

"Meditate
upon these things;
give thyself
wholly to them;
that thy profiting
may appear unto all"

I Timothy 4:15

Journal
of
Theology

Church of the Lutheran Confession

==ESSAYS AND ARTICLES==

OUR OFT-FORGOTTEN NAME: THE ELECT OF GOD

I.

In Colossians¹ the Apostle Paul speaks of believers as the "elect of God." Although it is not the most frequent designation used for them in Scripture, it occurs frequently enough to make it worthy of our attention. For Christian people as a whole to be unaware of this special name given to them by the Lord Himself, and not to know the fullness of its meaning, deprives them of a rich source of strength and comfort. It would be well that those who are especially called to preach and teach would make this term also something familiar to our people, so that they could use it quite commonly in speaking of themselves and enjoy the depth of spiritual understanding that goes with it.

It hardly need be said among us that a presentation of any scriptural doctrine for the edification of all believers is fitting in the Church. The well-known passage in Timothy² reads, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." For our purposes we emphasize, "All Scripture ... is profitable ... for the man of God." All Scripture is intended for every man of God so as to make him fit, not for the clergy (or any other special group) alone who are to dispense this or that to others."³ In like manner Paul writes in Romans,⁴ "For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." The application is general; there is no limitation. Scripture pertains to all the children of God. The truths of God are not revealed for idle intellectual curiosity, for

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mental exercise, for philosophical speculation, for theological debate, but are intended for something definite -- that we might have hope. Thus it isn't a matter of Scripture for the sake of Scripture, theology for the sake of theology, doctrine for the sake of doctrine, election for the sake of election, but Scripture, theology, doctrine, election all for the sake of the "down-to-earth", practical purpose, salvation for sinful man.

This way of looking at Scripture is inherent within the Lutheran Church. On this point our church fathers made an outstanding departure from the approach of the scholasticism of the Middle Ages. Over against the Thomists and Scotists they insistently maintained that everything in the Bible and all theology has to have a salutary purpose applicable to all. Nothing of divine wisdom, natural or revealed, was for mere theorizing and speculation, but was for the saving of souls. Thus they said, "Theologia est habitus practicus," -- theology is a practical habit (habitude), and denounced the scholastics who speculated on idle matters. For example, in considering original sin the main point was suppressed by debating whether this was a "quality derived from the contagion of the apple or from the breath of the serpent."⁵

At the risk of saying too much, the general impression appears to be that the doctrine of election, with the resultant designation of believers as "the elect," is a subject so learned, so deep, so difficult to be understood, that it is quite beyond the "run-of-the-mill" Christian, hence, something to be avoided if at all possible. That this is not a strawman erected to have something to knock down is evident from these words drawn up by the Synodical Conference years ago: "Thesis 13. That it is not only not useless, let alone dangerous, but necessary and wholesome to expound to our Christian people the mystery of God's gracious election as far as He has clearly revealed it in His Word; and we do not agree with those who hold that all discussion of this doctrine be suppressed or at least reserved for the forum of the learned."⁶

From the start, then, it must be maintained that this doctrine is revealed for all believers, to build them up

in the one true faith; and that the approach and presentation throughout should not be that this is something difficult and troublesome, which automatically builds up apprehension and reluctance to deal with it, but rather as a matter that can be quite as easily grasped as other doctrines in Scripture. These words apply, "The difficulties in the doctrine do not lie in the doctrine itself as far as God has revealed it to us. What we know from Scripture about predestination is so clear and simple that our children are able to understand it."⁷ In the same vein Prof. J. Schaller writes in his Christology, "It is so much of the very woof of the Gospel that no human being can be certain of his personal salvation except by trusting in this act of God. Though certain aspects of this doctrine may be considered 'strong meat,' yet its essential features are elementary truths upon which all saving faith rests."⁸

The story is told of a Synodical Conference pastor who sought to gain for his congregation a former member of the Ohio Synod. His hesitation about joining was explained with, "Sie haben Gnadenwahl," carrying with it the implication that such a thing as election or predestination was outside of Scripture, and thus not to be found in the Christian Church. The fact that in former years Synodical Conference Lutherans were looked at askance by other Lutherans on this point is an invitation to examine ourselves once again. First, then, let us assure ourselves that Scripture does teach such a thing.

There are many passages in Scripture dealing with this truth. For purposes of definition we limit ourselves to Eph. 1, 3-6, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." We direct our attention primarily to the words, "he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world."

HE, as stated in verse 3, is "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," the almighty, eternal Trinity, the only true God, who does things "according to the good pleasure of his will," (v. 5) "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," (v. 11). He is the author of our election; as always, the active agent in our salvation.

HATH CHOSEN (eklego), called out, picked out, putting thought into action; always in the middle voice: choose for one's self. Here we might also consider the other terms which the New Testament uses in speaking of this act. They are more or less synonymous, and it is not easy to determine accurately just how they differ in literal meaning.⁹ In verse 5, as in verse 11, we have "having predestinated us" (pro-horidso), to decide beforehand, to determine a destination beforehand, thus, to foreordain, emphasizing the predetermination. In verse 11 (also Rom. 8, 28) we read, "according to the purpose of him." Purpose (prothesin, from protithemi), the setting beforehand, the prearrangement involving an act of the will on the part of God: "The act of setting something before oneself to carry it into effect."¹⁰ In 1 Peter 1, 2 (also Rom. 8, 29) we read, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God." (prognosin, from proegno) Foreknowledge is the literal translation; but when the word is used in connection with God, this is not an adequate translation. Lexicographers agree that in the relationship of God to man it means to foreknow "cum affectu et effectu," "with affection and resultant effect," in distinction to "pro-oida" which is limited to an act of intellectual apprehension. Thus, in connection with God, foreknowledge is an eternal act of God involving His will, (J. Schaller, energetic volition; J. P. Meyer, emotional recognition) and is better and more properly rendered "foreordain." The object for which God has chosen is indicated in verse 3, "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places." Romans has it, "them he also glorified."¹¹ The choosing is for salvation, eternal life.

