



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

I Timothy 4:15

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A FOREWORD TO THE
TENTH VOLUME

It has not been our invariable custom to introduce each successive volume of the Journal of Theology with a foreword as our fathers were wont to do for similar periodicals of their time. Few of us could lay claim to the theological competence which often made those introductory remarks of a former day profound essays in their own right. Yet it would seem unnatural and unresponsive if at this point in our history, and that of the world, the Journal failed to introduce its tenth volume with some thoughts and reflections upon the contemporary scene.

While the Journal is only beginning its tenth year and thus cannot, in the strictest sense, identify its past history chronologically with the decade of the Sixties, the corporate history of our church body does coincide with the era upon which men everywhere looked back as the Year of our Lord 1970 dawned. News media, periodicals and magazines were filled with the customary expressions of retrospection and evaluation. This exercise in human appraisal and prognostic pronouncement to which we have become accustomed at the turn of a year was, of course, more intensive and extensive than usual in this instance, both because of the artificial way in which man is wont to group the years of his existence and because of the shattering experiences of the Sixties.

It would serve no useful purpose here to review in any detail the general picture of the past ten years. Our readers will doubtless have had their fill with the accounts offered by others; with the variations upon a gloomy theme; with the countless evaluations, some sober, many fantastic, absurd or utterly blasphemous. In their sum these expressions of human judgment upon the affairs of men were of themselves the best evidence for the moral and spiritual decline which, above and beyond all other causes, has

brought mankind to its present perilous situation.

It has been the custom of some, at any juncture in modern history, to diagnose the situation in terms of plus and minus factors. Were our gains greater than our losses? Is the balance favorable or unfavorable to optimistic hopes for the future? The groping mind of the blind is able to imagine a gold lining in every cloud; and it would be out of character for the world of unenlightened men if it had stepped into the Seventies without an emergency kit filled with clues that seem to point toward a favorable up-turn in human affairs.

This time, unhappily, the alleged signs of hope are even less plausible than usual. The conquest of adjacent space and the moon landings are said to have provided us with an enormously potent dose of encouragement. A people that is capable of such prodigious feats, we are told, must be presumed to have the ability to confront and conquer its terrestrial problems. The lunar achievement thus rates at the top of the list of plus factors for our generation in the minds of most pundits and, perhaps, of the average citizen as well.

There is no reason to call into question the magnitude of the technical skill and individual courage that enabled men to leave foot-prints on the moon. The mind boggles at the enormous intricacies of scientific work and the degree of human commitment that lie behind such an accomplishment. Admiration for the human creature is not a novel reaction among believers, and was not born of the technological miracles of the recent past. We have known of his glory for a long time and have sung of it with the inspired poetry of the Psalmist: "I will praise Thee: for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (literally: "I was distinguished, set apart, in a most wonderful manner"), Psalm 139:14. Divine revelation has equipped us with this very knowledge, that man stands distinct from all other parts of creation, He is set apart by creative design and by unique attributes which, functioning within this universe, demonstrate the power, love and wisdom of the Creator. If this crown of God's handiwork were at all able truly to value his

superb individuality, if he did not persist in the blind folly of claiming the primeval ooze as the womb of his race and seeking his ancestry in the beasts, we might well be able to see in the marvels of his innate abilities a hope for the future and look ahead with a measure of confidence.

All optimism is crushed, however, not by a lack of man's endowments, but by his capacity for perversion of the gifts and qualities that were bestowed upon him and set him apart. What the Apostle Paul says of him is revealed as true in all his doings. Man, declares Paul, has "changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things" (Rom. 1:23). This familiar indictment is frequently understood to refer only to man's proclivity for creating idols to supplant the true God as the object of honor, fear and obeisance. While this practice is, of course, included in the phenomenon of perversion, it is nevertheless only a symptom of what actually happens. As St. Paul indicates, no creature can change the essentially glorious nature of the uncorruptible God. Man can alter only that divine glory which adhered to man in his creation. And this has been changed by man in such a way as to be converted into its very opposite. That which was originally a life factor in man (Gen. 2:7) was not merely by him diminished in its power and beauty, but was transmuted into a death factor. What was pure has by the alchemy of sin been turned into a mortal filth that infects every human product with the virus of destruction. And this corrupted humanity, together with its works, man idolizes as a reflection of the glory of God. Refusing to recognize the essential gulf fixed between himself and all other creatures, he then also finds it possible to worship as gods the images of beasts and creeping things.

Even the fruits of civil righteousness, outgrowth of the natural knowledge of God (Rom. 1:19-20) and the remnant of the law once written in man's heart (Rom. 2:14-15), are becoming an increasingly rare commodity. At best they can provide only certain temporal blessings, in that they supply the basis for a viable social and political order

in a world of sinful men. They make no contribution toward spiritual revival and improvement. They suffer from that self-same blight of perversion which results from a corruption of the knowledge of God and His will (Rom. 1:21). Even so, they constitute an indispensable asset in a world of unbelief. Therefore we are dismayed to see instead a dreadful increase of the fruits of unrighteousness in a widespread assault upon the pillars of human authority--upon law and the instruments of its enforcement, administration, courts and magistrates, as well as in a wanton, suicidal disregard of the concepts of human dignity and rights.

Those who know and understand the extent of man's perversions are not surprised to be confronted with their virulence even in those human achievements, which seem most untouched by the usual overt practices of greed, lovelessness, bigotry, irreverence and immorality so evident in our society. The "pure" science and almost god-like assurance manifested in the moon program are impressive; and we have no doubt that there are men and women with regenerate, Christian hearts and minds who would, if given the opportunity, help mankind benefit by such an achievement. But the world as such must inevitably capitalize upon the feat for the furtherance of its perverted values and purposes. That "giant leap for mankind" will be found to have faced in the wrong direction. Any voices raised in praise of the Creator and Savior of the world, any advocates of His glory, were drowned out by the chorus of self-adulation. So it must have sounded when men made the first architectural break-through in their novel endeavor to build a tower at Babel. Sinful man is deified, not because the image of God has been restored to him in the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus, but because man has evolved so magnificently from his slimy reptilian forebears! The pretension of being able to bring plus and minus into an equation favorable to the future of this civilization by the mighty arm of man is in itself a monumental perversion of the facts.

