



"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

VOLUME 9

JULY 1969

NUMBER 3

—ESSAYS AND ARTICLES—

WALTHER ON ELECTION

Foreword

The following translation of a passage from Koehler's Kirchengeschichte is offered to our readers primarily because of its chief subject, the doctrine of the Election of Grace. Providing the necessary historical background, the author not only leads us into a richer understanding of the comfort conveyed by this wonderful revelation but also shows how any modification, be it ever so slight, nevertheless results in an impairment of the SOLA GRATIA, salvation by grace alone. This is particularly true of the "intuitu fidei," the thought that God's decision in His eternal election was arrived at "in view of faith," the faith He would eventually find in man. That this could lead to the synergistic view that man does make some contribution to his ultimate salvation was hardly anticipated by those teachers who in the 17th century coined the term. But it simply is a historical fact that this is how it worked out in the early years of the Synodical Conference.

The author, Prof. John P. Koehler, speaks from close personal observation and knowledge. As a pupil of Walther from 1879 to 1882 he was there when the controversy began. The thoroughness of his understanding of his great teacher and his wholehearted identification with Walther's position is fully attested by his subsequent writings as well as by his close cooperation with Hoenecke at Wauwatosa. Our generation has every reason to appreciate these truths, to say nothing of our needing them for our own troubled times. — The chapter on Church and Ministry is added as something that is also important, but chiefly because it shows that the Wauwatosa presentation of this doctrine was not a deviation from Walther's teachings on that subject, but rather a broader application of the Scriptural principles for situations lying beyond the original prob-

lems Walther had to face.

This translation is based on an earlier one prepared for use in our Seminary. For publication in our JOURNAL I have dispensed with the technical format of the original. For the sake of greater readability I have adopted a style that is rather free. Should there be any question about the accuracy of the translation, Koehler's original will always provide the answer. (Ch. 277: u to y; pp. 709-712).

After having recorded the migration of the Saxons under Stephan and the eventual emergence of Walther as their real theologian, Koehler describes the picture of Lutheranism in America. All this is treated as part of the general history of Protestantism, specifically German Protestantism in America. This explains the peculiar reference to "the German Lutheran Church in the United States."

THE GREAT OPPORTUNITY

The greatest privilege not only in America but in all Christendom came to the German Lutheran Church in the United States when it was granted the opportunity of participating in the discussion of the highest and most decisive concept of Scripture: the doctrine of the Election of Grace. As it always does, a special interest in this particular doctrine marked a high point of theological activity. So it was in the days of Augustine, Luther and Calvin. All Reformed attenuations, however, as well as the "intuitu fidei" of 17th century theology must, in their historical setting, be considered a weakening of this original vigor.

WALTHER'S GRASP OF THE SUBJECT

In 1878 Walther published what he had learned from Luther concerning the doctrine of Election. Before that he had already presented the works of those earlier dogmatians with such effectiveness that they commanded new respect in all the world. But now he disowned their "intuitu fidei" terminology as a peculiarly inept expression (schie-

fer Ausdruck). His main point was that faith is the result of Election. What he had learned from Luther was pre-sented about as follows: At the highest point of its revelation of Law and Gospel Scripture applies a principle that is affirmed from beginning to end, the thought that all things are under the sole rule of God. 'On the one hand His Word gives the troubled believer the comforting assurance of the election of grace, something so certain that it cannot fail him. On the other it proclaims to the hardened unbeliever the judgment of obduration, something which he cannot fend off. As Law and Gospel, these two proclamations are to be kept strictly apart. Nor are they made for the sake of intellectual analysis, for this is not a matter of theory. These are the simple facts of Law and Gospel, both of which by their very nature do not depend on being intellectually acknowledged by man. As for the election of grace, this thought that grace and with it the entire Christian life is the result of this election, this is precisely what Paul wants to say by way of comfort for the believer.

THE CONTEXT OF HISTORY

Augustine recognized the main point. But in his presentation and because of his neo-Platonism (which always wants to understand things on the basis of a principle) he arrived at his double predestination, "gemina praedestinatio." In replying to the De Libero Arbitrio of Erasmus, Luther addressed himself to the subject in his De Servo Arbitrio, approaching it with his fresh theological vigor and from his attitude of an uninhibited faith. Not only did he, like Augustine, recognize the main point, but since he was simply not interested in setting up a system he arrived at the real thought of Paul — although it must be granted that his terminology was often rather awkward. This is really "Luther's greatest theological achievement."

Calvin also took up the subject, likewise recognizing the chief point. But now his legalistic intellectualism took over, expanding the trend of Augustine into a "decretum absolutum," and from that point on set up his syllo-

gisms with relentless philosophical consistency, his stern determination (harte Energie) shrinking from none of the conclusions. It is not the concept of Election which marks the difference between Luther and Calvin, but their respective ways of operating with it. Since Election did not become a controversial issue during the lifetime of Luther, this subject (dieser Gedanke) did not come into the foreground again until after his death, and then as the result of Calvin's extremes.

But taking their cue from Melancthon, and lacking Luther's inner freedom while being preoccupied with so many minutiae (allerlei Kleinkunst), Lutheran theologians of the 17th century could find no better solution to their problem than the "intuitu fidei," plus their petty contraction of the foreknowledge (PROGNOSIS) of God, thus necessarily missing the great main thought of Paul.

SUDDEN CONTROVERSY

Walther resumed Luther's line of thought — rather haltingly at first, as was natural — and, as far as those Lutheran dogmaticians were concerned, in a manner which was both cautious and, outwardly at least, in keeping with their intellectualizing method. For this he was charged with Crypto-Calvinism by his former colleague, F. A. Schmidt, who had now become Professor at the Norwegian Seminary while still editing his own periodical, "Altes und Neues" (Things Old and New). Prof. F. W. Stelhorn of Fort Wayne supported him, as did certain other Missourians. This also was quite natural, since all of these opponents from his own synod had been Walther's students, who had acquired their appreciation of those Lutheran dogmaticians from him. For this tendency could be acquired intellectually, whereas the inner freedom of Luther could not be achieved in this way.

In their defense of the "intuitu fidei" these opponents of Walther came up with the claim that in the matter of salvation the decision is also "dependent on the attitude of man." They strongly rejected every idea of Synergism, yet the controversy was nevertheless waged in the very

manner (in den Formen), in the general thought-pattern (in dem Gedankenkreise) and with the same argumentation that had been used between Melancthon and Pfeffinger on the one hand and the Gnesio-Lutherans on the other. Thus also the doctrine of Conversion was brought into the discussion: Naturally nothing was achieved since, intellectually, the two parties were operating from entirely different premises. Among those who supported Walther was Prof. Ad. Hoenecke of Wisconsin's Theological Seminary (then at Milwaukee, later Wauwatosa, now Mequon). Another was George Stoeckhardt who had been called from the Saxon Free Church to a pastorate in St. Louis, and then soon to a professorship at the Missouri Seminary.