"Hath chosen US," sinful, human beings, who have been made, or who shall yet become, believers. Other passages tell us that this is a certain, definite number,

known to God. "As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed." "I speak not of you all, I know whom I have chosen."¹²

"IN HIM," in Christ, as stated in the next verse, "having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself." Also, in Ephesians, "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."¹³ In Timothy, Paul adds another term, "God saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus."¹⁴ This context is used also in Romans, "a remnant according to the election of grace."¹⁵ These passages tell us the cause of God's election, emphasizing that there was nothing in man, an act (conversion) or a state of mind (faith) which he did foreknow, nothing in the elect themselves which moved God to choose them, but only his free grace operating within the redemptive merit of Jesus Christ. Election is not an absolute and arbitrary act of God in itself, as is maintained by Calvinism, but is based on the fact that in the grace of God, Christ redeemed all sinners. "God chose the elect because they are redeemed in the common redemption of all mankind."¹⁶ Calvin taught an election by the sovereign power of God without the merits of Christ or the Means of Grace.

"BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD" simply means what it says. Election is an eternal act of God, not something that developed after the creation of man or his fall into sin.

By way of summary, we cite a few definitions of the doctrine of election generally accepted in former years in the Synodical Conference. The Brief Statement: "By election of grace we mean this truth, that all those who by the grace of God alone, for Christ's sake, through the means of grace, are brought to faith, are justified, sanctified, and preserved in faith here in time, that all these have already from eternity been endowed with faith, justification, sanctification and preservation in faith, and this for the same reason, namely, by grace alone, for Christ's sake, and by the means of grace."¹⁷ J. P. Meyer: "Elec-

tion is an act of God on His Christians by which from eternity He conferred on them the favor of sanctification (in the wider sense).¹⁸ The Lutheran Confessions: "The eternal election of God not only foresees and foreknows the salvation of the elect, but is also from the gracious will of God a cause which procures, works, helps, and promotes our salvation and what pertains thereto; and upon this our salvation is so founded that the gates of hell cannot prevail against it."¹⁹ A. L. Graebner: "The decree of predestination is an eternal act of God, who for his goodness' sake, and because of the merit of the foreordained Redeemer of all mankind, purposed to lead into everlasting life, by the way and means of salvation designated for all mankind, a certain number of persons, and to procure, work and promote what would pertain to their final salvation."²⁰

Certainly what Scripture says is clear enough and can be well understood by the child of God. Taking this doctrine by itself we find the difficulties no greater, and our faith taxed no more, than when confronted with other teachings of Scripture, such as the mystery in the doctrine of the Trinity or the person of Jesus Christ. But it won't do simply to say that there is nothing more involved than is met with in these other doctrines. The others set forth statements of God which conflict, or rather, go beyond our natural reason--the divine against the human; but in election we meet with another difficulty, a statement of God which appears to conflict with a statement of God--the divine against the divine--and it cannot be ignored. When one considers this doctrine in connection with the doctrine of universal grace, that God loved the world and desires the salvation of all mankind, as Scripture says: "God our Savior will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth,"²¹ perplexities will arise.

Throughout Scripture God assures us that from eternity He sincerely willed the salvation of all mankind, and at the same time He tells us just as plainly that from eternity He chose a few definite persons and decreed their salvation. What shall be done with this seeming contradiction? We have no other choice but to follow the course of

Paul. He admits the difficulty, "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God." Note the answer, "God forbid, for he saith of Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." And should objection be raised, we are told: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God." In closing his discussion of this matter Paul writes, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out."²²

This is our answer. Here we have an unsearchable judgment of God, a mystery of His will which is not given us to understand while here on earth. Our Confessions say much the same with an added warning, "For in addition to what has been revealed in Christ concerning this, . . . God has still kept secret and concealed much concerning this mystery, and reserved it for His wisdom and knowledge alone, which we should not investigate, nor would we indulge our thoughts in this matter, nor draw conclusions, nor inquire curiously, but should adhere to the revealed Word of God. This admonition is most urgently needed."²³ Christ Himself spoke in a similar vein. When one asked, "Lord, are there few that be saved." he replied, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate" - words which in effect remind us not to attempt to sound the depth of God's predestination, but attend to what is given us to know.

This attitude of heart and mind to accept the Word of God at face value, regardless of how unreasonable it may seem, is quite natural to a Christian. The new man in Christ continually says, "Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth." And when the Lord's words constitute a hard saying, or involve us in difficulties that may plague either mind or body, the rebellious Old Adam is subdued with the stern reminder, "Be still, and know that I am God." Paul writes to the point when he urges, "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."²⁴ The believer

agrees that "we walk by faith and not by sight," and that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."²⁵ How simple and well the attitude of a child of God over against a divine mystery is expressed in the words of a hymn, "How this can be I leave to thee, Thy Word alone sufficeth me."²⁶

It is in just this point, in a failure to adopt this attitude, that all the difficulties, troubles and controversies have developed in connection with the doctrine of election. Not satisfied with the revealed Word, not content, while on this side of heaven, to "see through a glass darkly," "to know only in part," men have busied themselves in harmonizing what was not given to be harmonized. They have sought an answer to that which cannot be answered. They would want to solve that age-old question "Why some, why not others?" not accepting the fact that the question is out of order and could be impertinent.

In order to resolve the contradiction existing in the mind of man between the decree of universal salvation and the decree of a special election, one is compelled to modify or deny one or the other. Calvin chose to deny that God desired the salvation of all mankind. He writes, "All men are not created under the same condition, but to some eternal life, to others, eternal death, is foreordained."²⁷ But Scripture says, "As I live, saith the Lord, God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from his way and live." "The Lord is not willing that anyone should perish, but that all should come to repentance."²⁸ What is more, the election of grace does not pertain to the unbelievers, or the lost. Concerning their place, there was no willing, or decreeing, or acting on the part of God. The explanation for their condition lies in the words, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself."²⁹ The cause and responsibility lies entirely outside of God and rests with men. Despite the gracious intentions and offer of God, "they would not." "They judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life."³⁰

Others have sought to bring about harmony between these decrees of God by denying the doctrine of a particular election. This is done quite subtly by including it under

the decree of universal grace and defining it as "the realization of God's universal gracious will, in so far as it is to be realized in them that are saved." In seeking to make this view hold, the thought is brought in that election is in some way dependent on the conduct of natural man, his not setting up "willful resistance" in opposition to God. In effect this destroys the scriptural truth that salvation is by grace alone. Such is the construction put on this doctrine by the majority of Lutherans outside of what was once the Synodical Conference. Disagreement on this doctrine together with the other doctrines directly effected was one of the foremost causes for the divided state of the Lutheran Church in our nation. In the 1870s' a good many Lutherans cared. Today, apparently, it makes no difference except to a few.

