

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

I Timothy 4:15

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EDITOR'S NOTE

In the early summer of this year Professor Egbert Schaller, for reasons of health, asked to be relieved of his responsibilities as editor-in-chief of the Journal. His request was granted and the undersigned was asked to fill this vacancy on the staff. It had been our hope that our respected colleague would still be able to serve the readers of the Journal with offerings from his pen, but the Lord of the Church had other plans for him. On July 29 Professor Schaller entered into the perpetual joy of heaven which is the ultimate goal of all true theology. Before this joy all other joys and aspirations sink into utter insignificance. The true religion indeed is a "Jenseits Religion" and not a "Diesseits Religion," the now-group of theologians notwithstanding. It is only when theology is regarded in this light that it will make its legitimate contribution also to the solution of the ills that are convulsing the world in the declining years of the 20th century. The life and activity of our two predecessors, Professors E. Reim and E. Schaller, made this abundantly clear as is attested by their writings in the Journal of Theology. Only as one bows to Scripture will his footsteps be directed into the pathways of God. Under the divine guidance which the Holy Bible provides, it is our intention to carry on the work of editing the Journal with the same "Leitmotiv" as was so plainly in evidence throughout the writings of the former editors:

"God's Word is our great heritage
And shall be ours forever;
To spread its light from age to age
Shall be our chief endeavor
Through life it guides our way,
In death it is our stay.
Lord, grant, while worlds endure,
We keep its teachings pure
Throughout all generations."

This issue is appropriately dedicated to the memory of Professor Egbert Schaller.

C. M. Gullerud

IN MEMORIAM

PROFESSOR EGBERT SCHALLER (1904-1971)

As time moves on and men move on to the scene and then off again, it is quite common for the observer to think but little of the privilege he had at the time and moment of beholding, and then when this too is past and the scene changes, so easy to forget. But this is not the recommended way, for Scripture tells us to remember and, in remembering, to learn. The names of men -- and women -- are catalogued in Scripture for salutary purpose. The names of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of Mary, Priscilla, and Dorcas, not to overlook the names of Peter, James, and John and many others are known and remembered because Scripture has placed them before us. In some instances names are rehearsed for the purpose of tracing the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, and in other instances to remind us that these were the men and women of old who served the Lord in certain critical times as well as in common work-a-day life. Some were prophets, others apostles and evangelists with special assignments, and others were people in the field and in the kitchen with no special call but the call to serve in the universal priesthood, an office which every child of God possesses through faith. Whatever the offices and whatever the names, they form a part of the great cloud of witnesses with which we are surrounded. And they are to be remembered with gratitude for the testimony they bore.

While we may be inclined to think of the remembrance of the witnesses and their names as limited to those which are set down in Scripture, this is by no means the case. For God has raised witnesses unto Himself in every age and for every purpose which He Himself has designed for the welfare and edification of His Church. Many names could here be listed of children of God who testified and bore witness in this our age. But the name we wish to mention here is the name of Egbert Schaller. No better thing can be said of him than this that he was a child of

God who found his only hope of salvation in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ and considered it his highest privilege to bear witness of Him Who had declared him and all the world free from sin and shame. Whether in classroom, pulpit, or conference room (synodical and inter-synodical) this purpose was uppermost: to preach repentance and remission of sins and to contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints. The talents which the Lord in grace had bestowed upon him were outstanding and they were used unflaggingly in proclaiming the unconditioned Gospel of Jesus Christ. His main regret in the service was that he could not have done more and this is indeed the sorrow that fills the heart of every true theologian whose conscience is active and wide awake. Retrospect brings regret for time unused and the future seems so short to recoup the loss. When one searches his own life, this is as it should be that one finds little cause for praise of self. But for us it is not unseemly but very proper to see in others the outstanding service they have rendered.