As strange as it may sound to the ears of many, a further cause of hope for the current decade is seen by

some in the spirit of the youth of today. This view-point is being advanced even by moderate intellectuals who are professionals in the fields of law, education and psychology, as well as by theologians of stature. They do not, for the most part, have in mind the extremists, anarchists and revolutionists who form a noisy and repulsive minority of the activist generation on campuses and in political groups, but speak of the far larger body of concerned young citizens who seek the ingredients of a viable human society in the midst of the contradictions and dislocations of our age. Their search for stable values is often pursued with raucous voices and alarming impatience; but it is, we are told, an honest search which may, and indeed must if mankind is to survive, eventuate in the adoption of moral values and a social order that can cope with the space era.

One will have to agree that when we search for human assurances which might augur a better future, we must probe for a sign in the rising generation of our race. The future belongs to the young. That they reflect in their attitudes the seething ferment of the present age should not surprise us. It lies in the nature of youth to be innovative, if not revolutionary in outlook, even in placid times. Young people in any generation approach their maturity with ideas which, however hoary and ancient they may be, seem new and brilliant to them. They question established criteria and feel confident that there is a better way which they are anxious to try. Such straining at the fetters of tradition is normal; indeed, it is characteristic even among those preparing for or newly entering the work of the church. Who of us has not seen young preachers, for example, go out into their first charge filled with zeal for new techniques in evangelism or congregational polity and certain that synodical procedures must undergo stringent renovation? Who has not observed young teachers, fresh from courses in methodology, attempting to abandon what they have learned in favor of a "more effective" approach? Such efforts at innovation are almost as predictable as is the subsequent collapse of many cherished but immature notions. Nor must it surprise us when, in a day of cata-

strophic change, young people seem abnormally contentious in their striving. Everyone admits that in many human areas there is a crying need and vast room for improvement.

But dissent and a desire for experimentation can be promising and wholesome only when it remains within the framework of eternal verities and divine order. Our gravest apprehensions must be aroused when we are told that the rising generation has "turned off" the demands of a traditional moral code and is tuning out the voice of what is sometimes scornfully called "the religious establishment." It would of course be hysterical to make or accept such a charge as a generalization. No one can "tune out" what he has never heard. One cannot become apostate from, or renounce, something to which he has never been pledged. Many of the young have never been taught to respect absolutes of morality, and have never been a part of any established church. On the other hand, there are certainly countless thousands of young men and women who, though much troubled and shaken by the rantings of nihilism and atheism, still cling to the faith of their fathers. Yet there is basis for the fear that millions who have never accepted a commitment to the Christian faith in any real sense, and countless others who once had confessional identity within the Christian churches, have been and are being further alienated from Christian truth and ethic. This is due in large measure to perversion of a kind more tragic than any other.

The disastrous spirit of youthful rebellion and iconoclasm dominating our scene has been ascribed to various causes. The Viet Nam war, the social injustices and hypocrisies of our society, the influence of a Marxist philosophy--these and other phenomena are blamed for the surging tide of unreasoning, violent dissent.

If indeed these disruptive elements in our national life were the sources for corruption of the attitudes and behavior of our young citizens, there would be hope for restoration of sanity and stability. In one form or another we have always had our Viet Nams, our social inequities and

the abuses of a capitalistic system. There have always been would-be reformers and fiery apostles of dubious causes. Yet there were certain forces of stability as well, among them a generally accepted moral code with its absolute values and its attendant respect for law and order and, above all, the widely honored, if not always savingly received, Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, drawn from an inspired Word.

But we have never in our national history had a decade in which such eternal values were as basely betrayed by irresponsible, reprobate spokesmen as they have been in the past ten years. The discrediting of the religious establishment and what it might have offered to the space age has come out of the churches themselves. Many of them have to an incredible degree set the pace for dissolution through perversion of the divine message that can make men truly free and bring a spiritual peace. In open contempt for the promise of God to Zion (Is. 33:20) they have brazenly declared that her stakes HAVE been removed.

It is conceded, of course, that apostasy is not new. We have long suffered from the presence of heresies, both subtle and boastfully overt. The work of the Gospel has always had to contend with their intrusions and aggressions. But there were strong dams that held back the flood--great centers of preaching which at least refused to yield essential moral and ethical principles and maintained fundamental tenets of the Christian faith. The degree to which such bastions of stability have crumbled in the past ten years staggers the heart. And if youth becomes hostile toward the sort of religious establishment which dominates the scene now, this is not only understandable but inevitable.

Consider for example the caricature of the Christian witness displayed by a TV discussion panel of supposedly qualified and certainly recognized theologians, aired during the early days of the new year. The discussion theme was to center in the question of whether faith in Jesus Christ is really the only way of salvation. The antics of the panel reminded one of a group of high school sophomores in informal debate of an unfamiliar topic. Sometimes

several panelists were speaking simultaneously, animatedly calling one another brother yet disagreeing with a kind of flippant violence. At one point two panelists were engaged in arguing the proposition that under God the Jews have their own valid way to heaven just as the Christians have theirs; in the meantime two others were trying to decide whether Jesus actually said what the Evangelists said He said, namely that "no one cometh unto the Father but by me." The chairman meanwhile was ineffectively addressing himself to both arguments. This travesty, this grotesque display of theological bankruptcy is representative of the "Christian establishment" for unnumbered thousands of uninformed people; and the abomination of desolation it portrays is multiplied a thousand times in a thousand places every week from pulpit and podium.

Small wonder that the eyes and hearts of the young view with cynical scorn a church that mouthes phrases in which it does not believe; that professes the tenets of a Bible already designated by its scholars and ignoramus alike as a book of fables, errors and outmoded theology; a church peopled by adults who advocate ethical principles which they themselves neither honor nor heed; that has replaced eternal moral standards with situation ethics and existential subjectivism while it claims to speak for a changeless Christ.