(To be continued)

Footnotes:

1. Colossians 3, 12
2. 2 Timothy 3, 16
3. Lenski, 2 Timothy, p. 859
4. Romans 15, 4
5. Triglotta, Apology, p. 107
6. Quartalschrift, 1942, p. 292
7. Confessional Lutheran, Nov. 1943
8. J. Schaller, Christology, p. 8
9. J. Schaller, Christology, p. 9
10. Lenski, Romans, p. 558
11. Romans 8, 30
12. Acts 13, 48; John 13, 18
13. Ephesians 3, 11
14. 2 Timothy 1, 19
15. Romans 11, 5
16. J. Schaller, Christology, p. 11
17. Brief Statement, para. 35
18. J. P. Meyer, Dogmatic Notes

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19. Triglotta, Formula of Concord, p. 1065
 20. A. L. Graebner, Christian Dogmatics, p. 178
 21. 1 Timothy 2, 4
 22. Romans, chapters 8-9-10
 23. Triglotta, Formula of Concord, p. 1081
 24. 2 Corinthians 10, 5
 25. Hebrews 11, 1
 26. Lutheran Hymnal, 306, v. 5
 27. J. Schaller, Christology, p. 9
 28. Ezekiel 11, 33; 2 Peter 3, 9
 29. Hosea 13, 9
 30. Matthew 23, 37; Acts 13, 46

G. Sydow



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THE PROBLEM OF CHOICE (Continued)

There is an old English proverb to the effect that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. This is a homely way of saying what the Apostle had in mind when he told the Thessalonians to "prove all things" (II, 5:21). It is precisely what we have in mind with our "proving," our testing of at least the most promising of the many translations, particularly of the New Testament, which are now before us and which create the problem of choice of which we spoke in our previous issue. If we continue to use the pages of our JOURNAL for this purpose, it is because of the second part of the apostolic injunction: "...hold fast that which is good." Not as though we had suddenly acquired a monopoly of sound judgment in this respect, or that ours were the sole responsibility for establishing what is good, but simply for the sake of establishing a starting point, providing a nucleus to which others may add. While this does give the writer the advantage of getting his observations and suggestions into the record first, they will thereby at the same time be submitted to the scrutiny and judgment of all our readers, contributing thus to the assurance that we shall be holding fast only to that which is good. At the same time there will be opportunity for testing the soundness of the standards for judgment suggested in our previous issue, and for thereby determining the merits and/or demerits of the various versions. Let this be the spirit in which we continue our studies.

Among the various qualities we have mentioned as being desirable in our search for the best of the modern translations, none surely are more important than those of accuracy and doctrinal soundness. Given these, one could dispense with the search for beauty, reverence, dignity, literary style, and even outward clarity -- if this were necessary. As it is, accuracy and doctrinal soundness do have a natural priority which we shall accord to them. With these ideals kept constantly in view, we intend to take up a few key subjects and related passages, compare the various versions, and make our occasional

observations as we go along. And we shall begin with a sensitive subject, a survey of certain basic passages dealing with the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Bible. For after all, this has become the favorite target of modern critics. On the other hand, nothing is more important for the vitality of our faith than the assurance that when Scripture speaks, God has spoken; that we may rely utterly on the truth of its every word. The passages we intend to cover in this connection are II Peter 1:21 (the Mode of Inspiration); II Timothy 3:16 (the Scope of Inspiration); I Corinthians 2:13 (Inspiration of the Very Words); and finally John 10:35 (Inspiration Defined as a Principle).

We begin with the Peter passage, even though that seems to limit itself to "prophecy . . . in old time." But note the context: Peter says of his fellow apostles and himself that they were speaking as eye-and-ear witnesses (v. 16), that we have also a more sure word of prophecy (v. 19), that prophecy came not by the will of man (v. 21-a). Then comes the powerful assurance that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (AV). Though the modern versions show considerable variety of expression, they are in substantial agreement not only in attributing the original impulses to the Holy Spirit, but also in bringing out the fact that the men were sustained ("carried along") by Him in this work. We quote: "men moved by the Holy Ghost spoke from God" (RSV); "spoke because they were inspired by the Holy Spirit" (Phillips); "men they were, but, impelled by the Holy Spirit, they spoke the words of God" (NEB); "men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (NAS*); "but under the influence of the Holy Spirit men spoke for God" (Goodspeed); "the Holy Spirit moved holy men to say what God told them" (Beck); "men were carried along by the Holy Spirit as they spoke the message that came from God" (ABS*); "it was when

*) To simplify our abbreviation let NAS stand for the New American Standard and ABS for the American Bible Society's New Testament, "Good News for Modern Man," our previous NT-TEV.

carried away by the Holy Spirit that the holy men of God spoke" (Moffat). -- Before we leave this first group of translations, note the striking version of NEB. Note also the footnote* concerning what we hope will turn out to be an improvement in our abbreviations. Goodspeed and Moffat were added for reasons that will appear later.

II Timothy 3:16 -- The Scope of Inspiration. The point here is to recognize that this passage applies to all of the Old Testament without thereby excluding any of the New. We quote the several versions: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable ..." (AV); "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable ..." (RSV, NAS, Moffat); "All Scripture is divinely inspired (or inspired by God) and is useful ..." (Goodspeed, ABS, Phillips); "All Scripture is inspired by God and helps us ..." (Beck); "Every inspired Scripture has its use ..." (NEB). Note that these versions are almost unanimous in attributing inspiration to all Scripture. The exception will be discussed later.