As has been said, the year 1879 marks the beginning of a controversy which was anything but edifying, in the course of which the Ohio Synod withdrew from the Synodical Conference and called Stellinghorn to their Seminary at Columbus. The Norwegian Synod was split, some going with Schmidt while others remained in an informal relationship with the Synodical Conference. Iowa and the General Council, in so far as this body concerned itself about the matter, sided with Walther's opponents. — During these late years a weariness has set in which, as is so often the case, aims at reunion, but hastily seeks to remove the differences without first having given the subject the benefit of a thorough discussion. As examples consider one such movement among the Norwegians, and another within the Synodical Conference — neither of which has at this time * come to a definite conclusion.

CHURCH AND MINISTRY

During these last few years the Wauwatosa faculty has been standing for a version of this doctrine which on the face of it seems to be the very opposite of Walther's. The latter had indeed identified the parish ministry (Pfarramt) with the Ministry. And in contrast to other forms of

* Koehler's Kirchengeschichte was published in 1917.

church organization he had claimed the distinction of special divine institution for the local congregation, and for its Ministry as well. The Wauwatosa faculty holds the parish ministry to be a species of the Ministry of the Church. In the same way it takes the local congregation to be a species of the larger term "Church." In both instances it maintains that the term "institution" (Stiftung) is not to be understood as implying that God conferred the distinction of a special institution on these two species of Christian and ecclesiastical life alone, apart from any other forms which have also been created by the Gospel. But since both of these institutions are a work of the Holy Spirit, it holds that the same is true of whatever other forms have been wrought in the same way. It therefore concludes that "institution" is simply the divine creating of all these forms: the parish ministry, local congregation, synod, the office of parochial school teachers, professors, etc. For they were after all brought forth by the Spirit through His Gospel as within the Christian Church His saints in view of the conditions confronting them made their arrangements in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free. — As of 1917, discussions concerning this question are not yet complete. But since in their hearts both sides take the same evangelical position as to the concrete matters which are under discussion, it is to be expected that on the basis of the Word of God agreement will be reached also in the intellectual understanding of these terms and their proper use. *

Translation by E. Reim

* As subsequent events have proved, this expectation was not to be realized. This final sentence does show, however, in what spirit, in the estimation of the author and his colleagues, these discussions were originally initiated and conducted.

"A FINAL APOSTOLIC WORD."

A half-century ago the publishing firm of Johann Herrman in Saxony issued a modest pamphlet entitled: "A FINAL APOSTOLIC WORD, addressed to all upright servants of the Word." Based upon II Timothy 4:1-5, this message came from the prolific pen of Dr. Carl Manthey Zorn, at one time a missionary of the Leipzig Mission Society in India and later pastor of the Missouri Synod in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, and Cleveland, Ohio. He died in 1928.

Because of its warm eloquence and its evangelical earnestness, both so characteristic of its author, the pamphlet was cherished by many pious Christians of that era as a minor classic. Today, so far as the undersigned knows, it is out of print and no longer listed in current publishing house catalogues. Presumably it is available to few of the present generation of Christians or their pastors.

We venture to reproduce here, in translation, the second-last section of this treatise, which deals with verses 3-4 of II Timothy 4. There are several reasons for doing so. On the one hand, it supplies a melodious counterpoint for the essay published in our March issue, entitled: "The Glory of the Gospel Ministry." A further reason is that the observations and judgments respond so well to the circumstances of our modern age. It is inspiring to hear the past speak to us so incisively concerning the current problems of the Church militant; and it is instructive to recognize how tragically the somber fears of this pastor of the old Missouri Synod have been more than realized among his spiritual descendants. Finally, it is well that our younger pastors especially should through reading absorb some of the firm and forthright style of a devout theologian who spoke and wrote in the hey-day of the Synodical Conference of whose sound theology we are heirs.

In reproducing the text we have taken the liberty of reducing to more modest proportions the amount of emphasis found in the original through the use of heavy type. This modification will in no way be permitted to distort or diminish the intended force or sense of the message. The excerpt now follows.

At this point the Apostle supplies a particular reason which prompts him so earnestly to exhort and so solemnly to adjure the servant of the Word that he stand fast in the Word, in season and out of season, that he reprove, rebuke and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine:

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

We well know that these words were, in the first instance, directed to Timothy. What message did they have particularly for him? This: A time shall come in which "they," that is, those to whom the salutary doctrine is being preached, will not tolerate, not appreciate this doctrine; rather, they will designate their own desires and preferences as the norm, and will abundantly provide themselves with teachers and pastors conforming to this standard. They will be people who itch to hear what suits them; and thus they will turn their ears away from the divine truth and divert them to the "fables," to fictions, inventions of men and false doctrines.

There were men available also in the days of Paul and Timothy who were heretics, errorists, teaching inventions and advancing questions, subtleties and materials for dispute rather than that which God had prepared, revealed and offered for the salvation of men and which must be grasped by faith; worthless, idle chatterers who advertised themselves as teachers of the Law and did not themselves understand what they said or affirmed. ¹ Already then there were found false teachers who had discarded a good conscience, made shipwreck concerning faith, and departed from the Truth. ² Already then there were harmful teachers who continued not in wholesome doctrine but were puffed up, knowing nothing, doting on questions and strifes of words, being of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who of their spurious godliness made a profitable business. ³ Even at that time there were many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially among the circumci-

sion, who taught things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. ⁴ And even in those days such errorists enjoyed a measure of success among wavering and unindoctrinated Christians. ⁵ But as yet they were unable to prevail.

When, then, should that time come of which the Apostle prophesied in the passage under discussion? Soon. In a subsequent generation, after Paul's death and presumably after Timothy's departure, a number of Christians would fall from faith and cling to deceiving spirits, to doctrines of devils and their teachers who would speak lies in hypocrisy, having their consciences seared as with a hot iron; who in self-chosen piety and with crass legalism would bind human ordinances upon the necks of their disciples, commanding them, for example, not to marry, and to abstain from food which God created to be received with thanksgiving. All this the Holy Spirit clearly revealed to the Apostle. ⁶ That such conditions would arrive soon, hard upon the passing of the Apostle and Timothy, we also note from the fact that the same Apostle told the elders of the congregation at Ephesus of his awareness that after his departure grievous wolves would enter among them, not sparing the flock; indeed, that out of their own midst men would arise speaking perverse things to draw disciples away from God's Word and Christ's flock into their own orbit. ⁷ We further note that the same Apostle writes to the Thessalonians that the mystery of iniquity was already stirring, but that he who now hindered it would hinder until he was removed. ⁸

So we understand the Apostle's prophecies in the words now before us, and see the extent to which the Apostle by means of these forecasts established his admonition to Timothy — the admonition that he be a herald of the Word, remain firmly thereon whether the times be favorable or unfavorable, that he reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. Since false teachers were even then in evidence, since they were already wreaking damage in the congregation of Jesus Christ, and because the Holy Spirit expressly said that such harm was soon to become even more general ⁹ — therefore Timothy must not in surrender or with fainthearted complaints sit twid-

dling his thumbs, nor be satisfied with a mere routine preaching of the Word for the guidance of his Christians, but shall with correction, warning and exhortation vigorously enter the lists against the evil already stirring and soon to increase in vehemence, set himself firmly in opposition, hinder it, repel it, in order to preserve and deliver the Christians; and do all this by means of the Word of God, the single weapon of his warfare and the sole means of salvation.