Nor can one regard with due respect the misguided efforts of a Billy Graham who, though committed to a fundamentalist view of the Gospel and vigorously preaching it, undertakes to appear in clerical status at a Florida "Rock" festival and use its facilities to put in a good word for Christ to a motley crowd "doing its thing"--and that means, in this case, blowing its mind with drugs, enjoying free love or in other ways defying acceptable standards of decency. Not only did this preaching venture dangerously resemble the forbidden practice of casting pearls before swine (Matt. 7:6); it invited contempt for the Message and the church that proclaims it. How can a servant of Christ offer the comfort of the Gospel to a multitude while it is expressly and hideously engaged in mass desecration of

moral values? One tries to imagine Moses preaching the Messiah to the people dancing around the altar of the golden calf; or Elijah recommending to the priests of Baal at Carmel the gift of divine forgiveness and peace.

If our youth is in large measure a lost generation, it is so because it sought and hungered for the bread of firm direction and godly leadership but received in its place a pill of hypocritical agnosticism. It needed the love of Christ and the holiness of God, and instead found crimes against nature itself in a hedonistic, pseudo-scientific philosophy. It has been grossly betrayed by many parents who wholly or partially abdicated some of the most vital responsibilities owed their children; who gladly surrendered them early and late to professional educators without critically supervising the process of their education; who adopted an utterly permissive attitude toward serious moral issues confronting their children, or offended them with cynical disregard of the very ethical values they sought to impose upon them. In a very real sense even some parents who call themselves by Christ's name thus invite upon themselves our Lord's scathing judgment: "They bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers" (Matt. 23:4). Meanwhile our youth is led into a crusade against pollution of our natural environment in an age that with typical perversity glorifies pornography, sex-ridden movies and staged nudity, all of which grossly pollute minds and hearts. What is wrong with the young people is that they are overwhelmingly subjected to the guidance of a spiritually perverted society.

Have we, then, come to this, that our only response to the shape of the present and the challenge of the future is a dirge of despair? God forbid that we who stand in the midst of vital blessings should wish to sing Elijah's death chant (I Kings 19:4,10). Our appraisal of the situation has thus far merely conformed to the demand of the modern realist who is constantly exhorting us to "tell it like it is." The world's promises and predictions in this "age of Aquarius" are rooted in perversion and, like the world's

sorrows, work only death.

Yet we on our part have every reason to ponder the spiritual significance of the prophet's famous words: "... but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light" (Zech. 14:7). The notion that this divine promise speaks of a millennialistic era on earth is simply another example of human perversity. God speaks through the prophet of the breaking dawn of judgment day as believers shall behold it and see their redemption drawing nigh in the ultimate darkness of this eon. In a wider sense, however, this is a manifestation that is characteristic of the entire New Testament age. At the very inception of that age the ancient words were recalled and fulfilled which said: "The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up" (Matt. 4:16). In the time of the Reformation men again experienced a dramatic fulfillment of the divine design that, when human society touches the very bottom of the abyss of spiritual ignorance and depravity, the glory of the Lord should shed its radiance most invitingly in the darkness, like Job's moon "walking in brightness" (Job 21:26). Even in many lesser crises throughout the centuries the mercy which holds up the pillars of nature while the elect are being gathered in has brushed aside the veil with which men seek to conceal the brightness of the Savior's face, again and again affirming, in every age, the principle of His Kingdom among men, that "at evening time it shall be light."

There can be no questioning by believers of the fact that once more the darkness deepens on the earth; and perhaps the affairs of the first creation have reached their final deadline. The more conspicuously, then, will the saving Truth of the Gospel appear in its glory whenever and wherever it is purely proclaimed; and never more conspicuously than now have need and opportunity been in conjunction. The Gospel will be seen and recognized, unflinchingly, by all who are ordained unto eternal life (Acts 13:48), for whose sake alone the final night has not fallen on the earth (Mark 13:27). By this eternal purpose do we measure

the hope that remains to the world of men; it sustains our spirit and daily renews our zeal.

May we with God's merciful protection and in His power give ourselves to the service of the Truth in the time remaining to us. We are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. In a dying age, in a season of utter perversion, we pledge ourselves to faithfulness in the cause that we have been mercifully called to serve; and we pray that our Journal, too, may make its humble contribution to the work. For all who further that Gospel offer comfort and peace to the old, and a reason and purpose of life to the young.

E. Schaller

THE VALUE OF THEMATIC PREACHING.

In a parting message to His disciples, the risen Lord said:

"Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things." Luke 24:46-48.

This is no doubt one of the briefest summaries of homiletics that has ever been propounded. On the background of a three-year apprenticeship, with Jesus Himself as the master preacher and model, the disciples after being endued with power from on high were ready to go forth to the performance of the greatest work of their ministry---preaching. In His parting words Jesus had given them instruction both as to the method and as to the content of their preaching. He stood before them as the glorified and risen Lord and Christ. They were to preach, not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in His name and in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. They were to preach repentance and remission of sins. This was nothing else than a preaching of the Gospel. That this usage of

Gospel is not meant to exclude the preaching of the law is demonstrated in our confessions as follows: "...the term Gospel is not always employed and understood in one and the same sense, but in two ways, in the Holy Scriptures as also by ancient and modern church-teachers. For sometimes it is employed so that there is understood by it the entire doctrine of Christ, our Lord, which He proclaimed in His ministry upon earth, and commanded to be proclaimed in the New Testament, and hence comprised in it the explanation of the law and the proclamation of the favor and grace of God, His heavenly Father, as it is written, Mark 1,1: The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God. And shortly afterwards the chief heads are stated: Repentance and forgiveness of sins. Thus, when Christ after His resurrection commanded the apostles to preach the Gospel in all the world, Mark 16,15 He compressed the sum of this doctrine into a few words, when he said, Luke 24,46,47: Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations. So Paul, too, calls his entire doctrine the Gospel, Acts 20, 21; but he embraces the sum of this doctrine under two heads: Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And in this sense the generalis definitio, that is the description of the word Gospel, when employed in a wide sense and without the proper distinction between law and the Gospel, is correct, when it is said that the Gospel is a preaching of repentance and the remission of sins. For John, Christ, and the apostles began their preaching with repentance, and explained and urged not only the gracious promise of the forgiveness of sins, but also the Law of God." (Formula of Concord, Thor. Decl. V. Trig. p. 953). That we are to preach repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus; that we are to preach (εὐαγγελίζεσθαι Luke 16:16) Christ and Him crucified, is emphasized over and over again in the New Testament Scriptures. That we are to preach so that men may be convicted of their sins and that they may be made wise unto salvation through faith which is

in Christ Jesus; that we are to preach so that the unconverted may be brought to Christ; that we are to preach so that the children of God may be kept in grace and grow in spiritual wisdom, in faith, and in good works, is Scriptural and of primary concern to every faithful preacher of the Word.