Professor Schaller was a linguist in the true sense of the word. His exactness of expression in the use of the vernacular was put to good use in parish, in classroom, and on conference floor. Men depended on him (perhaps sometimes too much for their own good) to come up with the right word. But this made him a good witness. It made him a good teacher, a good editor, a good essayist, a good chairman for our Board of Doctrine. But lest we desecrate his memory with overmuch praise, let it be said that he would have been the first to underestimate the impact of his service, not because he doubted the efficacy of the Word but because he worried that his person was standing in the way. It remains for us, however, to speak the word of appreciation (which now must be a quiet word of gratitude to God) for the stimulation he provided for the study of the Scriptures, particularly in the ancient languages. His special field, of course, was the Greek of the New Testament, through which he walked without Lexicon (at least we never saw him use one at conference or public meeting). He knew his Greek and the blessings of such

knowledge showed through. For us who remain, both old and young, a lesson may here be learned that we improve our time in the careful study of the Hebrew and Greek of Scripture.

Through many years of close association in days of comparative tranquillity and in more stormy days of controversy, we learned to appreciate the gift the Lord gave in Egbert Schaller. Blessed be his memory.

C. M. Gullerud

OUR PRESIDENT SPEAKS:

We can easily recite with Paul the truth that it is the Lord of the Church who gives to the Church prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers and in doing so we acknowledge that these are good and well-chosen gifts. But we are often rather casual about this truth until this same Lord recalls one of these precious gifts from His service among men. Then the value of the gift becomes very real indeed.

The Lord has recalled one of these, His gifts, in the person of Prof. Schaller and we of the Church of the Lutheran Confession feel the pain of it today. We recognize that the Lord gave exceptional abilities to our departed brother. To the Church of the Lutheran Confession was given in his person a remarkable gift for grasping the glory of our gracious Lord as this is revealed in His Word. We made good use of the strength that was given him in defending this holy Truth. We were nourished as we shared in the gift that was given him to express this Truth in sermon and essay with exceptional clarity. And with all of this we were aware of that sobriety in him, that he described so beautifully for us in the recent past as an attribute of the humble child of God.

We thank the Lord of the Church for this precious gift to the Church of the Lutheran Confession. We will need to have this gift replaced and that right soon. Let this be our earnest petition to the Lord Christ.

SERMON AT THE FUNERAL OF
PROF. E. SCHALLER

Text: Hebrews 13:7

"Remember them which have the rule over you,
who have spoken to you the Word of God:
whose faith follow, considering the end of
their conversation."

"The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." It is with joy and gratitude that we gather together for this service this morning. And that is strange indeed; for we are gathered together in the very presence of death. Since when, the world asks, is death a cause for rejoicing? Scripture seems to agree with the world; for death is the daughter of sin, as we are told, "By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin". Death is the clearest reminder of the wrath of God over the disobedient; for "the wages of sin is death". The broken, lifeless body lying before us, is the final, indisputable earthly proof of man's hopeless doom and damnation which he brought upon himself by separating himself from his holy God in sin.

Despite the truth of all this, we persist in saying today, "O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good and His mercy endureth forever." While we do stand in the presence of death, we are celebrating a service of life; for God made it possible for us to count the departed among the blessed dead. He would have been the first to declare that the cause of this was not to be found in him, but in the marvellous mercy of a forgiving God. He died secure in the knowledge that God had reconciled the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. God could do this and remain just; for God made His Son, Christ Jesus, to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. This precious truth by the power of God's Spirit the departed believed, in it he lived and died, and thus he is to be counted among the blessed dead.

This morning's service is not for the departed. For him nothing can be done, -- and, thank God, nothing

need be done. It is for us who still remain, who still labor and travail in an evil world, that this service is held. The Lord would once more speak to us who are on the way to death. In our text this morning our God is addressing Himself to our hearts in His Word as we seek an answer to the question, "Why Does God Call Upon Us to Remember the Blessed Dead?"

I.

Our text speaks of "those who have the rule over you", that is, of the spiritual leaders and guides which the Lord of the Church provides for the blessing and welfare of His children on earth. It speaks of those whose earthly labors had ended and who had been taken to their eternal rest. Such are to be remembered.