Are we justified in claiming the same for those New Testament books that had been written by the time of this letter to Timothy? We know perfectly well that what Timothy learned as a child was learned from Old Testament Scriptures. But by the time the Apostle wrote this letter he was nearing the end of his career (chapter 4:16). The number of writings known to Timothy had grown substantially, was to grow still more. And of all of them, including the works of his fellow apostles, Paul makes the far-reaching statement concerning verbal inspiration which we find at the head of our next section:

I Corinthians 2:13 -- the Inspiration of the Very Words. At the same time, as stated above, this is the passage which supports the inclusion of the New Testament in the "all Scripture" of II Timothy 3:16. As for the main point, verbal inspiration, we quote the versions: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (AV); "in words...taught by the Spirit" (RSV, NAS, ABS, Beck); "expressions...which the Holy Spirit teaches us" (Phillips); "words found for us...by the Spirit" (NEB); "in the

very words given us by the Holy Spirit" (Taylor).

The final passage is John 10:35 (Inspiration Defined as a Principle). And here it is our Lord Himself who states the principle: "... the Scripture cannot be broken." This reading of the AV is repeated by RSV, ASV, Phillips and Moffat. Beck, NEB and Goodspeed are but a step behind with their version, "Scripture cannot be set aside," while ABS prefers to paraphrase: "We know that what Scripture says is true forever."

This concludes this particular section of our survey. What remains now is that we make our preliminary observations and then on their basis draw some careful conclusions. -- The first step is rather obvious. In spite of the sensitive nature of the issue, inspiration, there is a rather amazing degree of concurrence in these several translations. They differ indeed in their choice of words, but in substance they usually say the same things. Nor is this because the translators have perhaps been handpicked for their conservative and fundamentalist views on this particular subject. Certainly neither Moffat nor Goodspeed would fit into that category. The same can be said for many of the scholars that sat on the various committees which produced the RSV, NEB, ASV and ABS. Yet their presence in this first group does not nullify our observation. The evidence does not permit it.

But does this mean that we have been mistaken about these versions after all, that there is actually no need for concern, either about their accuracy or the doctrinal soundness? Have we been sounding an alarm where there is no fire? To jump at this conclusion on the basis of what we have seen so far would certainly be hasty and ill-considered. What has appeared from the foregoing is simply some powerful evidence of the strength of the underlying text, which is so strong that even a scholar who may personally reject the doctrine of verbal inspiration has to let their meaning come through. Elsewhere he may indeed express his dissenting opinion -- perhaps in a mere footnote. II Timothy 3:16 is a case in point. There RSV supplements its original version ("All Scripture is inspired by God") with an alternative to the effect that "Every Scrip-

ture inspired by God is also" etc. The NEB translation ("Every inspired Scripture has its use . . .") has about the same effect. Though neither is wrong in itself, both have nevertheless been used by some modern theologians to limit the scope of inspiration as applying only to such parts of Scripture which in their personal judgment seem to be worthy of such standing. That this was utterly foreign to the thinking of the Apostle who had just been reminding Timothy of the Scriptures he had known from childhood is clear. That this sets aside the fact that Jesus simply accepted the Canon of the Old Testament without any exceptions whatever is equally clear. Yet such considerations do not seem to disturb such liberalist theologians in the least. But note that the trouble lies neither in the original text nor these translations, but solely in the use (or rather misuse) that has subsequently been made of them. The text itself stands like a rock, defying all efforts to change its meaning. It is such men who are frail.

If in the course of our further search we shall be discussing translations that are defective, sometimes to the point of being positively misleading, this does not mean that we are thereby accusing these scholars of deliberate deception. Such cases would be rare. But there are many factors that may influence the work of a given translator: his previous theological training, the doctrinal convictions he holds, the degree to which he is influenced by the increasingly liberal trend of modern theology, plus many other causes that may be hard to detect and harder to analyze. Our business is not to judge the motives of such men, but simply to evaluate their work, the product of their labors. But if we do find variations that in one way or another detract from a proper understanding of the Word, we not only have a right to speak; it simply becomes our duty. This is particularly true when we address ourselves to passages where vital matters of doctrine are at stake.

Perhaps it is the nearness of the Reformation anniversary that makes a study of the doctrine of justification seem peculiarly appropriate. What makes this doctrine particularly precious is the assurance it gives that the

righteousness we need to stand before God does not rest on any work of ours, but on the perfect satisfaction rendered by Christ; that the Gospel which gives this assurance is in fact the public proclamation of the verdict at which God arrived on the basis of what took place on Calvary; that this verdict is universal in its scope, proclaiming the forgiveness of the sins of all the world as an accomplished fact; that while faith is not its cause, it is nevertheless addressed to faith and received by faith alone; that the righteousness it confers is not our own but comes from Another, is His free gift alone.

If this last is kept in mind, it is immediately clear that Goodspeed's translation of Romans 3:28 ("that a man is made upright by faith") cannot stand. What should be equally clear is that any suggestion that it is a change in man which eventually wins God's approval is bound to work havoc, has in fact already done so in the churches of today. The opinion that a man is justified by faith because that faith makes a different man of him has been advanced also in Lutheran circles. And the Bible Society translation (ABS) does not help matters when it renders Rom. 4: 25 with "He was given over to die because of our sins, and was raised to life to put us right with God." Not only is the last phrase rather unclear, but when the very next verse (ch. 5:1) continues, "Now that we have been put right with God through faith, we have peace with God," it sounds as though the change has come about because man has finally met the terms of God. The fact that it is Christ who has done it all seems to fade into the background. -- Beck's translation also poses a problem. There is no doubt as to what he wants to say with his footnote to Rom. 3:20: "'Righteous' is a court term. God, who gives us the righteousness of Christ (3:23-24; 4:5; Phil. 3:9), as a judge declares us righteous and by His creative verdict makes us righteous." The forensic use of the terms is there. God's action is called the rendering of a verdict. He declares us righteous. If the footnote had ended at this point, there would be no occasion for further questions. But will the average reader take this closing phrase in the sense the author wanted to convey? And when on the many

occasions where this terminology recurs the reader is simply referred back to this one place where the footnote is recorded, will the average person do what the author wants, or will he skip it, particularly when it comes as late as James 2:8?

We must, of course, also consider Rom. 1:17 and its parallel, Gal. 3:11 -- "The just shall live by faith." We know what it did for Luther when the true meaning of this passage, its Gospel promise, finally got through to him. It is reassuring to find this familiar AV rendering retained also by NAS and Phillips. RSV turns the reassuring comfort of the Habakkuk prophecy into restrictive channels: "He who through faith is righteous shall live." NEB follows the pattern. ABS likewise, but in its own peculiar way: "He who is put right with God through faith shall live." Beck offers two translations. In Rom. 1:17 he says, "By faith you are righteous, and you shall live." In Gal. 3:11 we find a different form, one which makes its Gospel of justification subject to a strict condition: "If you believe, you are righteous and you will live." We fail to find any reason either for the change or for this injection of a condition which is not found in the text.