How do matters stand now? What is it like in these "last days?" ¹⁰ What are the conditions in this your day, you servant of the Word? Verily the incipient evil which the Apostle foretold in addressing Timothy is now at hand in ultimate measure. Today the church is awash in a flood of false teachers. Christendom far and wide refuses to tolerate the sound and saving doctrine of God's Word. Such who assume the Christian name establish their lusts and predilections as the norm and supply themselves abundantly with teachers and preachers ready to conform to it. They are people whose ears itch to hear that which pleases their carnal mind; they turn their ears away from divine truth and cock them toward fictions and absurdities of every sort, toward humanly contrived heresies, unreservedly and endlessly. The church has become a fearful desert. ¹¹ O God, thus it is indeed!

Yet in this wilderness, God be thanked, there remain oases, here and there, where more or less copious springs of the water of life bubble forth and regenerate hearts. Although not always in wholly unadulterated form, God's Word continues to be preached and heard. Children of God are still being spiritually conceived, born, nourished and preserved unto eternal life. Even in these areas, however, the leaven of ungodly doctrine and attitudes is at work and effective in increasing measure. There, too, Satan is busily sowing tares among the wheat and mingling children of evil with the sons of the Kingdom. These are "the last days of sore distress."

Even so, by the miraculous power of God, there remains on earth a church of the pure Word and Sacrament, an "orthodox" church — a church in which the

Word of God is taught in its truth and purity and the Sacraments are administered to Christian people in accord with the divine institution, although this church exists only in relatively or actually small numerical strength. This church is manifestly a "pillar and ground" of the truth; ¹² the divine truth rests upon her, ¹³ is by her confessed, witnessed, placed upon the candlestick, and beamed from her to all nations. In this church no false doctrine is tolerated. In this church the water of life gushes forth. Not always, indeed, is it a mighty torrent; but it springs forth pure and clean. Praise, glory and honor be unto God!

We are not confounded by the fact that much sin is found in this church. That is inevitable; "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." ¹⁴ Does not the esteemed apostle Paul himself deplore the sin which still clings to him? ¹⁵ Nor are we confounded by the fact that coarse outbursts of sin occur within this church. Did not the exalted apostle Peter grievously fall? ¹⁶ That in this church there are those who are "weak," weak in Christian knowledge ¹⁷ and in sanctification of life, ¹⁸ does not discourage us either; for thus it was in the apostolic age, as may be seen from the Scripture passages we have cited. Such conditions must be borne in love while those who are "strong" seek to remedy them. And that in this church there should be hypocrites and false brethren, both among the laity and among the servants of the Word, is to be expected. Judas Iscariot was in the circle of the Twelve Apostles. Some false brethren had privily come into that first, glorious congregation at Jerusalem; ¹⁹ and the Church of God in its manifestation on earth always resembles a net in which good and bad fish are found. ²⁰ Therefore this circumstance, too, cannot alienate us from the church we have been discussing, nor can the fact that through her representatives, or by them, mistakes are made. Surely this is not unexpected. Christ is nevertheless in her midst and rules all for good. Within this entire framework an upright servant of the Word will be undeterred in his work of preaching the Word,

reproving, warning and exhorting with all longsuffering and doctrine.

But especially in these last days of sore distress such activity is vitally necessary in view of a specific circumstance. And what is that circumstance? Let us in the fear of God perceive and ponder it.

Even the orthodox church, including its laity and the public servants of the Word, is influenced by the spirit of the times.

Insofar as this manifests itself in purely external matters, no criticism is called for. When, for example, in the public worship services of our day "ushers" are appointed to direct worshippers to their pews, or worshippers are no longer occupying seats on opposite sides of the aisle according to their sex, but sit in family groups; or if our schools abandon the old-fashioned multiple-seat desks and provide each child with its own desk — in brief, if in these and many other similar details one desires to be up-to-date, who could properly take exception?

But the susceptibility of the orthodox church to the spirit of our time is not limited to such matters. It extends to a domain wherein that church will be confronted with the wrath and judgment of God unless she calls a halt, recoils, turns about in repentance, cleanses herself of contemporary influence and allows herself to be guided by the Holy Spirit through the Word.

And here indeed it behooves an upright servant of the Word to be a herald of God, to hold firmly and immovably to the Word, to reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. Let him be moved to do so by the danger which he sees as a threat to his dear church, by the obedience toward the apostolic Word which teaches him how he is to seek to save his church, and by a love, a burning, fervent love for his church and the Kingdom of Christ at large; in short, by the obedience of love.

Any spirit of cold, proud, yes, hateful criticism, accusation, judging and condemning ought then to be foreign and remote to the upright servant of the Word. How unlike such a spirit would be to that of his Lord and Master, who surely also reproved and warned where necessa-

ry, but then surrendered His life in behalf of us poor sinners. ²¹ Perish the thought that an upright servant of the Word should desert his church merely because he sees it threatened by evil and danger. On the contrary, let him hasten to help. ²²

What are the marks, the symptoms which indicate that also the orthodox church is perilously affected by the spirit of the times?

We begin by pointing to general indications. When, as is indeed right and God-pleasing, faithful men of God in the orthodox church insist that in her public doctrine as well as in her practice God's Word alone shall be decisive, ²³ one is frequently confronted with remarks by members of congregations, and sometimes even of servants of the Word, to this effect: Oh, those are old fogies ²⁴ with out-dated views who have not progressed with the times! ... That is extremely dangerous talk; it readily spreads like cancer ²⁵ and tends to cause apostasy from God's Word.

Such speech, such a mind also engenders unionism. For what is the true essence of unionism? Indifference toward God's Word, displeasure in explicit divine directives, an inclination to let subjective ideas become the norm of conduct. Unionism breaks through the barriers and boundaries which God in His Word has set for the exercise of church fellowship. There may indeed be no desire to amalgamate or mingle with churches which by name and confession reveal their heterodoxy. But where some church body calls itself "evangelical Lutheran," just as we describe ourselves, and emblazons on its banner a subscription to the Word of God and the Book of Concord of 1580, there is a pressing inclination on the part of many individual members and of some servants of the Word to practice fellowship with that body despite the fact that in actuality it deviates from God's Word and the Concordia of 1580. Do we not realize that this very attitude is extremely dangerous, powerfully seductive, and leads to delinquency, to indifference toward God's Word, to disregard for God's express directives, favoring a disposition to make one's own thoughts the norm of conduct? Is that not an instance of placing name and appearance above truth and reality?