Our text, then, is surely a reminder to us to remember our departed brother who was called upon to give the greatest part of his adult life to service in the public ministry as a preacher and teacher of God's Word. But it would be wrong for us to restrict our remembrance only to such. Finally, every follower of our Lord, no matter what the area of his calling, who dies in the Lord is to be counted among the blessed dead; for all such, irrespective of their calling in God's vineyard, knew the source of their hope and salvation to be the Word of God. They believed that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" and that therefore "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." To them the Scripture was the power of God, which was "able to make men wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus". The glorious Word was the announcerent of God Himself, declaring simply yet absolutely that "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sins" and therefore "there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus".

The departed is to be rememoered among the blessed dead, first of all, because of his abiding love for the Word of God. When he spoke, he strove to speak as an

oracle of God. His dedication to the Word flowed out of his own experience with that Word, the assurance of God's grace and salvation in Christ and the knowledge that all men needed, and God intended that every soul should have, the comfort and forgiveness to be found only in the Word.

He is now gone, but we live on. And God earnestly desires that each of us also die the death of the blessed dead. To that end he again reminds us this morning that there is but one source of salvation for sinners, that which is to be found in the holy Word of God.

II.

But God would not have us remember the blessed dead only because of their love for and dedication to His Word, but also calls upon us to follow or imitate their faith. Our text says, "Whose faith follow".

No man is able to look into another man's heart to find faith. Only God can see the precious faith in Christ Jesus. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart". Yet we are able to recognize the presence of faith by what we call the fruits of faith; for faith always demonstrates its presence by works.

We could see the departed's faith in his life. He loved his God with a fervent and a faithful love. For the truth and honor of his God he was willing to struggle. His unwillingness to yield one jot or tittle of that Word for personal advantage stands written in the history of his life for all to see. This courageous steadfastness cost him dearly. It meant the loss of friends and earthly security. Yet in the strength of his faith he remained in simple obedience to the Word of God. But there was another side to the faith he manifested. He dearly loved the whole world of sinners and earnestly desired their salvation. This he clearly revealed only a few days before his death. When a member of his family asked him whether there was any particular portion of Scripture he would like to hear read, he asked to hear the 85th Psalm. When the reading was concluded, he folded his hands and prayed that all sinners

might hear the Word of God and believe it to their eternal salvation.

Because of the faith that he so clearly manifested by his works, we are to remember the departed among the blessed dead

Our God is calling upon us this morning to imitate the faith of the blessed dead. That way will be no easier for us than it was for them. We are to remember the way that God called upon them to walk, so that we might implore the same merciful God to grant us the uncompromising faith that is God's own assurance of a blessed death to all His children, when He says, "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give you a crown of life".

III.

Finally, God would have us remember the blessed dead by remembering the "end of their conversation", that is, of their life or life's goal.

Our departed brother knew well the struggle of the redeemed in an evil and unregenerate world. He knew temptation, suffering, pain and loss for the Gospel's sake. If we could ask him now whether the struggle was worth the cost, he would not even remember the anguish and heartache of the Christian's earthly life: for he knows now the fulness of the truth spoken through the Apostle Paul, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us". But what of the body? Before us lies the dust that was once his living body. But we know that this too will be changed; for this mortal body shall put on immortality, when at the voice of his Lord at His second coming this body shall arise unto life eternal. This he knew and we know who believe the voice of our Savior-God, Who says, "Because I live, ye shall live also".

Remember the end of his conversation, his earthly Christ-lived life and pray that such an end may be ours. By this remembering, God will make it possible for us to be able to evaluate and handle all the transitory things of

this world which loom so great and important in our lives, but which all pass away, even in the using. As God again this morning reminds us to remember the blessed dead, He is clearly setting before our eyes His Word of Truth, "What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul".

Why does God call upon us to remember the blessed dead? Because He desires above all things that we also may be counted among the blessed dead when our last hour shall come.