At least one more question remains to be answered: Is faith a cause, perhaps even the cause of our justification? In other words, is justification then a result of our faith? The point has already been touched on in a previous paragraph. But we still need to check the translations. If this leads us back again to Rom. 1:17 it is only because of one phrase which has not yet been discussed, "from faith to faith" (AV). Luther's translation ("aus Glauben in Glauben") comes closer, particularly as to the first part where the Greek has EK, out of. This might seem to support the thought that faith is the source and perhaps even the cause of our justification. This opinion is ruled out, however, as soon as we remember that this righteousness of God was revealed, revealed in the Gospel as an act of God, as an accomplished fact. It comes from Him as a gift that becomes ours by way of faith (Eph. 2:8) and is so received because it is designed for faith. Thus God has done it all, by the Gospel, which is His power.

E. Reim



QUOTE

A true and living orthodoxy must never become static. If we are to remain faithful to the orthodox faith of our fathers, we dare not merely repeat our fathers' answers to opponents of a generation ago. A living orthodoxy, rather, must rethink for its own generation the doctrines of revelation and inspiration. It must be prepared to fight on the battle lines as they are drawn today, and must appropriate the truth of God as it has been given. Certainly no Christian need ever fear the honest search for truth in humble dependence upon the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

- Kenneth S. Kantzer

"The Authority of the Bible."



== PREACHING THE WORD ==

FOR THE CLOSE OF THE CHURCH YEAR

The Text: Rev. 22:10-15.

As we study the prophecy of this book of Revelation which the Lord's angel commanded John not to seal, but to leave open because the hour was already so late - as we look, we are startled to see how much of it has already been fulfilled, both as found in this Book and as proclaimed in the other Scriptures. It is late, indeed, just as it is evening of another church year drawing to its close on earth.

We are urged to make a decision and to take our places as we want to be found in the last moment of time. Our text urges us and presses us. Things won't go on like this forever, or for long, that unjust and unrighteous people walk together with the righteous through this valley of the world, or live side by side as they are doing now while God pours His blessings down upon the evil as well as the good. This arrangement will have a sudden end. Our Lord will not wait for us to walk all the way (Matt. 24:22). He will come to cut the journey short. He will bring His eternal Kingdom with Him and arrive as the lightning that cleaves the sky, finding us as we are.

Most of us have had our picture taken at one time or another. There is always a period of waiting while we compose ourselves, arrange our attitude and look pleasant. But when the camera clicks, it is all over, and nothing can change our image. It is fixed as it was in that second. Are we aware that we may in this very moment be posing for our picture? At the flash, there it will be, finished for all eternity: A picture of the gates of eternal life, of our Savior, and - of us.

ARE YOU READY FOR YOUR PICTURE AT THE GATES?

I. It will be over in a moment.

The angel who is speaking to John brings him an advance copy of the words that will be spoken by the heavenly camera-man in that high, supreme moment which awaits the world. (v. 11-12a). St. Paul tells us that it will happen "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump" (1 Cor. 15:52). Yes, that is always the way with a picture. "Behold, I come quickly." Did not our Savior warn us how quickly that would be, and what "quickly" means? "As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:27). There cannot be sufficient time for a man to come down from his house-top, or return from the field to get his good clothes. As a picture is already taken even before the click of the shutter reaches our ears, so we will find ourselves revealed when Jesus comes. Even the fliers soaring above the earth in their rocket jets at sonic speeds will seem to stand still as the gates of heaven are manifested and the world is bathed in the light.

And as it will be over in a moment, so it shall be over forever. For He who comes is Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. From His mouth issued the words which gave the earth its being and brought it out of nothing. He started the clocks; but they will never tick again after He returns. Again His mouth shall utter words, saying: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." So might a photographer speak who has flicked the camera's eye; so might he speak to you if you complain: "Oh, I moved; I had my eyes closed; I was not ready!" The answer is: What you were then, you will remain. There was enough time to prepare; there was full and ample warning.

Is it not so with us? How many times have we seen

the sun rise and set, the tides come in and go out, the seasons change, the fields ripening unto harvest or white in their mantle of snow? How patiently the Father has called us unto His kingdom and glory. How often the servants have gone out to bid the invited guests come to the feast. How many the thunderous warnings of the approaching end! Are you ready for your picture?

II. There will be beauty in it......

..... and it may as well be you. Why not? Hath not God yearned and bled that you might be a shining loveliness in that great Day? Let us regard for a moment those who are righteous and holy and who shall be righteous and holy forever. At the instant of their Savior's return, they may be hardly minded to receive Him. They may be troubled in that moment by the sins of their youth; they may be laboring in the dust of the harvest; they may be fleeing for their lives amid some disaster of this world. But whether they are found in rags or in furs, the picture snapped on Judgment Day will show them to be a glorious sight, righteous and holy, and not in their sins.

This seems like a tremendous thing to hope for, an impossible thing. For "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" (Job 14:4). Our text indeed says: "Blessed are they that do his commandments ..."; but each of us will despair of sharing in that praise. When we regard ourselves, we can only conclude that the picture-taking of Judgment Day will find us totally unprepared for the occasion. And yet there will be some who are ready. God assures us of this. Why should it not be we? Is it not our deepest desire that we should have such a face, such clothes, such jewelry which would make us beautiful despite all our sins and offenses?

There is a way; and we find it when we look away from ourselves. The moment of picture-taking is not an unforeseen emergency. He who comes as the lightning on that great Day has been here before; and when He was here before, He became known as "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." What does this mean? It means not only

that through Him we may become righteous, but that in Him we ARE righteous. For Jesus was given, yes, made unto us (1 Cor. 1:30). He rightfully belongs to all men because He bore their sins, because He redeemed them all. The Scriptures say that God justified the ungodly, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and they were all ungodly. Their sins are covered, their iniquity is pardoned. Are we, then, righteous? Are we holy? In God's sight indeed we are, since the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, has cleansed us from all sin. God affirms this, and we need but agree to it, accept the truth of it. God's love has been greater than our sin. Let us be satisfied that He has pronounced us righteous, and let us trust in it until the moment comes when we shall see Him face to face. Then in the hour of His appearing we shall be ready, beautiful. It is written: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (Rom. 10:10); and "to him that believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." (Rom. 4:5).