Does not Satan, too, disguise himself as an angel of light? ²⁶ Would we desire fellowship with him? Does not every lie, all that militates against God's Word, originate with Satan? ²⁷ Should we allow ourselves to be subverted by a name and by pretense? Shall we sit down together, and work together, with those who call themselves evangelical Lutheran, yet in some or in many doctrines, or even in but a single doctrine, set themselves against God's Word and oppose it? Would that not be an extreme cause of offense and lead to evil? Would it not represent the finest satanic impulse toward a gradual indulgence in the coarsest forms of unionism?

In the orthodox church much earnest testimony is voiced against the antichristian lodges, with evidence from God's Word to the effect that a Christian may not affiliate with them. Nevertheless numerous congregations and their servants of the Word accept into membership and to the Lord's Table, upon request and simply because they profess the Christian faith, such who have sworn the oath of the lodge and have no intention of renouncing it. That is a fearful union! Servants of the Word may seek to explain such offense by saying that they wish to "educate" these erring brethren by means of the Gospel preached in the congregation and thus bring them to a lively understanding of the truth, so that they sever their connection with the lodge. But what happens in many instances? The lodge brothers continue both in the congregation and in the lodge to the day of their death. Indeed, there are congregations in which the lodge holds the upper hand to the extent that the pastor would be deposed if he testified against it. And what is the result? Christian people become confused. With increasing frequency one hears it said: Here the lodge is opposed, in another congregation the door is open to it; consequently the anti-lodge position is one of those antiquated prejudices which will soon disappear from our midst, as have so many others.

The parish school, or parochial school maintained by orthodox churches, is by far the most effective agency for the christian training of the children of our congregations. We cannot expect Christian schools from the secular

state, nor may we expect them. But so many parents, even pastors, now content themselves with the greatly inferior Sunday School, and oppose the Christian day-school to boot. Day after day children are sent to the irreligious, yes, the antichristian public schools. How sparsely instructed in the Word of God must the generation be that is growing up in this fashion. Thank God that at this very time great efforts are being made to preserve and improve Christian day-schools.

Daily home devotions, as well as private Bible-reading, have both become rare and spasmodic exercises.

Many, many of our Christians neglect regular attendance at public worship. And all too many of our pastors are partly at fault because of their mechanical sermonizing.

Oh, how would it be possible to enumerate all the things that accuse us before Almighty God? Lukewarmness, secular spirit and worldliness ²⁸ abound and prevail. This is the "root that beareth gall and wormwood," the root of bitterness. ²⁹

To summarize: In manifold ways we do not do as the Word of God, and the orthodox church to which we belong, teach. In theory we are pure and fine; but the practice does not correspond. And we tolerate such ungodly practice, offending against the earnest Word of the Lord that we should hear and do His teaching. ³⁰

Now some who see and deplore this are of the opinion that it is "weakness" and must be "borne." — But what, according to Scripture, is "weakness," and what does it mean to "bear"? To begin with, read the 14th chapter of the letter to the Romans. There you will find that "weakness" is represented by the excessively tender and over-anxious consciences of some upright Christian hearts which are, however, weak in knowledge; who do not feel free to do this or that which God nevertheless has in no way prohibited, and feel obliged to do certain things which God has nowhere required. Here we also learn what "bearing" means; namely, that well-informed Christians are to show loving consideration for such weak ones, neither judging them nor offending them by a reckless use

of "adiaphora," of things neither commanded nor forbidden; that they do not by their example in the use of such things induce the weak to follow suit, but with "offense" and "doubting," feeling that thereby they are sinning. Now read the first three verses of the 15th chapter of Romans. Here we are told:

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."

The "infirmities" of the weak have reference to this, that a christian brother may not yet have attained to the spiritual maturity and strength which enables him to resist all temptations victoriously, and thus may "be overtaken in a fault." ³¹ Such a one we are to "bear;" we are not to reject him in our own conceits and regard him as a heathen, but should "restore him in the spirit of meekness" ³² and with out attitude seek his good and lead him toward improvement.

But may we properly and simply designate as "weakness" those manifestations in the orthodox church which we described above, and thus appease our consciences? Most certainly not! Can we imagine ourselves able to dispose in such a way of the fact that our deeds contradict our doctrine? Certainly not! If we thought so, and acted accordingly, we would be exposing ourselves to well-deserved ridicule. Thus recently a false Lutheran pastor said to one of our pastors: "You accept lodge members under protest and we accept them without protest." Let there be no denial: those are evils growing out of the spirit of this age, which must be resolutely resisted with the Word of God. If they are indefinitely "borne" as "weakness," God's wrath will descend upon us; He will withdraw His saving Grace from us and give us over to a reprobate mind. ³³ Then we will at the last reach the tragic condition of Christendom in general: that we, too, will no longer endure sound doctrine and will instead order for ourselves preachers a-plenty according to our own lusts, will turn our itching ears away from the truth and lend them to fables. Through fault of Christians this has invariably and swiftly befallen the orthodox church in the

past. Luther saw this and declared that the Word of the Lord is like a "passing deluge" which continues nowhere longer than fifty years. After Luther's death, through the fault of Christians, this judgment was very soon confirmed; and it will come to this with us, too, very soon, if we heed not the word of Christ:

"Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." 34

Oh, we so gladly bask in the light of the pure doctrine conferred upon us; we so joyfully parade this most precious of all gifts, and fail to remember the great responsibility which rests upon him who bears this treasure — what is required of one who has the pure doctrine. 35

Therefore, you servant of the Word, on your part make yourself as a wall, step into the breach, fight in the day of the Lord, lift up your voice, issue a call to repentance, be a herald of Christ, stand fast in the Word in these last and evil days, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine! Confront with vigor the evil that is stirring, brace yourself against it, resist it, repel it, preserve your church from destruction, save her! The Apostle, approaching his death, by the Holy Spirit solemnly adjures you so to do.

Translated: E. Schaller

Notes:

1. I Tim. 1:3-7.
2. I Tim. 1:19-20; II Tim. 2:17-18.
3. I Tim. 6:3-5.
4. Titus 1:10-11.
5. II Tim. 2:17-18; Titus 1:11.
6. I Tim. 4:1-3.
7. Acts 20:29-30.
8. II Thess. 2:7. (Read 1-12).
9. It is to be noted that in I Tim. 4:1-3 previously cited, the expression translated "in the latter times" in KJV would better be rendered:

"in future times." This is not equivalent to "the last days" mentioned in II Tim. 3:1.