So be it for the sake of the mercy of God Who says, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors and their works do follow them".

Amen.

Lester Schierenbeck

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1521-1971: IN COMMEMORATION
OF LUTHER'S STAND AT WORMS.

II.

During this year of the 450th anniversary of Luther's stand at Worms, we have been reviewing a number of the writings which he completed during that highly significant year. One which amazes the modern reader with its ready adaptability to the current situation of uneasiness and unrest within the Roman Catholic church of our day, with its concerns over the papal requirement of celibacy, is the monumental work which flowed from Luther's pen during the days of his exile at the Wartburg, entitled "The Judgment of Martin Luther on Monastic Vows."

The question of monastic vows needed to be treated, particularly because an interesting case had arisen at Wittenberg. The superior (in the monastic order) of one of the married priests there had demanded that he be surrendered by Elector Frederick into the custody of his order. This the elector refused to do. However, he asked that the matter be studied and that a decision be rendered. Although Luther was unable to be present, he became involved through correspondence and determined to make a thorough-going study of monastic vows. The result was the treatise under discussion.

In our presentation we are making use of the American edition of Luther's Works, Volume 44 (The Christian in Society, I), pages 251-400.

In our study of the judgment of Martin Luther on monastic vows we shall follow the same divisions of thought on the subject as he did. After very briefly and succinctly declaring that it would be pointless to discuss whether or not the Christian may offer a vow, since Scripture itself instructs the believer not only to make his vows but also to keep them (Psalm 76:11), Luther sets forth

the real issue about which he is truly concerned: "What we are trying to show is how to distinguish one vow from another and recognize which vows are godly, good, and pleasing to God." Scripture makes no requirements of any other kind of vows than those which please God and these are named; vows other than these ought not rightly to be considered vows at all. It is a tragic fact that man; according to his sinful nature, has taken every sacred and pious act and perverted it into a sinful and unholy work. This has also occurred in connection with vows. Therefore, it is important that the Christian be instructed and urged to make the proper distinctions.

Luther's judgment on monastic vows is presented, thereupon, in five major divisions: 1. (Monastic) vows do not rest on the Word of God; they run counter to the Word of God; 2. Vows are against faith; 3. Vows are against evangelical freedom; 4. Vows are contrary to the commandments of God; and 5. Monasticism is contrary to common sense and reason. In conclusion, Luther presents a lucid interpretation of I Timothy 5, in which he answers those who hold that this passage advocates monastic vows.

1.

Although the Old Testament presents numerous examples of vows, chiefly in the Book of Numbers, there is no indication there or in the New Testament or in the history of the early Christian Church that the monastic vow, as it has been practiced, has any authority from sacred Scripture. The vow made and carried out by Paul in Acts 21:23-26 was a vow of the Old Testament type and was far different from the monastic vow of Luther's day, both as to its nature and to its extent. By his example, moreover, St. Paul was not intending to set forth a norm for others to follow. Luther points out that this was true of other fathers in the faith as well. He adduces the example of St. Anthony, whom he quotes as declaring that "absolutely nothing should be observed which did not have the authority of Scripture." (LW 253), and shows that

although this revered father is considered as the father of monks and the founder of monastic life, he himself led his life as a hermit and chose celibacy as a way of life out of his own will, rather than from the enforced legalism of a vow. It was the successors of Anthony, rather than Anthony, who began to insist that vows were necessary and God-pleasing, but their contentions are based upon their own human reason and not upon Scripture.

Scriptures plainly teach, particularly in the words of St. Paul, that the one example whom all Christians are to follow is Christ Jesus and no other. "Be ye imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1). God the Father Himself instructs Christians as to their Model, when He urges: "Hear him" (Matt. 17:5). How clearly, then, does not Scripture reveal that there is no other way, truth or life other than Christ? There is no law, example or tradition that can have any value apart from this. Even more must be said: "Whatever is commanded which is contrary to or beyond Christ" (*ultra et praeter Christum*) "is condemned, whether a man takes it upon himself or whether he is following the example and teaching of the saints." (LW 254).