What a wonderful picture, then, we will make at the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem which descends with Jesus at His coming. Our faith in Him presents us faultless before His throne; and this faith will be plainly recognized in its fruits. We will be seen as children of God who have served Jesus in newness of life, in obedience to His commandments. Our Christian life, though still spotted with many a sin in its course, will appear as well-pleasing to the Lord, the Judge.

Thus we are ready at any time for the great moment. As He finds us, so shall we be, ever clothed in His blood and righteousness. And the last look the world will have of us will show us entering through those lovely gates (v. 14). That will be the reward which Jesus brings with Him (v. 12); a reward of grace, to be sure - not payment for our works, but the token of His love.

If we could see now what the Lord will see when He appears, with what haste and eagerness every one of us would begin to prepare for it and never be found unready day and night, being instant in prayer for a blessed depar-

ture; not only because of the beauty that shall forever be ours but also because of the ugliness which will be revealed when the lightning flashes. For

III. There will be ugliness unchangeable forever.

We might ask where ugliness can appear when all men have been so loved and so fully pardoned by God. But the explanation is not difficult to find.

Behold, humanity is marching toward that Day divided into two unnumbered multitudes. Between them flows the river of the Savior's blood. On one side of it is a broad highway; on the other side men walk a rough path. Those upon the narrow way, struggling and climbing, are they who have washed and cleansed their robes in the river (Rev. 7:14). On their side will be the opening to the gate of Life. But look at the other stream of humanity in this valley, the human myriads marching along the broad way. They will not cross the river of their salvation; they refuse the cleansing.

What dread will strike, what fierce confusion in their ranks, when Christ appears and their filth will be frozen upon them forever. Thus must they eternally be and remain - rejects, outcasts. The angel carefully classifies them in the words of our text (v. 15). Look them over. Some day they will be fixed in their ugliness of unbelief. Some day they will be out of reach of the heavenly gates of beauty. There are the "dogs." Scripture gives that name to the vicious humans who attack Christ, blaspheme His Name on earth and seek to destroy His Church. Some of them are ferocious; but others are very polite dogs, who try to put an end to Christendom by refusing to support its work, who mock the Gospel by putting forth every effort to make it look uninviting and doubtful. Sorcerers, the false scientists, are next on the list; men who with satanic skill blind the simple, and with signs and lying wonders deceive them into following their lead. Whoremongers are those given over to the lusts of their flesh, living joyously in the grossest sins of the flesh. Of them, as of the murderers and idolaters, we have seen

and are seeing a great sufficiency in our crime-infested age. No less familiar are we with the kind that "loveth and maketh a lie" - the base deceiver who in Christian guise confuses the hearts with false doctrine, as well as the teacher of antichristian religion.

All these will likewise be there when their image is recorded for the files of eternity; and they, too, will reap a reward. Some of them may be people we have personally known on earth. Dear Savior, keep us safely, lest we become like unto them. Let us give heed unto Thy testimony, that we may be found of Thee as such who "have right to the tree of life."

FOR THE FESTIVAL OF THANKSGIVING

The Text: "And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite"

Luke 10:31-32.

Of the sins which we are daily obliged to confess before our Father in heaven there are two kinds: Sins of commission and sins of omission. For we both do what is wrong and fail to do what is right. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). Our sins of commission, the wrong that we do in thought, word and deed are also the sins most easily seen and noticed, burdening our consciences and staining our record; but our sins of omission often pass by quite unnoticed, by us and by others. Yet these have a way of rising to plague and disturb us at times when we feel most virtuous - perhaps as on a day of Thanksgiving. For it would be today that we might be reminded of the nine lepers who failed to return to give glory to God for their healing - a grievous sin of omission. How often, we are moved to ask, have we been guilty of the same?

We seem to feel ourselves fully ready to proceed

with the celebration of this festival. A sense of thankfulness fills us all, who are blessed children of God. For the greatness of God's goodness toward us is very evident on every hand, and the Holy Spirit has enlightened us to see that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17). Our well-being is certainly undeniable. Beginning with our spiritual riches, we can boast of the love that has given us "a conscience free from blame, a soul unhurt by sin." It is the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge; and it has never failed to renew us poor sinners, wonderfully keeping us in perfect peace. We have borne our few crosses valiantly and in the comfort of every convenience: for He who has preserved our souls from Satan has also provided bountifully every need of our earthly life. The words leap to our lips today as we are invited to say: "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever."

But we may well ask ourselves whether the repetition of such and similar words is in itself always a thanksgiving. Are we not rather merely urging and admonishing one another while the question remains whether we are actually doing what we urge, actually have been doing it, and are willing to do it in future, or whether we must accuse ourselves of a sin of omission? The true Thanksgiving heart seeks to make its thankfulness known to the Lord. Then let us submit to an examination by the simple yet searching question:

HAVE YOU TOLD HIM?

As illustration we shall observe a certain priest and a Levite.

I.

You know these two men, of course. Who could forget them? Although they are only passing figures in a great story, although we know neither their names nor their addresses, they become as an open book to us.

Travelling along the road between Jerusalem and Jericho, they are either going to Jerusalem or returning from there. Their connection in the Holy City was with the Temple, for their calling lay in its service. Priests and Levites, of the house of Aaron, were in charge of the spiritual life of the Nation. They served in the House of God. Knowing this, we know a great deal more about these two. We know, for example, that they were enjoying the fullest blessings of their day and age. For one thing, they had a good home, a happy home, and they were provided with life's needs. Furthermore, we know that they were in good health, that they were excellent human specimens physically; for no maimed or crippled men were permitted to serve in the House of God. Nourished and endowed with the good things of life, they were certainly also heaped with spiritual blessings. If David could say that he would "rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness," what must we think of the priests and Levites who were permitted to handle the mercies of God, to live at the heart of the Gospel? Whatever they touched in the Temple was holy. They dwelt close to the breast of the Heavenly Father and bespoke His blessings daily upon themselves and others. When the Bible calls us priests, it bestows upon us a name of highest glory and privilege. This the priest and Levite enjoyed; and so they had on earth everything that the heart could desire.