In giving the disciples instruction regarding the content of their preaching, Jesus also gave an indication to them regarding the method. The Greek word used for preaching in Luke 24:47 is κηρύσσειν (to proclaim after the manner of a herald, the κήρυγμα). Those who are appointed heralds have the assignment to transmit whatever proclamation has been placed into their hands. The nature of such a proclamation is to get to the point and to present it in an orderly and comprehensible fashion in order that all who hear may be properly and well informed. As surely as this is true of any secular proclamation, so much the more should this be the case with a message that concerns the salvation of souls. That the proclamation of this precious message calls for the most painstaking effort and the most orderly presentation may be concluded from the use of the verb καταγγέλειν (to tell or proclaim thoroughly), Acts 17:13 et al. Much may be learned from a study of the three verbs εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, κηρύσσειν, καταγγέλειν (all of which are commonly translated simply with "preaching" in the versions most generally used in our circles.) That one may preach the truth of God most effectively (rightly understood) is the desire and prayer of every faithful servant of the Word. It is certainly in order to consider the best methods to be employed in the fulfillment of our preaching mission.

It is not the intention of this presentation to advocate any stereotyped form into which the sermon must be cast, since there should be free range for the use of the individual and varied talents and gifts of the preacher. In the Seminary we have opportunity to observe at first hand the value of diverse gifts among the seminarians, and we do not attempt to stultify their development or to calcify a favorite method. However, since a great hue and cry has arisen, especially in the last decade or so, calling for a radical

change in preaching methods, it may be well to examine our methods to see if there may be any validity in this call for change.

The most radical change that is being proposed is an abandonment of sermons such as they have been known and used ever since the time of Christ and the apostles. It is proposed that the sermon be replaced by a form of dialogue and discussion. We see this as a concomitant of the present rebellion against anything that smacks of what is called "organizationalism", but here we see the pendulum swinging much too far, as is invariably the case with all ill-conceived and violent reaction. This is recognized even by men who are not especially known for their conservatism. Thus the Rev. Lester Kinsolving in a syndicated column writes: "Few clergy would question the value of dialogue, and many seek to initiate it in such forms as post-sermon congregational discussions. On the other hand Jesus Christ is not remembered for 'The Dialogue on the Mount'. Certain things can be said and moods conveyed by effective preaching that are impossible in a 'buzz session.' From the time of the Hebrew prophets almost every period of religious revival has been led by great preachers--from Saints John Chrysostom and Francis of Assisi to Savanarola, John Wycliffe, Martin Luther and John Wesley."

No, we are not about to abandon the sermon. But it may be of benefit to evaluate our preaching and sermonizing to see if we are employing the most effective means of transmitting the message. It is the intention of this presentation to speak a word in favor of what has been called thematic preaching. While we recognize the fact that the starting point and the cut-off point of the texts of our pericopal systems are manmade and in some cases leave room for improvement, it may well be said that in general they are well-chosen and serve us to good advantage. In taking any Scripture text before us we recognize and confess first of all that it is given by inspiration of the Holy Ghost. In handling it we acknowledge that the Holy Ghost is a God of order and not of confusion. He does not present an assortment of facts carelessly and haphazardly thrown together.

It is not as though the preacher is left to bring order out of chaos. The organization is there, if only we will see it and recognize it. It is not as though we are superimpose on the text a theme and parts that are not there, either directly stated or clearly implied. This is not intended to rule out a synthetic treatment of the text, because whether the method be synthetic or analytic it must in either case be thoroughly Scriptural and the parts must flow from the central thought of the text. In either case, any given text portion does have a central thought which the sermonizer will formulate into a proper theme. Just how the theme is to be presented in the sermon, whether it is to be formally announced or not, is certainly left up to the judgment of the preacher. No stereotyped form is here being advocated, although some homileticians lean strongly to the formal announcement of theme and parts, and much can be said in its favor. On the one side we find preachers like Stoeckhardt and Walther almost without exception announcing theme and parts, while Luther on the other hand hardly ever does this, though sometimes we wish he had. But this much one may say, that the theme, the prevailing central thought, should stand out and be discernible. You don't find newspapers without headlines. You don't find store managers hiding their chief sales items under the counter or tucking them away in boxes. They are displayed in the show window and laid out in open view on the counters so that the customers will not miss them or pass them by. He is certainly a poor sermonizer who so disguises his theme that only the most perceptive will recognize it. We have, of course, heard sermons in which the theme came through beautifully even though no formal announcement was made; but this takes careful thought and judicious organization. Needless to say, the formal announcement of the theme is of itself no guarantee that the preacher will stay with the central thought and its proper development. It all takes meditation and study. Without these ingredients one can expect only mediocre sermons which will lead the hearers into all kinds of side-tracks from which many never get back on the main line. Perhaps they finally despair and start thinking

of other things, and the fault will then be the preacher's.

There is a definite need for thematic preaching both for the preacher himself as well as for the hearers. It will serve to discipline the preacher--to keep him from delivering what may be called a "spray-sermon"--and will lead him rather to deliver a "jet-sermon" that goes straight to the goal without any wasted mileage. The "spray sermon" takes twice as many words and is much less effective. The preacher who presents just an assortment of thoughts poorly organized and often unrelated is like a father who releases a number of balloons and expects his child to jump up and catch them. Perhaps he will get one or two; more likely he will get none. Much better to tie them together and hand them to the child. This may seem to be prosaic, but in the long run it will be far more satisfying. The preacher who does not address himself to the central thought of the text will tend to ramble along, often quite aimlessly, with the result that he will lose the hearers who have no handle to hold on to.

R. C. H. Lenski in his book entitled "The Sermon"* has some worthwhile things to say regarding the advantage of thematic preaching both for the preacher and for the hearers. As a conclusion to this presentation we hope that our readers will not take it amiss if we bring a quotation from this worth-while book.