10. II Tim. 3:1.
11. See footnote 13.
12. I Tim. 3:15.
13. At this point the venerable author incautiously opened the door to misunderstanding. In the passage cited St. Paul obviously refers to the Holy Christian Church. When the author applies it to the orthodox visible church, he speaks metaphorically. He is also assuming that the reader will make the necessary adjustments when it is stated above that the church has "become a fearful desert." He means outward Christendom, of course. The false ecclesiology rampant in our day makes it essential that these distinctions be underscored. (The Editor).
14. Rom. 3:23-24.
15. Rom. 7:14-25.
16. Matt. 26:69-75; Gal. 2:11-13.
17. Rom. 14.
18. Rom. 15:1-3.
19. Gal. 2:4.
20. Matt. 13:47-50.
21. John 15:13; I John 3:16.
22. Prov. 17:17; 24:11-12; John 10:12-13.
23. Ps. 119 (see v. 9); Luke 6:46-49.
24. This is the author's own translation.
25. II Tim. 2:16-17.
26. II Cor. 11:14.
27. Gen. 3:1-5; John 8:44; I Kings 22:21-22.
28. Rev. 3:16; I John 2:15-17.
29. Deut. 29:18; Heb. 12:15.
30. Read Matt. 7:21-27 and James 1:22-25.
31. Gal. 6:1.
32. Ibid.
33. Ez. 22:30-31; 13:5.
34. Rev. 2:5.
35. Luke 12:48.

== PREACHING THE WORD ==

AN ANNIVERSARY SERMON *

The Text: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth: Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."
Isaiah 52:7-10.

Dear Fellow-Redeemed:

From the horse and buggy days to this age of rockets to the moon: this is the time-span we are thinking about this morning — sixty years. That is a great part of any man's life if he has reached the four score years of which God says it is given by reason of special strength. What does a man do with so many years? In an age of science and invention which in these last sixty years has given us the radio, the television, the modern high-powered auto, the jet airplane, the vaccines, the antibiotics, the heart transplant, the modern press, movies with sound, electric and gas refrigeration, automatic furnaces, hot-water heaters and the like, it might be said that a man could have

* Preached at the observance of Pastor Geo. Tiefert's 60th year in the Pastoral Ministry.

carved out quite a niche of fame for himself if he had invented or discovered one or the other of these twentieth-century marvels. Certainly the names of Henry Ford, the Wright brothers, Salk, Thomas Edison, Firestone, Marconi and a host of others have gone down in history, and they will be remembered for their contributions to the progress of this amazing era in which we are living. In fact, it is certain that if anyone could come up with a magic formula to end the war in Viet Nam tomorrow or could step forward with a sure plan to end inflation or to put an end to poverty, his name would be assured of a place in Who's Who in America. Of course, to be elected President of the United States would put a man's name in the Encyclopedia Britannica.

But what about a poor preacher out on the prairie, driving a horse and buggy or riding in a sleigh battling the winter snowstorms to get to an outlying parish or to visit a sick and dying parishioner in a tar-paper shack? What about a preacher serving for so many years a congregation in the small town of Stambaugh, Michigan? What chance is there that such an one will be remembered in the annals of history? You know the answer. It remains for the people of God to give the answer and to tell the truth. Of course no one is expecting to find this recorded in a single page of world history; but this we shall say, its results are recorded in the Book of Life where the names of those are written who came to faith in Jesus Christ through this ministry and remained faithful unto the end. This has been a blessed and a beautiful ministry.

And so on this festive occasion, the sixtieth anniversary of the ordination of Pastor Geo. Tiefel to the Holy Ministry, we consider on the basis of our text the theme:

HOW BEAUTIFUL THIS MINISTRY!

I. Beautiful because of the message which it brought.

Our text is from the book of the prophet Isaiah, and its words take us back to a time when Judah had for a long time been in bondage. Seventy years had passed since the day when Judah and its king were led away by the wick-

ed Babylonian king who ordered Jerusalem, the holy city, with its temple, to be burned to the ground. Before their eyes all the walls were demolished, the vessels of brass, silver and gold, the treasures of the temple, were taken as spoils by the heathen conquerors who wished to leave no trace of the things which had been holy to Judah for many a year, but which its own people too often had despised and deserted for the idols of their neighbors. To them it now seemed that the world was coming to an end. But it was not so; for they had the promise that they would return and the sacred things would be restored. For a long time they had waited and wondered. Now the time of the Lord had arrived. To those who were watching, there came to view on the horizon something moving in their direction. As they strained their eyes to see if it might be friend or foe with good news or bad, they recognized the runners upon the mountain as friends. They could see that they were not running as people being pursued, but as men hastening to bring tidings, yes, tidings of the good day which had been foretold and promised. The runners came to bring tidings of Cyrus' decree that all the Jews should be released, that joy was to be restored and the temple rebuilt. This was the message, a message of deliverance, good tidings of good, a publishing of peace! Nahum speaks of it in these words: "Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows; for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off" (Nah. 1:15). The feet of the runner are called beautiful, for they carry the messenger along the way so that the news may be proclaimed which speaks of deliverance, peace and freedom.

Of course this has a deeper and more wonderful meaning than just this, that Jerusalem shall be restored and the temple building erected; for the Apostle Paul has said concerning the sending out of the preachers of the Gospel in our New Testament age: "And how shall they preach except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things." (Rom. 10:15). It is en-

tirely proper, then, that we apply these words from Isaiah to the ministry of our beloved and honored celebrant, Pastor Geo. Tiefel.

The record of his ministry stretches out over a period of sixty years; and we may say that those hundreds of sheep and lambs that have been fed and shepherded by him through the divine call of God our Savior could well have been speaking the words: How beautiful are the feet of him that brought us good tidings, that published peace; that brought us good tidings of good, that published salvation; that said unto us, Thy God reigneth. For it can be said with certainty that the heart and center and core of this servant's message has ever been the peace that comes from the manger bed at Bethlehem, the joy that comes from the Savior who says: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." He preached the forgiveness which comes from the cross from which the Redeemer said: "Father, forgive them"; and he proclaimed the glory of the Resurrection morn with its message declaring the sins of all the world forgiven. To preserve this peace and this joy to the flock, Pastor Tiefel has been willing to expend himself and to go through the fires of controversy. He will be the first to say that it has all been by the grace of God who strengthened him and walked by his side through all these years. It has ever been his joy to preach, to teach, to shepherd and to guide the flock. The missions of the Church have occupied a special place in his heart. The first time I heard of the name Tiefel was in connection with missions — particularly the mission in far-away Japan. The cause of Christian Education has been dear to his heart. Many young people will be ready to stand up today and testify to the fact that he encouraged them to study and to prepare for the work of the Lord. Our celebrant always showed the most lively interest in conventions and conferences and took an active part, all of which has been appreciated by us who listened to his words of wisdom. Indeed, this has been a beautiful ministry because the center of all its activity has always been the peace of God which passeth all understanding — the peace which our Savior brought the world by His blood and righteousness.

That our celebrant might always be ready to serve his Lord whenever and wherever called, Mrs. Tiefel, under God, has been at his side with encouragement and help and has thus been a true handmaid of the Lord. For this, too, our thanks arise today to the throne of God.

