where KJV had "the Jews' religion." At 3:1 NKJB reads "has been clearly portrayed among you as crucified" where KJV has "hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you." At 3:9 "faithful Abraham" has been changed to "believing Abraham." At 5:22 "faith" has been changed to "faithfulness." At 6:2-5 where KJV reads "burden" twice, the NKJB distinguishes the words "burden" and "load." At 5:24 "affections and lusts" has been changed to "passions and desires." At 4:17 "zealously affect" has been changed to "zealously court." That the old Koine text has been followed is clear from the translations at 3:1 and 5:1. It would seem that at 4:15 the NKJB has outdone the KJV in going back to the Koine text: "Where is then the blessedness you spoke of?" We are glad to see at 4:3 "the elements of the world," because some modern translations have played havoc with these words.

The archaic language of the KJV has been brought up to date. Words which have changed meaning over the centuries have been replaced by modern words. But the precision of thought and beauty of language found in the KJV have not been sacrificed in the NKJB. Much more could be said but, without burdening the reader with further observations, the NKJB New Testament is heartily recommended.

Harold H. Buls

## Books Received

- LET'S STUDY GREEK. By Clarence B. Hale. Moody Press, Chicago, 1982. 282 pages. Cloth.
- THRU THE BIBLE. By J. Vernon McGee. Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1982. 887 pages. Cloth.
- THE LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS. By Eduard Schweizer. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1976. 319 pages. Paper.
- JESUS' PARABLES AND THE WAR OF MYTHS. By Amos N. Wilder. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 168 pages. Cloth, \$13.95.
- THE DYNAMICS OF SALVATION. By Donald F. Winslow. The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1979, 214 pages. Paper.
- THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD. New translation by E. M. Blaiklock. Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee, 1981. 93 pages. Paper, \$3.95.
- AUTHORITY AND THE CHURCH. By Gregory G. Bolich. University Press of America, Washington, D.C., 1982. 219 pages. Paper.
- THE REBELLIOUS GALILEAN. By John Bonforte. Philosophical Library, New York, 1982. 319 pages. Cloth, \$9.95.
- WALVOORD: A TRIBUTE. Edited by Donald K. Campbell. Moody Press, Chicago, 1982. 353 pages. Cloth.
- ISRAEL AND THE NEW COVENANT. By Roderick Campbell; introduction by O.T. Allis. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, Phillipsburg, New Jersey, 1954. 350 pages. Cloth, \$12.95.
- CONFESSING ONE FAITH. Edited by George Wolfgang Forell and James F. McCue. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1982. 344 pages. Paper.
- HANDMAID TO THEOLOGY. An Essay in Philosophical Prolegomena. By Winfried Corduan. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1981. 184 pages. Paper, \$7.95.
- BLESSED AND BROKEN. An Exploration of the Contemporary Experience of God in Eucharistic Celebration. By Ralph A. Keifer. Michael Glazier, Wilmington, Delaware, 1982. 148 pages. Paper, \$6.95.
- SIGNPOSTS TO FREEDOM. By Jan Milic Lochman. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1982. 167 pages. Paper.
- REALITY AND EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY. By T.F. Torrance. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 168 pages. Paper, \$8.95.
- PSYCHIC HEALING. Expose of an Occult Phenomenon. By John Weldon and Zola Levitt. Moody Press, Chicago, 1982. 250 pages. Paper.
- PREDIGT UND SOZIALE WIRKLICHKEIT. By Werner Welzig. Daphnis, 1981. 193 pages. Paper.
- BEYOND BUDDHISM. J. Isamu Yamamoto. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1982. 138 pages. Paper, \$5.50.
- THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT. By Robert Guelich. Word Books, Waco, Texas, 1982.
- THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY. An Introduction. By Vincent Brümmer. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 320 pages. Paper, \$16.95.
- CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT. An Apologetic. By Edward John Carnell. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1957. 314 pages. Paper, \$9.95.
- MODERN ACTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. By R. Paul Caudill. Broadman Press, Nashville, 1982. 165 pages. Paper.