"For the preacher there is a practical side to building real theme structures. Once the design of such a structure is sketched out, the sermon is practically completed. The work of elaboration is greatly reduced. Thus time and effort are saved. Working thus in an efficient manner, there is a psychological reaction on the preacher. The very feeling that he is turning out an excellent piece of work puts an enthusiasm into his heart which will lift his entire effort, even on through the delivery of such a sermon, to a higher plane. All labored efforts work in

*) "The sermon--Its Homiletical Construction" by R. C. H. Lenski. 314 pages. Paperback. Price: \$2.95. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich.

the opposite direction. Instead of psychological uplift, assurance, and joy, there is a feeling of strain, of discouragement, of secret dissatisfaction in spite of all striving, which affects even the delivery in the pulpit. The man who knows deep down in his heart that he has a well-built sermon will preach his best, while the man with the opposite feeling, be it ever so secret, cannot possibly preach his best. The hearer's intuitions are almost always keen. He may not be able to analyze and to tell exactly what the trouble is, yet he will instinctively know the difference between a good and a poor sermon. It is easy also to memorize a well-constructed theme sermon. There is no better aid to memory than natural combination and logical coordination and subordination of thought, especially when accompanied by exact formulation. The hardest thing in the world to retain in the memory is thought imperfectly and irregularly connected. It is like trying to carry a lot of loose sticks in your arms--they always try to get away. Lay the sticks in order and tie them with a rope-- you may carry them with one hand. That laying together and tying up is using a theme.....

"A theme has great value for the hearer. The longer a man preaches, the more difficult will it be for him to put himself into the position of the man in the pew who is to do the hearing. After years of practice in hearing sermons the author has reached the conclusion that good hearing is also an art and must be learned by practice. It is the preacher's great business to aid the hearer in his task of really getting the sermon and taking it away with him. There is the matter of sustained attention. Preachers often wonder why their hearers, at least a part of them, soon become rather inattentive. I can speak for them. It is almost impossible to give close attention to a sermon of about thirty minutes, if the preacher does not give the hearer certain necessary and natural hand-holds by which to grasp and retain

the sermon contents. The better the hand-holds, the easier it is to keep up the strain of attention. It is, of course, a strain to preach, but it is also a strain to hear with full attention. The theme is the supreme handhold. If no theme is offered, the mind of the hearer soon drifts. For a little while he may beat around in his mind in trying to discover what the preacher is really attempting to do. Then he gives it up, his attention flags. The main parts when properly announced, either simultaneously or in succession, are the next great hand-holds for the hearer's mind. To deny the hearer this help is letting him get lost in the sermon. Presently he does not know where he is. He makes a few efforts to find out, then gives up. The sermon rolls on, but the mind that ought to receive it has begun to drift. It may retain a bit here and there, if the preacher says something very personal or otherwise startling, but as a whole the sermon is not received. It is the preacher's own fault." (Pages. 134-135; 137-138).

C. M. Gullerud



== PREACHING THE WORD ==

A PASTORAL CONFERENCE SERMON¹⁾

The Text - I Peter 5:2-4:

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the

1) We are pleased to be able to share this sermon, delivered at the February meeting of the Wisconsin-Michigan pastoral conference, with our readers.

flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

In Christ Jesus, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls,
Fellow-Redeemed:

I am sure that all of you have, to a greater or lesser degree, become increasingly aware of what has been referred to as the alarming clergy drop-out rate. Those of you who are keeping in touch with the happenings in other church bodies will realize the clergy shortage facing many churches today. It is reported that there are many churches in every major denomination without spiritual leaders and that the average pulpit vacancy ranges from six months to one and a half years. Such a shortage is due, not only to the steadily declining seminary enrollment, but also to the withdrawal of thousands of ordained pastors from the parish ministry.

A recent feature article in one of the Chicago newspapers, entitled "The Vacant Pulpit", summarized the thoughts and feelings in the minds of many which have led up to this growing boycott of the public ministry. According to this survey, the reasons are many and varied: Some mentioned the differing religious and social beliefs and the resultant tension between pastor and congregation; others cited the problem of inflation, which has brought about staggering financial burdens for the church worker. Some were seeking an escape from the tremendous and ever-increasing pressures of the ministry; still others blamed 'The Vacant Pulpit' on the increasing allurements, for seminary graduates, of social, educational, and other non-pulpit work. Many were frustrated by what they considered to be rigid and outmoded traditionalism in theology--in their opinion a stumbling-block and hindrance to beneficial spiritual labors. They looked to the churches' refusal to deal with the 'relevant', as well as to the confusion and uncertainty regarding the church's mission and purpose in today's world, as strong reasons for their exodus from its service. All of these reasons together with many others

have led many to believe that the public ministry is a dying institution with little or no future in tomorrow's world. To the poet's question: "Who will answer, when He calleth, 'Here am I, Send me, Send Me!'" , it seems as though fewer and fewer positive responses are being given.

Is it really true that you and I are part of a dying institution, part of a vanishing breed of yesterday's artisans? Have we outlived our usefulness? Did those many years of intense and specialized training prepare us for something which would soon be obsolete? As with so many other occupations, have time and circumstances combined slowly to eliminate our usefulness?

Can these things be honestly said of the ministry of Jesus Christ? In the eyes of many it may seem to be so-- but those eyes have not seen the countless and timeless testimonies of Scripture concerning the work of God's chosen prophets and servants. They are not aware that, despite whatever changes have taken place in our world, man himself and his innate sinfulness has not changed, nor have his deepest spiritual needs. Such people have not listened to Paul's cry, "And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Rom. 10:14c-15). They have not made of the ministry what God makes of it. The words of our text, addressed by the Apostle Peter to the elders or pastors of various churches in Asia Minor, are also a message from the Holy Spirit to every called servant of the Word. They contain some timeless instruction and encouragement for all devoted public servants of Jesus Christ, yes, for CLC pastors living and working in 1970. They show THE MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST not for what it might seem to many, not for what men think it might be, but for what it is -- A HIGH AND HOLY CALLING.

As we from our text examine this high and holy calling which is ours, we shall see first of all that the demands of this calling are high; secondly, that the spirit in which we labor is extremely important; and finally, that the rewards of this calling are great.

I.