As we look at the beautiful ministry of the Gospel, we are indeed moved to sing:

O blessed ministry of reconciliation
 That shows the way to God and brings to us
 salvation!
 By Thine evangel pure, Lord, Thou preserv'st
 Thy fold,
 Dost call, enlighten, keep, Dost comfort and
 uphold.

II. Beautiful because of the results it produced.

Yes, to sing a new song unto the Lord — to this we are moved as we consider the results that the ministry of the Gospel produces. Our text says: "Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem." We can well understand that the people of Judah were moved to song as the joyous message of deliverance reached them and they could look forward to the restoration of Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the temple which would again stand as a reminder of the presence of God and as a renewed pledge that they were walking under the ruling power and grace of the God of comfort. In the years of their captivity the people of Judah had hung their harps upon the willows and when they were asked to sing a song they said: "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" But now they could take their harps from the willows and play and sing unto the Lord who had remembered His people, filled their hearts with joy and given them every reason to fill the air with songs of thanksgiving.

All of this points us to the glorious results of the Gospel which brings comfort and pardon, as so beautifully expressed in these words of Isaiah: "Comfort ye, comfort

ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins . . . O Zion that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God. Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him; behold, his reward is with him and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom and shall gently lead those that are with young. "

And so the Church is being gathered; young and old are being enfolded into the bosom of the Savior God. Among them will be precious souls which have been united with Christ through the sixty year ministry of Pastor Geo. Tiefel. This is the thing for which we are especially thankful today; for that which really counts is the gathering of the souls before the throne of God on the great day of Judgment. Of this we sing:

O blessed day! from far and near
The servants of the Lord
Shall meet the ransomed millions there
Who heard God's saving Word.

And as we say our farewells today we shall surely join in the further prayer:

God, may Thy bounteous grace inspire
Our hearts, so that we may
All join the heavenly, white-robed choir
Upon that glorious day.

In this we see eye to eye, and all the elect even unto the ends of the earth join in. May God grant that our hearts are attuned to this song as we close with the words of our text: "The Lord hath comforted his people." Amen.

C. M. Gullerud

===== PANORAMA =====

A SUBVERSIVE EFFORT

From a report of the recent General Assembly sessions of the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh, as printed in

Christianity Today of June 20, we quote the following:

"In its report to the assembly, the Panel on Doctrine took the first cautious steps toward disposing of the Westminster Confession, convinced that 'the whole concept of a subordinate standard is one which the church may now feel it wise to abandon' as an anachronism. The confession was regarded by the panel as one of a number of post-Reformation statements 'which led the men who drafted them to be dogmatic about mysteries which are beyond the comprehension of finite and sinful creatures.' The assembly agreed that the panel should take preliminary soundings from presbyteries before it reports again on the subject next year."

One certainly does not recognize as a new discovery the observation of the panel that there are "mysteries which are beyond the comprehension of finite and sinful creatures." But a perverse twist is given this truth when it is used in justification of a proposal to set aside an historic confession.

Any confessional symbol is indeed a subordinate standard in that its pronouncements must be tested and judged by the norm of Holy Scripture; but it is in its very nature "dogmatic" if indeed it is worth anything at all. The Westminster Confession can certainly not be classified as an orthodox confession. It strongly endorses Calvinistic error. Yet it was drafted by men who professed and defended many basic tenets of the Christian faith.

The argument that a confession must be abolished because it speaks of mysteries which the sinful human mind cannot comprehend is an atrocious piece of sophistry. What Bible-oriented Presbyterian theologian, Scottish, English or American, has ever claimed that the wisdom of God is accessible to the unregenerate, unenlightened human mind? The Westminster Confession itself plainly states that God

"... is pleased, in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call (men), by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds, spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God, taking away their hearts of stone, and giving them an heart of flesh ..." (Emphases ours).

While the Confession lacks much even in its concept of conversion, it at least recognizes the apostolic preaching:

"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

I Corinthians 2:7-10.

The panel's view seems to be that the Gospel, whatever it may be, is so recondite that it does not lend itself to propositional formulations. What concerns us is that the panel's proposal could, apparently without significant protest, be given a hearing by presumably knowledgeable representatives of a traditionally conservative church body. One can only hope that the rank and file of the various presbyteries retain enough stamina to repudiate this shabby effort of modern "enlightenment" to remove a significant landmark from their midst.

E. Schaller

BOOK REVIEWS

1.

Exposition of Isaiah (Vol. I), by H. C. Leupold; Baker Book House, 1968; 598 pages. Price: \$7.95.

When a new commentary on Isaiah makes its appearance and represents the work of a Lutheran scholar already familiar because of his earlier exegetical labors, one looks to it with keen anticipation. This is particularly true in the case of the present publication because it covers a Scripture historically discussed, but not exegetically treated in the classic work of Prof. Aug. Pieper in his Isaiah II, and because the commentary on Isaiah I by a theologian of the former Synodical Conference, Dr. Geo. Stoeckhardt's Commentar ueber den Propheten Jesaia, is limited to the first twelve chapters. (One is sorry to see that neither book is included in Dr. Leupold's bibliography).

We know Dr. Leupold from his expositions of Genesis, the Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Daniel and Zechariah. Although he has not always hewn strictly to the line of traditional conservative Lutheran exegesis (for example, in his Genesis he does not find the divine Person of the woman's seed directly implied in the Protevangel, Gen. 3:15, and this affects his translation of Gen. 4:1), the product of his exegetical efforts is without question a contribution of acceptable caliber.

The Genesis commentary appeared in 1942. More than a quarter-century and a generation of negative Bible criticism later, the Isaiah volume comes to our hands. Naturally we will look eagerly to see whether the spirit of this scholar at Capital University has withstood the pressures of neo-orthodoxy and modernism and has given us once again a true picture of a great Old Testament book.

There has not been time for this reviewer to look for the answer by means of a page-by-page study of the commentary, or to render a verdict based upon such an examination. Investigation has been limited to a scanning

of the outline and a testing of various critical passages. In an Isaiah commentary one naturally turns quickly to the treatment of a passage such as Is. 7:14. What does the author have to say about the much-debated "virgin" passage, where the RSV had substituted "young woman" for the traditional translation of the AV? It is with great satisfaction that one is able to quote Dr. Leupold's response to the RSV: "The translation 'virgin', therefore, deserves to be moved out of the margin and into the text; and the translation 'young woman' merits no more than marginal status." This judgment grows out of a lucid and valid discussion of the Hebrew terminology, and is offered without apology. The difficult question of a contemporaneous fulfillment of the prophecy is also treated with commendable soberness. One does feel a twinge of regret when the author, although he refers to Matt. 1:23, makes little point of the quotation and fails to emphasize the fact that the inspired New Testament reference to Is. 7:14 must place the correct rendering of the passage beyond dispute for the believer.