Therefore no one can claim for himself the liberty to make vows or in any other way set a sacred obligation upon himself to perform special works. If he has already mistakenly done so, then he must no longer keep his vows or perform his obligation. The error lies in thinking that there is another way of serving God, apart from the way given by the Lord Jesus, namely Himself! St. Francis, according to Luther's judgment, did not intend to set up for himself and his followers a rule apart from Christ. He only desired that they follow and abide by the Gospel, and that, therefore, they should have a free choice of, for example, living as celibates or non-celibates for as long as they were able. Francis was misguided when he made these matters a rule, to be maintained by monastic vows lasting as long as the individual lived. The conclusion is apparent: "When a Franciscan takes his vow he vows nothing more than that which he already vowed at the start

in his baptism, and that is the gospel." Although one may understand Francis' error to be due to the fact that he believed that the Gospel contains many special "counsels" addressed to the few able to keep them, nevertheless one makes a serious mistake in entrusting himself to such rules expounded through error. The Gospel, in all its parts, was intended for all people; it does not belong only to the Franciscans or to any other order.

Francis and others who defend monastic vows base their beliefs on the mistaken notion that the Gospel message is not entire (i. e., not intended in all its parts for all people), but that, on the contrary, it is divided into two distinct sets of instructions: counsels and precepts. Whereas the precepts are intended for ordinary men, the counsels provide special instructions for those above the ordinary, those with special grace to keep them. By making this division, which has no basis whatever, they reveal their own ignorance of the nature of the Gospel. Instead of offering "counsel and precept," as they claim, "the Gospel is simply the promises of God declaring the benefits offered to man." (256). In reality there is no distinction between kinds of instructions that Christ gives in various places in the Gospels; they are all obligatory precepts for everyone, as Luther points out, speaking specifically of those instructions delivered by Jesus in Matthew 5 and 6, because there is warning attached to them. Thus the very basis of monastic vows is removed, since those who practice them base them on a distinction in Scripture which does not exist.

Even if his opponents might grant that Luther is correct on the above matter, they still maintain that there certainly are Scriptural counsels (not precepts for everyone) in the matter of virginity and celibacy. Luther here declares that Christ, rather than counseling such practices, actually discouraged them; he makes the assertion regarding Paul's words on marriage that the apostle is not urging or compelling anyone to follow the "counsel" to remain unmarried (I Cor. 7:25), but that he "leaves the matter open." When the Christian lives by the Gospel, he is led to under-

stand that celibacy is a matter of free choice, not of constraint, and that it is impossible to "make an evangelical counsel into a precept." Vows of chastity, then, are not in accordance with the Gospel; rather, they are in opposition to the Gospel.

An even greater error is made by those who defend the practice of vows by arguing that two different states of perfection are attainable by men. They claim that, try as he might, an "ordinary" Christian can achieve only a state of imperfection; whereas the "religious" monk, by adhering to his vows, can achieve a state of perfection. This is a horrible doctrine! Christ and His apostle, St. Paul, do not teach in this way. Perfection, that is, righteousness, is by faith alone, a gift of God the Holy Spirit, and is entire. All desires to serve God in His Kingdom stem from faith, also those desires to remain celibate so that one may serve unencumbered with concern for wife and children.

Is it not strange that, although those who defend monastic vows base their views on those instructions which they term "counsels," yet they pick and choose only three counsels out of them all to insist upon? They boast that they attain a state of perfection by keeping three counsels: obedience, poverty and chastity. Yet, what they mean by these three vows bears little resemblance to the proper understanding of the counsels of Scripture! In illustration, Luther cites the insistence of St. Bernard "that a monk is not obliged to obey even his abbot if he commands him other than his rule allows." The spirit of the Gospel, on the other hand, leads all believers to "yield and submit" themselves to all men. The monastic view of poverty has been similarly perverted by Satan, so that, though the monks profess to be poor, they are in reality far better off in a material way than most of the ordinary Christians who have taken no vow of poverty!