The demands of our calling are high. In the field of medicine the trend in recent years has been changing drastically and dramatically. The age of the family doctor, the general practitioner, has slowly given way to the era of the specialist. The wide range of medical knowledge available today makes it virtually impossible for any one man to be an expert in all fields of medicine. In the area of spiritual health, however, the pastor must at the same time be, in a sense, both a "specialist" and a "G.P.." He must be an expert in many fields. "Feed the flock of God which is among you," the Apostle instructs. Shepherd those souls entrusted to your care--and this shepherding requires of us a wide variety of gifts, a deep and thorough knowledge and understanding of sacred truth as revealed in Holy Writ, an extensive understanding of human nature with all its sinful complexities as well as a compassionate feeling for human spiritual needs. It includes preaching, teaching, instructing, counseling, warning, rebuking, encouraging, comforting. As Paul says, "In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings: By pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God. . . . As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things" (I Cor. 6:4-7, 10).

"Feed the flock of God which is among you", Peter says. And we well realize that the demands of this calling are high. With Paul we say, "And who is sufficient for these things?" (II Cor. 2:16) Who is equal to such a task? For its demands extend far beyond the capabilities of any mere mortal. Of ourselves even our very best is not good enough. Nevertheless, thank God, we are given encouragement, divine encouragement. We are not alone; there is strength given us from on high if we but ask. Though we often feel as Moses did, eminently unqualified for our

work, nevertheless humbly and joyfully we accept the calling of our Lord. For we know that we are not our own men; rather, we are God's men in God's place doing God's work in God's way for God's Glory. With Paul we rejoice that "our sufficiency is of God" (II Cor. 3:5).

II.

Not only are the demands of Christ's ministry high, but the spirit in which we labor is extremely important. "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." A large employment agency recently sponsored an ad over the air waves, bringing an appeal to all those unhappy or dissatisfied with their work. "Has your present job lost its fascination, its appeal? Is it still rewarding and fulfilling?". These questions were asked; and one can well imagine that if they were answered honestly, there may have been a great deal of response to that ad.

Such a spirit of discontentment and dissatisfaction dare never be present in the ministry, lest immeasurable damage be done to the cause of Christ! Isn't this exactly what Peter warns us about in our text? Wouldn't it be well for all of us in the Lord's service to examine carefully our motives and lay them alongside the spiritual yardstick of our text?

Young men who are considering entering the pastoral ministry are usually deeply concerned about one thing-- their qualifications. Cropping up again and again in their minds are questions such as these: "Do I have what it takes? Am I made of the right stuff? Am I cut out for the ministry? Do I possess the gifts to survive the scholastic requirements, those years of Greek and Hebrew? Am I 'apt to teach'?" To those who are honest with themselves, these are humbling questions, questions which perhaps have dimmed the hopes of some prospective pastors.

Paul speaks to Timothy in great detail about the qualifications for the office of bishop or pastor, and we

would be foolish to ignore or underestimate the importance of these qualifications. Granted, we have the comforting assurance in Scripture for our work as pastors that though we have no sufficiency of ourselves, yet our sufficiency is of God; we have the assurance that God's strength is made perfect in our weakness, that God will overcome many of the deficiencies caused by our weaknesses and frailties, that His eternal purposes will be accomplished in and through, yes, even despite us. Nevertheless the Scriptural requirements for the office of pastor remain. But what we are particularly concerned about at this moment is what Peter mentions in our text and what the Bible portrays as one of the most important gauges for measuring a pastor - the spirit in which he carries out his glorious work. Why does a man enter the ministry? Why would he want to? In the seminary we were told, and properly so, that of first and foremost importance in the pastoral ministry is a compassionate, compelling love of souls, a burning, fervent desire to bring the One Thing Needful to dying souls, a sense of spiritual urgency spoken of by the Apostle Paul when he said, "For necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel!" (I Cor. 9:16)

With this God-given gift of a heart not only filled up, but welling over with a love for souls, with this internal constraint of one moved by the Holy Spirit, there will be no need for external constraint. The faithful shepherd will serve willingly and eagerly--not just because that's his job, not because that's what he's being paid for, not because of what's in it for him. He will not serve like a drafted soldier who has no choice, or like a child which grudgingly agrees to do something asked of it by his parents. Nor will he serve like a laborer who needs a superior looking over his shoulder every minute of the day, but as Peter says, willingly, joyfully, faithfully. "Not lording it over God's heritage;" not adopting a Pharisaical or dictatorial attitude over against those under his care, not using the pastoral office for personal advancement, as a springboard for fame, or power, or prestige, but rather being an example of true Christian humility to all who see

him, realizing that his call is to serve. In such a pastor there never will be observed that tragic inconsistency between word and deed, that spiritual "credibility gap" as found in one pastor of whom it was said: "When he was in the pulpit his preaching was so good it was said he should never again come out; but when he was out of the pulpit, his conduct was such that it was said he should never again enter the pulpit."

Living in glass houses, as you and I do in so many respects, has to be difficult and demanding. But it also carries with it some wonderful opportunities for being "examples" of a Christian spirit, not only to the flock but to those outside the household of faith as well. Some recent events in the life of one of this nation's political leaders show how even the world recognizes the importance of its public figures being beyond reproach, their integrity beyond question, avoiding at all times even the appearance of evil. How much more important and necessary is it for us, who are not representing human powers or authorities but are the public servants and ambassadors of Christ Himself--how important that we properly reflect the spirit of our Master at all times!

III.

Yes, the demands of our calling are high and the spirit in which we labor is very important; but (and let it never be forgotten!) the rewards are great. To some who once carried or still carry the title of pastor, this may seem an overstatement, if not a misconception. On the surface the rewards may appear to be few and far between. In comparison with the rewards and benefits the world and its businesses are willing to pay for skills, the material rewards of the ministry seem woefully sparse. Huge salary offers, alluring material fringe benefits, a forty hour week--none of these things were ever offered or promised by our Savior to those who would serve Him. The ministry has none of this to offer. And many of the greatest problems in our work, many of our most discouraging and

frustrating moments may come at times when we begin to look for such earthly returns, times when we expect our diligent efforts to be more appreciated, times when in moments of pride and selfishness we want tangible rewards here and now.

If these are the things sought after, they are not to be found in the ministry of Jesus Christ. If we are looking for such fading, transitory, passing crowns of glory that are here today and gone tomorrow, we are suffering a great delusion. Yet there are rewards--and they are many and they are great--inner rewards, rewards of satisfaction and contentment, the reward of serving souls whose joy and delight is in the Lord, the reward of watching them grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, the reward of seeing the seed of the Gospel of Christ bear abundant fruit in many different ways.