We may be sure that they knew the Psalms, too, and chanted them often, including the 107th Psalm which begins and ends with the words: "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever." Shall we suppose that they never sang these words out of full hearts? Or were they unmindful of the duty therein expressed? Let us fairly say that they were no different in this than you or I; that they were thankful, in the way we, too, often are, for their blessings. But they forgot to tell God, for they failed to thank God in the language that He best understands, the language of love.

For our text shows them looking down upon a human being in his misery and passing him by. The man who had

fallen among thieves lacked just about everything that the priest and Levite had. He was a loser, of all his worldly goods, of his well-being, yes, very nearly of his life. To look at him was to be reminded of one's own blessings; and perhaps it did remind the passers-by. Perhaps they said to themselves: Thank God that is not I lying there! But they did not DO it; they did not tell God. Telling Him would have meant bending over the sufferer, kneeling down to him and doing something about his agony and loss. For that is God's way. He knelt down to us. He sent His Son from His throne and poured Him with His sacred blood into our sin-sick life. This God will understand thanks and thankfulness best when it expresses itself in similar love and mercy. For Scripture describes thanksgiving in that form: "Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High" (Ps. 50:14). And again: "I will sacrifice unto Thee with the voice of thanksgiving" (Jonah 2:9).

O give thanks . . . so sang the hearts of priest and Levite many a time. But when they forgot to follow their own exhortation, their thanksgiving added up to nothing more than a selfish feeling of well-being. For when there lay before them the utmost in human misery, with its opportunity for love and mercy, they were silent before their God.

II.

We make that mistake often, it is to be feared, even among ourselves and with one another, quite without meaning to do so. One thinks of the wealthy merchant who told his friend over the dinner table one evening that he owed his success in life to the wonderful guidance and wisdom of his mother, now aged and white-haired. He went on to praise his mother, to speak of his affection for her, of how much he owed her, when his companion suddenly asked him: "And have you ever told her that?" It turned out that the grateful son had never once actually communicated his appreciation to his mother in the way that she would best understand.

Is not the same weakness to be found in our rela-

tionship with the Lord? Now it is Thanksgiving; and our Savior-God is being glorified in hymn and prayer for His goodness toward us. But in our text we read that "by chance there came down a certain priest that way;" and by exactly the same chance the Lord puts us in the way of such human misery - us, who are abounding in all riches and advantages. The distressed lie all about us in the gutters of this world - those who lack what we possess in such plenty. One would think that people who are so ready to sing: " ... for He is good, and His mercy endureth forever," would understand that the opportunity to do good and be merciful is a test of thankfulness. How can I say that if I walk by on the other side, if I bind up no wounds, I have been thankful?

Objects of need are not far, not out of our way, but at our hand. God always places them near us. Much is being said about the suffering in other countries, of men's hunger and despair; and of course we include them in our thoughts. Yet it would be a mistake to think only, or even chiefly, of them. It is possible that many who send food parcels and medicines to foreign countries have been walking by the suffering world that lies right at their door.

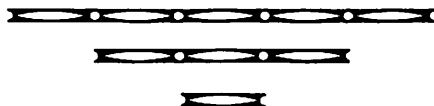
Let us speak of the neighbors at your side whom you, thankful people, may have been overlooking; of the homes very near you where there is sorrow, where hearts need comfort, where there is uncertainty that needs assurance, weakness that needs strengthening, small faith that needs encouragement. Living on the high, serene level of your own full, satisfying life; when have you walked over to such a heart and spoken words that helped, or gone out of the way to find solutions to someone's troublesome problems? Are there no widows in need, no aged waiting for a sympathetic word? Is everything covered by medicare and welfare check? Are there no parents troubled by wayward children; is there nobody who seems to be slipping into the ways of error, no wrong which is attended by much sorrow? Is there some taboo somewhere against helping such people? Must not they who are rich in assurance and understanding sit down at the side of the wavering and hold them fast?

A speechless appeal hangs over our valley of sorrows; here, in the midst of plenty, there are bewildered and unhappy people who nurse their griefs and doubts along silently, for the most part, but not entirely without signs that give notice of them in our contacts here and there. May we not tell our God how thankful we are for our happy homes and our security by offering the needy devotion, love and sacrifice?

Let us speak of our Missions. What an impersonal thing they are to many - just marks on a map, or represented by a collection plate making the rounds. But these mission stations represent labor in the midst of countless, endless cases of human suffering, of people who have lost their God or never found Him, and cannot possibly be happy as you and I are happy today.

Surely we can, in retrospect, see ourselves passing by these things, many times. Let us, then, repeat our question to ourselves in all earnestness. You say: "O give thanks unto the Lord!" Have you? Have you told Him? And do you keep telling Him?

E. Schaller



himself a vigorous opponent of the Biblical doctrine of inspiration, against which he inveighs as a "mechanical dictation theory." Some of the most resounding rhetorical passages of the lectures are reserved for denunciation of a faith in an inerrant Bible (e.g., p. 429ff). The old, tired arguments of the day of nineteenth century rationalism are fervently advanced. Thus the book offers no help to those seeking sound principles of interpretation. At most, in this respect, it identifies for us the sources of the "new hermeneutics" now being developed by a school of young modern Turks, including apostates from genuine Lutheranism, who are speaking of a kind of limited inerrancy of Scripture and somehow give the impression that, with the help of some fresh discoveries, they are growing a new variety of this heresy in their own theological back yards.

E. Schaller

2.

The Preacher's Heritage, Task, and Resources,
by Ralph G. Turnbull; Baker Book House, 1968;
paperback; 168 pages and extensive Bibliography;
\$2.95.

Dr. Ralph Turnbull is pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Seattle, Washington. He formerly served as Professor of Homiletics at Western Theological Seminary, and has held pastorates in Great Britain, Canada, and Philadelphia.

The volume contains the modified text of ten lectures in the field of Practical Theology and Preaching. These lectures were delivered by Dr. Turnbull at various Presbyterian, Free Methodist, and Reformed conferences, seminars and institutes. He leaves no doubt in the minds of his hearers and readers that his faith and "Weltanschauung" is Presbyterian.