The entire section, chapters 7-12, which Stoeckhardt entitles "Der Weissagungscyclus," Leupold calls "The Immanuel Book." This establishes the author's ready recognition of the Messianic character of this prophecy and offers promise that his interpretation will be correctly oriented.

When Dr. Leupold discusses the authorship of the book, he shows some hesitancy by conceding that the question presents "a very difficult problem." He not only insists, however, that the evidence supports the claim which gives the book its title, but here pointedly refers to the testimony of the New Testament as a vital factor in the discussion. Yet we might well have wished for a more decisive and positive tone on this subject. The author could with full justification have written as unequivocally as he did in his Genesis when he said: "We hold very definitely to the conviction that Moses wrote Genesis as well as the rest of the Pentateuch . . ." The evidence for the Isaiah authorship is equally firm. "Difficulties" are caused by unbelieving scholarship.

This commentary contains no Hebrew type. Reproduction of Hebrew words is by transliteration. This lack, however keenly it is felt by students, is understandable, since the setting of Hebrew type would doubtless have greatly increased the cost of production. Yet one cannot help feeling that the absence of the original text may somehow have discouraged more extensive discussion of grammar and terms. That impression, whether correct or not, is most irritatingly felt in the treatment of passages such as 9:6-7. The linguistic comments offered are, for the most part, appended to each chapter under the heading: "Notes." Perhaps this procedure is in keeping with the author's purpose of offering what he calls a "practical commentary." (Foreword). One disturbing oversight in proof-reading was noted. The last sentence in the first full paragraph on page 16 is unintelligible.

Because this review is based upon no exhaustive study of the book, it cannot evaluate in detail the correctness of the author's rehearsal of the historical setting of Isaiah's prophecy or the bearing of his findings upon the interpretation. But such concerns may well be left to the investigation of the individual student. It is enough to say here that the appearance of this commentary is heartily welcomed. One hopes that a vacant slot may be awaiting it in the library of every pastor. And the appearance of Volume II will be anticipated with much interest.

It is to be hoped that a closing comparative comment may not be regarded as invidious. One feels that by comparison with Aug. Pieper's profound grasp and scholarly discussion of the essential mission of the prophet, the character of Dr. Leupold's analysis seems somewhat superficial. This limitation is noticeable also in the exposition. But in part it may be due to a wish for a wider audience than a highly scholarly work could command. We shall endeavor to appreciate and use whatever valid testimony he bears, though we will read him with proper critical care.

E. Schaller

2.

The Books of Nahum and Zephaniah: A Study Manual, by T. Miles Bennett, Baker Book House, 1968; Paperback, 102 pages. Price: \$1.95.

This volume is part of the Shield Bible Study Series, "... paper bound manuals which serve as guides for study of the Bible for seminaries, religious departments of colleges and universities, Bible schools and colleges, pastors, Sunday School teachers, and for group study of the Bible in the local church."

The Shield Bible Study Series offers inexpensive commentaries on the Books of the Bible. They are 5 1/2 X 8 inches, attractively compiled, and sell at \$1.50 - \$1.95 each. The series to date is produced by 26 authors and covers 14 Old Testament and 20 New Testament Books. Each volume contains a basic introduction to the Bible Book, its author and the times in which he lived. This is followed by an exposition of the sacred text. These external factors suggest that the series will be a valuable as well as an available addition to the Bible student's library.

But we are also interested in the quality of the content. We have not had the advantage of reviewing other books of this series. Our review applies only to the book by T. Miles Bennett: Nahum and Zephaniah. Mr. Bennett is professor of the Old Testament at Southwest Baptist Theological Seminary at Fort Worth, Texas.

The introduction to Nahum (about seven pages) sets the historical stage for his message. Mr. Bennett performs a genuine service for the reader in his fine summary of pertinent facts concerning Assyria, her monarchs, and the historical incidents which made her the most feared and hated nation of the world.

The tone dilutes, however, when Nahum the prophet and author is presented. After a brief review of some of the theories of authorship presented by critics, the refutation by Mr. Bennett sounds compromising. We miss the clear and positive refutation made by the believing scho-

lar who in child-like faith holds the Truth from God as absolute Truth which prevails against all "wisdom" which contradicts it.

The same diluted tone of refutation is used over against critics of the message of Nahum. Mr. Bennett writes near the bottom of page 19: "From a superficial reading of the Book of Nahum one might conclude that it is devoid of religious value. Indeed the author has been classed with the nationalistic 'false prophets' against whom Jeremiah and Micah waged relentless warfare ... But this is much too harsh a judgment." Such a refutation does leave a question unanswered: What "judgment," then, is a proper judgment against Nahum?

As to the interpretation of the Book Mr. Bennett dwells relentlessly upon the "vengeance" theme which aligns itself with his remark concerning "the vindictive spirit of Nahum's prophecy which some have called a 'hymn of hate.'"

It is unfortunate that Mr. Bennett concentrated his introductory materials upon the world of Nahum's time and did not look more carefully at the history of God's people and His dealings with them. When we look upon God's tender loving care of His people in the midst of a perverse world we behold a God who is mighty in love and righteous in judgment. To be sure, the Book of Nahum contains a very brief reference to this truth (1:7. 13. 15), but a good Bible scholar ought to know he cannot isolate the message of Nahum from the revelation of God and the history of His people. Mr. Bennett would have Nahum present nothing but the wrath of God upon the Assyrian nation, a nation which had rejoiced in its wickedness, rebellion and hatred against the only true God and His people. But Nahum presented this wrath of God in connection with the greater scene of God's loving concern for his people.

The Zephaniah portion of Mr. Bennett's volume again performs a valuable service to the reader by providing a summary of historical facts by way of introduction. This time a broad view of the history of God's people relative to the day of Zephaniah produces a fine background for the prophet's Word.

However, the weakness of the introduction appears again in the examination of Zephaniah as author. After a brief summary of critical theories which deny the authorship to Zephaniah Mr. Bennett comes to his defense, but includes in the defense another diluted refutation (bottom of page 65): "... with God's spokesmen judgment was not the final word; in their thought it always served a disciplinary purpose. The prophets always seemed to offer hope at least to a remnant. Presently, therefore, there seem to be no sufficient reasons for denying to Zephaniah any portion of the prophecy bearing his name."

The volume of Nahum and Zephaniah in the Shield series is a worthwhile reference manual, but hardly a source for scholarly Bible research valuable to all those listed in the first paragraph of this review. This volume has value — limited value — with careful use.

G. Radtke

3.

The Tests of Life: A Study of The First Epistle of St. John, by Rev. Robert Law, B.D., D.D. Baker Book House, 1968. 416 pages and Index. Price: \$6.95.

This is another in the series of works being produced by Baker Book House as "The Limited Editions Library." The present volume was originally published in 1909 when the author held a pastorate in Edinburgh. He was able to revise it to a Third edition in 1914, of which the present publication is a reprint.