Vows are claimed to be in accordance with the examples of the fathers, such as St. Francis. But while these saints were in error in believing that their spiritual fervor granted them stronger claim to the Gospel, yet what they did they did with an evangelical spirit. Their suc-

cessors have lost the spirit and retained only the form; they follow the works of the fathers, but not their faith.

2.

Vows not only contradict the Word of God, but also stand in opposition to the Christian faith. Luther points to the clear passages of Scripture which declare the simple truth that all hinges upon a faith that lays hold on Christ and His merits. For example, John 8:24: "If you do not believe that I am he, you shall die in your sin." Or John 3:18: "He who believes not is judged already, because he does not believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Although a monk may be "chaste, obedient, poor, and full of all virtues, and doing all the works you like to name, yet without faith, will he not be condemned in spite of the works?" Luther asks. Or, as the reformer further argues, from another tack, God's wrath does not descend upon those who do not sin; therefore, since they maintain that the works based on vows are not sins, even though not based on faith, they must also declare that by his works the monk averts God's anger from himself with the result that, therefore, faith is not necessary! This is blasphemy.

Luther inveighs against the theologians of the Sorbonne (who had incurred his scorn for deciding in favor of John Eck in the Leipzig Debate of 1519) for their unwillingness to let their understanding be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (II Cor. 10:5). They have been guided solely by human reason in their opinions. Vows, as they, too, must finally admit, do not grant those who make them free from all doubt and uncertainty. Luther accuses his opponents of actually teaching that it is presumptive to claim that without doubt one's vow is pleasing and acceptable to God, and of thereby revealing that they want all men to be fearful and uncertain. In opposition to all this, it is God's revealed will and desire that we trust entirely in His mercy and love, "and with utter certainty and without any doubt to have faith that both we ourselves and all our works are pleasing to him, not because

of our worthiness or merit but because of his goodness. This is the conscience of a sound faith which holds firmly and unshakably to the promise and command of God. On the other hand, the kind of faith that does not believe -- or, what is the same thing, doubts - that both it and its works are pleasing to God, devastates the conscience and sins against it. For that matter, in doing what it does not believe is pleasing to God, such a faith sins both against itself and the conscience." (277).

The works which a believer performs are good works in the sight of God because they are the fruits of the forgiveness which God has already granted through His Son. Now if anyone claims that justification, forgiveness of sins, is attainable in any other way than by God's free gift, apprehended by faith, such an individual is denying Christ. The advocates of vows base their works not on grace, but on law; they maintain that the covenant of grace in baptism, granted to all believers, is not sufficient for them, but that, rather, they must become better than other Christians by means of lives under the control of vows. It is obvious that this is so, for if they had believed that all of God's gifts are acquired through faith alone, then who of them would have taken vows and become monks? The fact that the vow of the monk is voluntary seems to provide for them a certain extenuation. However, even though voluntary and not forced upon anyone, the vow tends to stress works rather than grace; for they not only are firmly convinced (as it seems) that by their vows they are on the way to salvation, but also that their works are more perfect than the works of the rest of the believers. That is a sin, not only against conscience, but against faith.

Though St. Bernard is claimed as a father of monastic vows and orders, Luther feels that he does not defend the practice because he eventually declared, when at the point of death, that he had wasted his life; but that he found his comfort only in the knowledge that God does not despise a broken and contrite heart. If only more would come to realize that the vows and lives of monks were wasted, like those of St. Bernard, and would, like him, learn to confess

that their vows are nothing and that it is by faith alone that the believer is justified and redeemed.

3.

Luther's third point in his judgment on monastic vows is a masterful presentation of the proper understanding of Christian liberty. He introduces his discussion by pointing out that the only sort of vow that can be pleasing to God is one that does not run contrary to the Word of God and faith and that "faith remains unhurt only when a vow is regarded as a matter of free choice and not as necessary to attain righteousness and salvation." (296). The entire matter of vows, then, must be considered from the standpoint of Christian liberty.