- 
- THE TRIUNE IDENTITY. By Robert W. Jenson. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1973. 191 pages. Cloth, \$16.95.
- EVIL AND THE CHRISTIAN GOD. By Michael Peterson. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1982. 160 pages. Paper, \$7.95.
- COMPARING RELIGIONS: A LIMITATIVE APPROACH. By J.G. Platvoet. Mouton Publishers, The Hague, Paris, New York, 1982. 350 pages. Cloth.
- THE NAMES OF GOD. God's Character Revealed through His Names. By Lester Sumrall. Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1982. 168 pages. Paper, \$3.95.
- DICTIONARY OF MODERN THEOLOGICAL GERMAN. By Helmut W. Ziefle. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1982. 199 pages. Paper, \$9.95.
- THE TRIUNE GOD. A Historical Study of the Doctrine of the Trinity. By Edmund J. Fortman. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1972. 382 pages. Paper, \$10.95.
- JESUS AND THE CONSTRAINTS OF HISTORY. By A.E. Harvey. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 184 pages. Cloth, \$23.00.
- CHINA: THE EMERGING CHALLENGE. A Christian Perspective. By Paul E. Kauffman. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1982. 317 pages. Paper, \$8.95.
- SEASONABLE REVOLUTIONARY. The Mind of Charles Chauncy. By Charles H. Lippy. Nelson-Hall, Chicago, Illinois, 1981. 179 pages. Cloth.
- WORSHIP. By John E. Burkhardt. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 168 pages. Paper, \$8.95.
- TEMPTATION. By Charles Durham. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1982. 166 pages. Paper, \$4.95.
- THE ELUSIVE SELF. By Hywel D. Lewis. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 202 pages. Paper, \$14.95.
- THE JOY OF WORSHIP. By Marianne H. Micks. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 120 pages. Paper, \$5.95.
- BIBLICAL ETHICS AND SOCIAL CHANGE. By Stephen Charles Mott. Oxford University Press, New York, 1982. 254 pages. Paper.
- ISSUES IN MISSIOLOGY. An Introduction. By Edward C. Pentecost. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1982. 205 pages. Cloth, \$11.95.
- TRAVELING LIGHT. By Eugene H. Peterson. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1982. 203 pages. Paper, \$5.25.
- BECOMING HUMAN. By Letty M. Russell. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 114 pages. Paper.
- SPEAKING IN STORIES. By William R. White. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1982. 125 pages. Paper.
- LAST THINGS FIRST. By Gayraud S. Wilmore. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 120 pages. Paper, \$5.95.
- WHEN SOMEONE ASKS FOR HELP. By Everett L. Worthington, Jr. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1982. 239 pages. Paper, \$5.95.
- DAILY REMEMBRANCES. By James Smith. Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1982. 380 pages. Cloth.
- THE CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO DEATH, DYING AND BEREAVEMENT. By Roger Shipley. ETC Publications, Palm Springs, California, 1982. 245 pages. Paper, \$7.95.
- THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN'S SEARCH FOR SELF-ESTEEM. By W. Peter Blitchington. Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1982. 166 pages. Cloth.
- INTRODUCTION TO PASTORAL CARE. By William V. Arnold. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 204 pages. Paper, \$10.95.