For his textual study the author used the 8th Edition of Tischendorf's text. It is also proper to note that the work was done before the advent of the modern scholarship available to the student in such volumes as the grammars and lexica of Blass-Debrunner, A. T. Robertson and W. Bauer.

The book does not represent a running commentary on the Epistle, but treats its content under doctrinal headings. It is thus isagogical and dogmatical in form, although the passages bearing upon the doctrines treated are, of course, expounded on the basis of the Greek text; and very few, if any, verses are by-passed entirely. An index of passages treated helps the reader to locate the references.

First John is not one of the New Testament books that lend themselves well to dogmatic division. Dr. Law seems to recognize this fact in his introductory chapter on structure and style; yet he fails to let this dissuade him from his chosen method of dealing with the Epistle. The demonstration of the organized spiral structure of the Letter is one of the most detailed and painstaking this reviewer has ever encountered. And the delineation of the historical backdrop against which the Epistle was written, as well as its relation thereto, is highly informative and stimulating, offering insights which reveal a vivid purpose in many of the Apostle's statements.

Some textual points made by the author are of special interest. One sample may be listed here. The author observes that the affectionate, respectful use of the pronouns ekeinos and autos as equivalents for the Name of the Savior (as in 2:6; 2:8; 3:3, etc.) is similar to the peculiar way in which some widows (and not only those of "scottish" descent) refer to their husbands as "himself." (p. 89f).

The author agonizes unnecessarily over 3:6-10 and comes to the startling conclusion that John here speaks "not as a calm theologian," but in "vehement repudiation" of certain Gnostic ideas; and that his words therefore are an "apparent exaggeration, an overemphasis." (pp. 224-228).

When Dr. Law, commenting on 3:16 and the hyper hemoon, declares that "reference to the Death of Calvary as a substitutionary ransom is excluded by the context," he again displays an approach to the text which gives little evidence of an essential Gospel understanding. When, in a footnote, he then casually adds that "the substitutionary idea is not excluded, neither is it necessarily included by hyper

hemoon," he indulges in a bit of sophistry. Why should the required consequence, namely that we ought also lay down our lives in behalf of the brethren, here rule out the substitutionary sense of the preposition, especially when the vicarious nature of the Atonement is otherwise so strongly stressed in the Epistle (cp. 2:2; 4:10) ?

The treatment of the subject of Antichrist (2:18, 22; 4:3) is painfully superficial. Nowhere does the author identify the Antichrist. But when he says that "the traditional identification of the Papacy with Antichrist was based on a crudely literal conception of prophecy and its fulfillment. It erred in being too specific and too exclusive . . ." (p. 322), he both fails to offer support for this critique and reveals a lack of appreciation for the unique position of the Papacy in history. His reference to the Pauline treatment of this subject in II Thess. 2:3-12 is a mere aside; and that is hardly scholarly exegesis.

Although there are other weaknesses which might be charged against this work, it is nevertheless a dignified, conservative study of John's message and offers some valuable seed thoughts for the pastor who wishes to base sermons on pericopes from this lovely Epistle.

E. Schaller

4.

Chats From a Minister's Library, by Wilbur M. Smith; Baker Book House, 1951; Paperback Edition, 277 pages and Index. Price: \$2.95.

The service background of the author is the Moody Bible Institute and Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena. His book consists of selected manuscripts from a series delivered for the Radio Department of the Moody Institute, and of similar essays prepared for other occasions. Some nineteen subjects or topics are treated, representing a considerable variety of interests large and small.

We have, for example, a chapter on "The Relation of a Verse in Genesis to the early Use of Chloroform," and one on "Paul's Love of Books."

A fair judgment of this volume would perhaps be that it is 1. Entertaining; 2. Edifying; 3. Disappointing.

It is entertaining. Some of the topics treated are unique, and the book brings material from definitive works which are no longer available to most readers. One must say, however, that there are also one or two entire essays which for the most part represent a dead loss to our pastors, such as the one entitled: "Where to find the best printed sermons on any given text."

If the book is disappointing, it is because of the occasional stark contrast manifested in an author who can speak so eloquently of the treasure that is the inspired Word of God, and of the need of "rightly dividing the word of truth," yet is able unabashedly to project a millennialist future and make himself guilty of such unscriptural nonsense as the declaration that Christ Jesus is coming again to "bring peace on this earth." (p. 22).

Yet his chapter in which he decisively turns back every attack upon the historicity of the Resurrection of Christ is, in turn, a tremendously uplifting experience.

E. Schaller



The JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY is published at Eau Claire, Wisconsin, by authorization of the Church Of The Lutheran Confession.

Subscriptions: \$3.00 per year, \$5.50 for 2 years, payable in advance.

Issues are dated: March, May, July, October, December.

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Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54701.

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HOW TIMES
HAVE CHANGED

Less than thirty years ago Concordia Theological Monthly of the Missouri Synod was able to quote, "with approval," the following sane comment from the Presbyterian:

"A writer for the Dallas News lately criticized the churches of that city for not caring adequately for the poor and unfortunate. In commenting on this charge, the Baptist Standard very properly called attention to the fact that the Church is primarily a religious and not a charity or reform institution, though many do not realize this.

"They look upon the churches as charitable and social organizations to perform social service. ... A church is not an institution for charity, but it is an organization for the promotion of religious truth. Every man outside the church is under the same obligation to relieve suffering humanity that any man in the church is under. ... Some people look to the churches to oppose every sort of evil, and take the attitude that outsiders are not as much under obligation to oppose these evils. People expect a preacher to oppose the liquor traffic, gambling, vice, immorality, dishonesty in business, oppression of the poor, and other evils. If the churches would give themselves to such matters to the extent that some outsiders claim, the matter of religion would be entirely secondary, and the main purpose for which the churches exist would be almost entirely neglected. "

And now, of course, they ARE neglected. Over the years the Dallas News and those who agreed with it have won the argument. Most churches have surrendered, and accept the calling men have foisted on them. Since they have little doctrine left to preach, they have become churches in name only. Let us glorify the Grace that has permitted us to remember what our Commission really is.

E. Schaller



C O N T E N T S

VOLUME 9

JULY 1969

NUMBER 3

ESSAYS AND ARTICLES

- WALTHER ON ELECTION 1
E. Reim
- "A FINAL APOSTOLIC WORD" 7
C. M. Zorn — E. Schaller

PREACHING THE WORD

- AN ANNIVERSARY SERMON 19
Text: Isaiah 52:7-10
C. M. Gullerud

PANORAMA

- A SUBVERSIVE EFFORT 25
E. Schaller

BOOK REVIEWS:

1. Exposition of Isaiah (Vol. I)
by H. C. Leupold 27
 2. The Books of Nahum and Zephaniah
by T. Miles Bennett 30
 3. The Tests of Life, A Study of I John
by Rev. Robert Law 32
 4. Chats from a Minister's Library
by Wilbur M. Smith 34
- HOW TIMES HAVE CHANGED 36
-