Truly evangelical freedom is liberty from works as being necessary and possible means by which to gain God's favor. It is not that no works are done by Christians, but, rather, that no trust is placed in them. A believer has confidence only in the works of Christ, for they, and they alone, have the power to make atonement for the sins of the world. Having this confidence and trust, the believer knows that he is free, not only from the punishment he has earned by his own sins, but also from the necessity of trusting in his own works. His conscience is also clear, for in faith his sins have been laid to rest in the wounds of Christ. It is just this faith, liberty and conscience of the believer that is most under attack by all who place confidence in works.

There is a deep and pressing need to have a clear understanding of works, in order to be truly free. It may be possible that an individual perform works in accordance with God's holy Law, at least, in respect to the letter of the Law. However, these works are at best imperfect and cannot please God. They are not works that can defend us from the condemnation of God; they cannot justify us. The works of the believer, nevertheless, ought to be done freely and without thought of reward. In actuality, the works of Christians are not works of the law at all; rather, they are

the works of Christ in us. They are the fruits of faith and can, therefore, not be omitted or neglected any more than can faith itself be omitted or neglected.

So, then, works are performed in two senses.

Those that are done by one's own efforts in accordance with the Law may be called our own works; those done by Christ in us are His works. One can properly consider vows in the same way. Vows made through the work of Christ in us, made in the spirit of freedom, voluntarily, without the hope that through them forgiveness of sins is won, are entirely possible for the Christian. But it is totally impossible to make vows with this kind of freedom of conscience unless the believer is already assured of his salvation through Christ alone and is already saved.

The trouble is that vows are not generally conceived of in this proper and blessed way. Rather, "the whole idea of vows has been devised to ensnare the conscience and hold it captive to the bondage of the law." What monk wants to regard himself as being in the same class in the sight of God as an ordinary Christian? He, therefore, boasts of his chastity, for example, as being a meritorious act that sets him apart from and above others. Yet, in the judgment of Luther, chastity without the proper motivation is not chastity at all, but the worst kind of harlotry. "If a virgin makes herself superior to others or even equal to others before God because of her virginity, she is a virgin of Satan." What it means to be pleasing to God in one's virginity is to be content in one's unmarried condition simply because by so doing one is free of responsibilities and has time and liberty to serve God; such an individual does not glory in her virginity, but in Christ.

Therefore, one must conclude that the institution of the vow is not only not a precept of God's Word, but is forbidden by evangelical freedom. Luther points out that it is Christian freedom that is being defended by St. Paul when he writes to the Galatians: "But if an angel or someone else from heaven were to teach anything other than what you have heard, let him be anathema." Everything not specifically taught by our Lord Himself in His Word is

made a matter of Christian liberty. Where in Scripture can one find a command of God to take vows, to cut one's hair in a certain way, to observe rules of obedience, poverty and chastity as they are promulgated in monastic orders? In God's divine will, these matters are optional for Christians, but those who defend monastic vows have declared them to be obligatory.

A proper understanding of the nature of Christian liberty points out that vows, if they were godly, "ought to include the freedom to retract the vow." If one wishes, of one's own free will, to vow obedience, poverty, chastity, or anything else he desires, with the implicit understanding that the individual may change his mind later, if he discovered himself unable to fulfill what he has promised -- that is a matter of his Christian freedom, and no one could judge him. In fact, such a voluntary vow has its worth, particularly if the monasteries would change back into the form they once took, namely schools for the Christian education and training of the young. Luther often expressed the opinion that monasteries would serve a wholesome purpose in this way, even as the early schools had done.

In making a vow a covenant which may be abrogated later for good reason, Luther was not thereby declaring that a vow made to one's neighbor could similarly be laid aside. "God does not want His law thrust aside to enable you to serve him."