- SIGN OF RECONCILIATION AND CONVERSION.** The Sacrament of Penance for Our Times. By Monika K. Hellwig. Michael Glazier, Wilmington, Delaware, 1982. 152 pages. Paper, \$6.95.
- WITH WANDERING STEPS AND SLOW.** Growing toward God. By Joy Hoffman. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1982. 140 pages. Paper, \$4.95.
- SPEAKING OF JESUS.** Finding the Words for Witness. By Richard Lischer. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 121 pages. Paper, \$6.95.
- A NEW AMERICAN JUSTICE.** By Daniel C. Maguire. Wiston Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1980. 218 pages. Paper.
- STRESS MANAGEMENT FOR MINISTERS.** By Charles L. Rassieur. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 168 pages. Paper, \$8.95.
- WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY.** By Charles C. Ryrie. Moody Press, Chicago, 1982. 117 pages. Paper.
- REALITY AND EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY.** By T.F. Torrance. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 168 pages. Paper, \$8.95.
- AT YOUR WORD, LORD.** How Prayer Releases the Power of God in Your Life. By William L. Vaswig. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1982. 128 pages. Paper.
- THE RISE OF WORLD LUTHERANISM: AN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE.** By E. Clifford Nelson. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 448 pages. Cloth, \$24.95.
- CONTEMPLATION.** Ways of Prayer, Volume 5. By Francis Nemeck and Marie Coombs. Michael Glazier, Wilmington, Delaware, 1982. 151 pages. Paper, \$4.95. Cloth, \$8.95.
- KNOW THE TRUTH.** A Handbook of Christian Belief. By Bruce Milne. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1982. 288 pages. Paper, \$6.95.
- GOD HAS MANY NAMES.** By John Hick. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 140 pages. Paper, \$7.95.
- LUTHER'S CATECHISM.** By David P. Kuske. Board for Parish Education, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1982. 383 pages. Cloth.
- CATECHISM HANDBOOK.** By David P. Kuske. Board of Parish Education, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1982. 228 pages. Notebook.
- THE CREATOR IN THE COURTROOM: "SCOPES II."** The Controversial Arkansas Creation-Evolution Trial. By Dr. Norman L. Geisler in collaboration with A.F. Brooke II and Mark J. Keough. Mott Media, Milford, Michigan, 1982. 242 pages. Paper, \$5.95.
- FREEDOM OF RELIGION IN AMERICA.** Historical Roots, Philosophical Concepts, and Contemporary Problems. Edited by Henry B. Clark II. Transaction Books, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1982. 143 pages. Paper, \$6.95.
- THE HISTORICAL AND ECUMENICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF JEREMIAS II'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE LUTHERANS (1573-1581).** By Constantine N. Tsirpanlis. EO Press, Kingston, New York, 1982. 83 pages. Paper.
- THE EARLY CHURCH AND THE STATE.** Translated by Michael Di Maio and Agnes Cunningham. Edited by Agnes Cunningham. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 117 pages. Paper, \$6.95.
- THE PATRISTIC AND BYZANTINE REVIEW.** Volume 1, Number 1. Edited by Constantine N. Tsirpanlis. American Institute for Patristic and Byzantine Studies, Kingston, New York, 1982. 80 pages. Paper, \$5.00.

- 
- THE PATRISTIC AND BYZANTINE REVIEW. Volume 1, Number 2. Edited by Constantine N. Tsirpanlis. American Institute for Patristic and Byzantine Studies, Kingston, New York, 1982. 171 pages. Paper, \$5.00.
- ASKING THE FATHER. Ways of Prayer, Volume 4. By Gabriel Daly. Michael Glazier, Wilmington, Delaware, 1982. 120 pages. Paper, \$5.95. Cloth, \$8.95.
- CENTERING ON THE LORD JESUS. Ways of Prayer, Volume 3. By George Maloney. Michael Glazier, Wilmington, Delaware, 1982. 108 pages. Paper, \$4.95. Cloth, \$8.95.
- A CHRISTIAN CRITIQUE OF THE UNIVERSITY. By Charles Malik. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1982. 115 pages. Paper, \$4.50.
- CHALLENGES IN PRAYER. Ways of Prayer, Volume 1. By Basil Pennington. Michael Glazier, Wilmington, Delaware, 1982. 109 pages. Paper, \$4.95. Cloth, \$8.95.
- COMMITTED LOCALLY - LIVING GLOBALLY. By J. Harry Haines. Edited by Alan K. Waltz. Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1982. 95 pages. Paper.
- GETTING TOGETHER. A Guide for Good Groups. By Em Griffin. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1982. 233 pages. Paper, \$5.95.
- GOD'S GRACE AND HUMAN HEALTH. By J. Harold Ellens. Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1982. 156 pages. Paper.
- I BELIEVE IN CHURCH GROWTH. By Eddie Gibbs. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1982. 460 pages. Paper, \$8.95.
- INCREASING THE JOY. Studies in 1 John. By Harold T. Bryson. Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1982. 142 pages. Paper.
- INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY AND COUNSELING. Christian Perspectives and Applications. By Paul D. Meier, Frank B. Minirth, and Frank B. Wichern. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1982. 433 pages. Cloth, \$19.95.
- LIFE WITH GOD. A Manual for the Religious Instruction of Adults. By Herman C. Theiss. Morse Press, Seattle, Washington, 1979. 149 pages. Paper.
- PRESERVING THE PERSON. A Look at the Human Sciences. By C. Stephen Evans. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1982. 177 pages. Paper, \$5.95.
- SOCIAL MINISTRY. By Dieter T. Hessel. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 228 pages. Paper, \$10.95.
- THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY BEDTIME READING BOOK. Edited by Ron and Lyn Klug. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1982. 125 pages. Cloth.
- THE CHRISTIAN PASTOR. By Wayne E. Oates. Third Edition. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 298 pages. Paper, \$9.95.
- THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT ACCORDING TO THE MAJORITY TEXT. Edited by Zane C. Hodges and Arthur L. Farstad. Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee, 1982. 810 pages. Cloth.
- THE IMITATION OF CHRIST. By Thomas A. Kempis. Paraphrased by Donald E. Demaray. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1982. 303 pages. Paper, \$9.95.
- THE PRODIGAL FATHER. Ways of Prayer, Volume 2. By Wilfrid Harrington. Michael Glazier, Wilmington, Delaware, 1982. 118 pages. Paper, \$4.95. Cloth, \$8.95.
- THE SMALL CHURCH IS DIFFERENT. By Lyle E. Schaller. Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1982. 192 pages. Paper.