These are just some of the rewards which prompted Luther to call the ministry the most sacred and desirable calling on the face of this earth. But there is still more, much more! To us, His faithful shepherds, the Promise is given: "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." Here is the reward which overshadows all other rewards of our calling, the glorious inheritance of the saints, those eternal pension benefits earned solely by the blood of that Lamb for sinners slain. No greater reward, no greater honor, no greater satisfaction, no greater joy can be given any man than that which we pray will be granted us as we stand before our Heavenly Employer, our Chief Shepherd, on that Great Day and receive this everlasting commendation: "Well done, Thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of Thy Lord" (Mt. 25:23).

THE GOSPEL MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST--A HIGH AND HOLY CALLING! May God grant to all of us the grace to keep this truth ever before our eyes, looking to the Day when our Chief Shepherd shall appear, and praying with the hymnwriter:

"Dear Lord, to thy true servants give

The grace to Thee alone to live,
 Once bound by sin, but saved by Thee,
 We go to set the prisoners free,
 The Gospel message to proclaim,
 That men may call upon Thy name.

When all our labor seems in vain,
 Revive our sinking hopes again;
 And when success crowns what we do,
 Oh, keep us humble, Lord, and true,
 Until before Thy Judgement seat
 We lay our trophies at Thy feet. Amen."
 (L. H. 482: 1 & 3)

David Schierenbeck



==== PANORAMA ====

WISCONSIN SYNOD
 AND CLC --
 A REPORT.

Through the courtesy of the
 secretarial office of the Wisconsin
 Ev. Luth. Synod we received, in
 the month of December 1969, a copy

of the Proceedings of that synod's fortieth biennial convention held at New Ulm, Minn. in August of last year. On page 149 of the Proceedings, as a portion of a supplementary report to the convention from the synod's Commission on Doctrinal Matters, there appears a section under the heading: Church of the Lutheran Confession.

Our readers have heretofore rarely found in the Journal any theological or historical discussion of the issues that becloud the relationship between the Wisconsin Synod and the CLC. We are conscious of the fact that in past controversies within the Lutheran church prospects of a wholesome outcome were sometimes diminished by learned and polemical essays in church periodicals which too often succeeded only in raising new issues or inviting

misunderstanding. Thus we have largely refrained from public comment on the issues being discussed or scheduled for discussion between our Board of Doctrine and the Wisconsin Commission, in an effort to avoid the risk of unnecessarily prejudicing a favorable outcome of such discussions. But in the face of the Wisconsin Commission's report we feel it necessary, both for the purpose of clarification and for the sake of concerned readers, to comment on certain portions of that report. We begin by reproducing it here in full:

"As our Commission reports in the 1969 Book of Reports and Memorials, page 109, we addressed a communication to the CLC Board of Doctrine suggesting a resumption of doctrinal discussions in a meeting to be held here at New Ulm on August 5, 1969. The purpose proposed for this meeting was to discuss the principles of fellowship with them, particularly their and our definitions of 'weak brother' and 'persistent errorist'. We regret that in its reply the Board of Doctrine of the Church of the Lutheran Confession felt constrained to decline the invitation to meet with our Commission on Doctrinal Matters. In doing so they state that they 'deem it urgent that both sides submit to the need for restoring unity by frank and honest confrontation with the truth, historical as well as Scriptural, without further recourse to unrealistic procedural reservations which have proved to be obstacles to prompt attainment of the God-pleasing objectives of our discussion'. It is their wish that the historical events from 1955 to 1961 become the subject matter of such discussions.

"Our Commission is convinced that a discussion of the basic principles of church fellowship, which could lead to a common basis for further discussion of past events, is the only proper and effective way to proceed.

Without such a common basis of Scriptural principles, even an agreement in evaluating historical events would be impossible. We, therefore, reject the charge that we are responsible for 'unrealistic' procedural reservations which have hindered discussions in the past.

"Under these circumstances our Commission on Doctrinal Matters does not find itself in a position to plan further discussion with the Board of Doctrine of the Church of the Lutheran Confession."

From the reading of this report it was learned for the first time in what light the Commission had asked the constituency of the Wisconsin Synod to see and understand the present suspension of discussion with our Board of Doctrine. To say that we were distressed by certain expressions in the report would be a mild description of our reaction.

The Commission has stated that the Board of Doctrine "felt constrained to decline the invitation to meet with our Commission on Doctrinal Matters." This sentence has reference to the Board's reply to the invitation, submitted through President Naumann under date of June 17, 1969, for a meeting with the Commission at New Ulm on August 5, a meeting to be restricted "to a discussion of the principles of fellowship as set forth in Scripture."

When it is now affirmed that our Board of Doctrine refused the invitation, casual readers unaware of the background may well be assuming that the Board of Doctrine simply declined to meet with the Commission. We therefore quote herein the closing words of the Board's response: " we are both ready and willing to continue face-to-face discussions in which the issues are properly confronted." It has consistently been the policy of the CLC and its Board of Doctrine not to disregard any promising opportunities for discussions with the Commission on Doctrinal Matters, Wisconsin Synod, in pursuit of a thorough, God-pleasing and lasting reconciliation of the doctrinal dif-

ferences that divide our two churches. Our interest in such an undertaking has in no way abated.

What was sought on our part, however, was a removal of the restrictive features of the agenda proposed for such a meeting by the Commission. This was indicated in the report of the Commission as quoted above; but in a manner that may well leave a false impression in the minds of many.

Referring to our Board of Doctrine, the Commission declares that "it is their wish that the historical events from 1955 to 1961 become the subject matter of such discussions."