This in itself should not rule out the probability of a non-Presbyterian learning something from Dr. Turnbull

relative to the preacher's heritage, task, and resources. Dr. Turnbull is a gifted man and his gifts were put to full use in his several lectures addressed to Presbyterian, Methodist and Reformed assemblies. But the lectures become something else when they are printed consecutively in one volume and used by readers who are outside the confessional context. In this form, penetrating lectures from a gifted and powerful man of conviction become a high-pressure sales pitch, repetitious propaganda, and a brain-wash. The book will therefore have its real value in the area which Dr. Turnbull indicates in his introduction: "... Because pastors and students have asked for excerpts and notes from the lectures, this book will serve that purpose."

The book organizes the lectures under three parts: PREACHING AND OUR SOCIETY AND CULTURE (The Puritan, Evangelical, Liberal, and Interacting Influences); THE PREACHER'S TASK IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD (His Aims, Difficulties, Opportunities); THE PREACHER'S RESOURCES (Using Puritan and Reformed Standards, The Urgency of Preaching, The Work of the Gospel Minister, The Evangel in Preaching, The Pulpit Leads the World).

Dr. Turnbull reproaches the critics who suggest that the "power of the pulpit" has faded and that the "power of the pulpit" has long since been rejected by the majority. He lectures to the point that "...the history of America testifies abundantly to the power and influence of the preacher with the Christian message." He insists that "...the American Heritage is the Christian Heritage." Therefore he points out in his book: "These chapters are based upon a selection of American preachers of earlier days whose lives and ministries sowed the seeds of national culture at its best. These men represent their age and work in the directives of moral, social, and spiritual advance."

If American Heritage, Christian Heritage, Power of the Pulpit can be run through a pencil sharpener and reduced to the points of Puritanism, Evangelism, Revivalism, and Jonathan Edwards... then Dr. Turnbull has performed a valuable service.

But a disservice emerges instead. Dr. Turnbull's historical references are neither national nor Christian in scope. They resemble materials from the anniversary book of a congregation or church body. For the sake of restoring power to the pulpit the reader is immersed in non-Scriptural doctrines concerning God, Conversion, Sacraments, Means of Grace. Evangelism is the method of salvation for a dying church, Revivalism is the method of salvation for a dying world. With ever increasing intensity the theme assaults the reader: The Pulpit, The Preaching, The Preacher - The Pulpit, The Preaching, The Preacher - The Pulpit, The Preaching, The Preacher. The final chapter: The Pulpit Leads the World. And it is never once recognized that the Word, not the pulpit, the preaching, or the preacher has to do with the hearer's conversion and/or confirmation in the faith.

There are, to be sure, some isolated useful truths to be found in this book... like needles in a haystack. But the book, used by a reader who is outside the confessional position of Dr. Turnbull, is not worth the time and effort of screening for a few needles, some of which have no point, no eye, or have already gathered rust. The useful truths to be found are generally made undesirable by the context, or have been treated in greater depth by other authors.

On the back cover of the book the publishers state: "It is a valuable volume for the minister's library of inspiration, instruction, and source material." This is absolutely correct if you are looking for Presbyterian inspiration, instruction, and source material!

G. Radtke

3.

Man in God's Milieu, by Bastian Kruithof, published by Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1968; paper-back, 144 pp.; Price: \$1.95

In the pages of his book, Man in God's Milieu, Mr. Bastian Kruithof brings faith and reason face to face and attempts to determine the role each should play for man in the "milieu" in which God has set him. As he develops his subject in its many aspects, the author fills the 144 pages with quotations from and references to a great many notables from the fields of theology, philosophy, the natural sciences, history, literature, etc. This reviewer was left more than a little breathless at times in trying to keep pace with the thoughts of Plato, Kant, Hegel, Brunner, Banink, Matthew Arnold, and a host of others presented in rapid succession. Perhaps the author is trying to cover too much in a limited amount of space.

The purpose of the book is set forth by Mr. Kruithof in the preface where he describes it as "...a book on Christianity and culture." He remarks: "Gathering the pollen from hundreds of sources has been a fascinating experience. Making the finished product a matter of simple communication has been different...."

In developing his subject under such chapter headings as: "Reason and Faith, Revelation, Theism, The Problem of Evil, The Meaning of History, The Christian Faith and Secularism, Morals Old and New, Destiny and Destination," two things become quite apparent. The one Mr. Kruithof would readily acknowledge: that he has been greatly influenced by Calvin; the other, which the author would question, is that at times reason is given a determinative place where faith alone should rule.

R. Gurgel

4.

Famous Biblical Hoaxes, by Edgar J. Goodspeed; published by Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1968; paper-back, 119 pp. and Index. List: \$1.95.

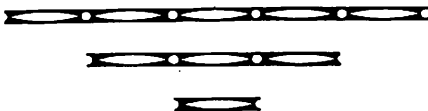
This is an expanded and up-dated combination of

two previous studies by the author: "Strange New Gospels" (1931), and: "New Chapters in New Testament Study" (1937). It presents an examination and discussion of a number of curious items of "Christian" literature purporting, in one way or another, to be ancient and authoritative accounts of events associated with Biblical personages, including our Lord Jesus.

These documents are not the New Testament apocrypha familiar to Bible students, but manuscripts and fragments even weirder in content than some of those. Included are such phantasies as: "The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ," allegedly discovered in a Tibetan monastery; "The Confessions of Pontius Pilate;" "The Long-lost Second Book of Acts;" and thirteen others.

For pastors who have interest and time to devote to such diversions, the book offers several hours of entertaining reading. Dr. Goodspeed, known among us chiefly through his Bible translation, has a lucid style and, without allowing it to become burdensome, brings scholarship to bear upon the subject.

E. Schaller



NOTICE TO OUR READERS

Enclosed with this issue of the JOURNAL our subscribers are receiving, as a bonus supplement, a copy of the convention essay: "The Virtue of Christian Sobriety," printed by resolution of the 1968 convention of our Church. Additional copies of the essay are available for distribution @ \$.30 each, postpaid. In the interest of economy of time and labor, may we ask that pastors who recommend the essay to their members receive individual orders and forward total order to be filled? Bulk shipment can then be made to each pastor for distribution.

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E. Schaller

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