- 
- THE SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN. A Guide for Nurses, Parents, and Teachers. By Judith Allen Shelly. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1982. 148 pages. Paper, \$4.95.
- THE SUFFERING GOD. Hope and Comfort for Those Who Hurt. By Charles Ohlrich. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1982. 130 pages. Paper, \$3.25.
- THE WORSHIP OF GOD. Some Theological, Pastoral, and Practical Reflections. By Ralph P. Martin. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1982. 237 pages. Paper, \$7.95.
- TODAY'S PASTOR IN TOMORROW'S WORLD. Revised Edition. By Carnegie Samuel Calian. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 163 pages. Paper, \$8.95.
- COUNSELING AND CONFESSION. The Role of Confession and Absolution in Pastoral Counseling. By Walter J. Koehler. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 1982. 91 pages. Paper.
- A PRIMER ON FREE WILL. By John H. Gerstner. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, Phillipsburg, New Jersey, 1982. 28 pages. Paper, \$1.50.
- AN INTRODUCTION TO PROTESTANT THEOLOGY. By Helmut Gollwitzer. Translated by David Cairns. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 235 pages. Paper, \$12.95.
- CONFESSING ONE FAITH. A Joint Commentary on the Augsburg Confession by Lutheran and Catholic Theologians. Edited by George Wolfgang Forell and James F. McCue. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1982. 344 pages. Paper.
- DOING THEOLOGY ACROSS CULTURES. By Morris A. Inch. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1982. 110 pages. Paper, \$5.95.
- EVANGELICAL CATECHISM. Christian Faith in the World Today. American Edition. Translated by Lawrence W. Denef. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1982. 399 pages. Paper, \$4.95.
- MARTIN LUTHER: HIS LIFE AND TEACHINGS. By James Arne Nestingen. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 79 pages. Paper.
- PROCESS THEOLOGY AS POLITICAL THEOLOGY. By John B. Cobb, Jr. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 158 pages. Paper, \$8.95.
- RITUAL, RELIGION, AND THE SACRED. Selections from the Annales: Economies, Societies, Civilisations, Volume 7. Edited by Robert Forster and Orest A. Ranum. Translated by Elborg Forster and Patricia M. Ranum. The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 1982. 236 pages. Paper, \$8.95. Cloth, \$27.50.
- THEOLOGY AND NARRATIVE. A Critical Introduction. By Michael Goldberg. Abingdon, Nashville, Tennessee, 1982. 288 pages. Paper.
- THE CREATIVE WORD. Canon as a Model for Biblical Education. By Walter Brueggemann. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 167 pages. Paper, \$8.95.
- THE RESURRECTION OF THEISM. Prolegomena to Christian Apology. Second Edition. By Stuart C. Hackett. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1957. 381 pages. Paper, \$11.95.