To those who have been able to follow carefully the record of discussions and correspondence between the Board of Doctrine and the Commission on Doctrinal Matters in recent years, it will seem well-nigh incredible that the Commission should define the attitude of the Board of Doctrine in such terms. They will recall that the Board of Doctrine has in the past consistently rejected every allegation to the effect that the CLC demands that the "historical events" between 1955 and 1961 be made the subject of discussions which seek establishment of unity. They can point to the words of the Board of Doctrine proposing "that earlier as well as subsequent official statements and actions of Wisconsin be admitted in evidence for clarification of the meaning of that synod's Theses" (Proceedings of the CLC, 1966, p. 23). They may also recall the declaration of the CLC at its 1966 convention with reference to a proposed meeting:

"Therefore we understand that in the discussion under this first presupposition there will be no objection if a participant finds it necessary to refer to past or present official pronouncements, resolutions, and actions to clarify the meaning and usage of words in either document. By such necessary reference we do not mean the formal and full review of past pronouncements and official statements of the WELS mentioned in the correspondence and

included in the second presupposition."

This official definition of the intent of our church body in regard to historical references was quoted by the Board of Doctrine in its reply to the invitation of the Commission in July 1969; and in introducing it, the Board stated: "We have previously indicated, both by word of mouth and in writing, that our purpose in calling for reference to statements and events of the past is not recriminatory." In other words, it is not, and never has been, the desire of the CLC or its Board of Doctrine to use a meeting of the two discussion panels as a forum for the rehearsal of old grievances or the opening of old scars. The claim that the Board of Doctrine wanted the historical events of 1955-1961 to become the subject of this or any other meeting, therefore, is at best a misconstruing of the facts.

Nor can we accept in silence the implication of the Commission's report that the Board of Doctrine refused to discuss "the basic principles of church fellowship" with the Wisconsin Synod's Commission. The evidence of our willingness is in the record! What the Commission has failed to explain to its constituency, at least in its formal report, is our reason for insisting that, for the purpose of clarification, such a discussion of principles be open to any necessary "review of Wisconsin's official resolutions and declarations, 1955-1961" (Cf. Proceedings, CLC, 1968, p. 19).

Why should the Board of Doctrine consider such a provision needful at this time? On December 19-20, 1966 the Board of Doctrine met with the Wisconsin Commission to discuss the principles of church fellowship. The discussions "at the first meeting" were to be "restricted to the two published formulations of the doctrine of fellowship," that is, to the official confessional statement of the CLC "Concerning Church Fellowship" and the document "Church Fellowship" adopted by the Wisconsin Synod in 1961.

The Board of Doctrine had prepared a critique of Wisconsin's statement of fellowship; and most of the meeting was devoted to a discussion of that critique. The Commission on its part offered no formal statement concerning the CLC confession. The reaction of the members of the

Commission seemed to be that, while they might have preferred a different choice of wording at certain points in our confession, they agreed with it in substance and in principle. Meanwhile they rejected what we presented as our understanding of the sense and meaning of certain portions of Wisconsin's "Church Fellowship."

This outcome of the discussions confronted us with some alternatives. If indeed the Wisconsin Commission stood in substantive agreement with our position as defined in "Concerning Church Fellowship," and if Wisconsin intended to uphold that same position in its doctrinal statement, and if Wisconsin has been honoring it in teaching and in practice, then agreement in principle existed and we ought, in gratitude to God, explore the details of this joint position and remove any remaining confusion due to terminology or exegesis. But another alternative could not be ignored.

The members of both sides know, or ought to know from bitter experience, that words and formulas can serve to obscure as well as to clarify. We seek a genuine reconciliation of differences, not a common confession in which old differences remain concealed behind well-sounding phrases. We know that principles can be academically and abstractly discussed by theologians at great length, and that seeming concurrence can thus be reached while in actuality the differences remain, hidden under ambivalent language, whether unintentionally or by intent.

What reason would we have for fearing the possibility of such an outcome? Certain pronouncements and decisions made by the Wisconsin Synod in matters of fellowship during the years 1955 to 1961, as well as actions based thereon, appear to us to contradict what the Wisconsin Commission now sets forth as being its synod's position in the matter of termination of church fellowship. Those official statements and resultant actions remain a part of the record of that synod, and continue to be upheld and defended. It was because of the error which many saw in those resolutions and actions that several thousand souls were compelled by conscience bound in God's Word to with-

draw from membership in the Wisconsin Synod. This was, and is, neither a light nor a small thing.

It is therefore imperative, if we are now to determine whether or to what extent Wisconsin's doctrine and our own are in conformity, that both sides learn to understand the entire picture, that we compare and discuss the whole record. The Wisconsin Commission itself has said that the official pronouncements of a church body and its history cannot be ignored when evaluating its confessional position (Cf. CLC Proceedings, 1965, letter of April 6, 1965). If then the CLC, which charged the Wisconsin Synod with doctrinal error in the matter of termination of church fellowship, is invited to prove its charges, it ought to be granted the opportunity of presenting all the evidence it believes to be relevant and necessary. It would be difficult to imagine how a process of admonition and correction could ever successfully be carried through in the church if the alleged offender reserved the right to determine in advance what evidence is admissible.

The Wisconsin Commission indeed has maintained that references to past official pronouncements and actions would, at this juncture in the discussions, serve no wholesome purpose. But that is, after all, a human judgment presently supported only by theory. Our proposal for clarifying the state of agreement or disagreement by such an approach has not been honored, and its potential has thus not been determined by trial. We have earnestly sought to establish, on the basis of the two confessional documents alone, what accord actually exists between us. The results of this procedure have been inconclusive. The issue, we feel, should be resolved by fitting together all the documented evidence which bears on the case.

Why should such an undertaking not be pursued? Does the ultimate objective, the banishing of any and all error and the prompt establishment of confessional unity, not merit the effort? We believe that it does; and we continue to hope that it may please our Lord to touch the hearts with wisdom and open the way.

E. Schaller

CONTENTS

VOLUME 10

MARCH 1970

NUMBER 1

ESSAYS AND ARTICLES

- A FOREWORD TO THE TENTH VOLUME 1
E. Schaller
- THE VALUE OF THEMATIC PREACHING 11
C. M. Gullerud

PREACHING THE WORD

- A PASTORAL CONFERENCE SERMON 18
David Schierenbeck

PANORAMA

- WISCONSIN SYNOD AND CLC -- A REPORT 26

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Editor: Prof. E. Schaller, 513 W. Grover Rd.,
Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54701.

Editorial Staff: C.M. Gullerud, R. Gurgel,

Contributing Editors: M. Galstad, G. Radtke,
G. Sydow, F. Tiefel.

All correspondence, including subscriptions, renewals and changes of address, should be directed to the Editor.