What is done freely and voluntarily, even taking a vow to do so (foolish though that may be), does not harm one's faith or cause one to sacrifice his Christian liberty. The believer will do such things without a vow.

4.

In the fourth section Luther points out that monastic vows are actually contrary to the Commandments. In so doing, he desired to be understood, once and for all, as not standing in judgment against the saints and fathers. He is declaring himself as being against the institution that makes monastic vows of obedience, poverty and chastity

obligatory, no matter by whom the practice may have been carried on.

The First Table of the Law of God is denied by the institution of monastic orders. By its teaching of work righteousness, the institution of vows makes faith useless, for it takes away its content. Without that content (which is God Himself), the practitioners of vows trust in their own name, rather than in the name of God. They may go so far as to believe that they are saved because they bear the name of the founder of their particular order. Likewise, their practice abrogates the Second and Third Commandments, as well. An entirely different concept of holiness is presented, separate and distinct from the holiness of Christ. Thus, under the institution of vows, there can be no true worship of God. In its place, they have adopted modes of worship in which the monks become no more than empty pipes of a pipe organ, standing in rows, "giving no distinct note, but rather blasting out into the air."

The Second Table of the Law is also denied through monastic vows. For these commandments of God instruct us to love our fellowmen and to serve them, beginning with our own parents. The absolute vows which are insisted upon by the institution of monastic orders, grant no freedom to fulfill one's duties to parents, even in cases of grave and urgent need. A vow which obliges the Christian to separate himself from his neighbors and parents, especially when it cannot be peaceably released in case of necessity, is evidently in complete opposition to the intent of the Second Table.

Under the pretext of being obedient ("Obedience is better than sacrifice," I Sam. 15:22), they excuse themselves from the performance of those commandments which speak of love toward one's fellowman. "If a monk sees anybody who is hungry, thirsty, naked, homeless, captive, and all the rest, he is warned that he cannot leave the monastery to visit the sick and comfort the sad. He just lets perish what is going to perish. He shuts his heart to compassion, even if he can help. Afterward he is likely to say that he did not do the charitable thing because he did

not want to offer sacrifice before obedience. He would do the same if his father and mother needed his help to look after them and care for them. What an unheard-of-madness!"

5.

Even natural reason indicates that monastic vows are in error. Reason may certainly be brought to bear in this matter, for even though it will never reveal the truth of God, yet it will demonstrate what is palpably untrue. For example, Christ Himself uses reason in this way when He makes the assertion that every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation (Luke 11:17). Luther demonstrates with the same method (i. e., by the use of reason) that monastic vows are "actually contrary to the common sense of all mankind."

He points out that even a correct vow ceases to be binding upon the individual who made it if circumstances beyond his control prevent him from keeping it. He uses the illustration of one who vows to make a certain pilgrimage but is unable to do so because of death or other sufficient reason. Certainly, reason itself would insist that in that case the vow has been set aside. What is possible in the case of one vow is possible in the case of all vows.

Thus, even in the case of celibacy, if conditions beyond one's control bring it about that the individual is unable to keep what he has pledged, he ought to be released from his vow, without question and without a bad conscience. Although it is argued that this is a matter of controlling one's fleshly passions rather than a matter of impossibility of control, Luther declares that it is just in such desires of the flesh that one has the least control of himself. This is especially true when you are, in this case, making a vow which is in opposition to God's own divine commandment to be fruitful and multiply.

The proponents of vows evidently feel that in the case of chastity a gift of most precious worth, above all

other things, is thereby vowed to the Lord, St. Jerome is quoted by them: "I confidently declare that though God can do all things, he cannot restore a virgin after a fall." Here Luther affirms how strong a delusion this matter is; for Jerome is thereby revealing a lack of faith in the almighty power of God, Who is able to perform and accomplish all things. Luther puts it plainly: "If a man believes that a virgin cannot be restored because God lacks the power to do so, that, in other words, what has been done cannot be undone, he will have the same audacity to declare that no virtue and no grace which has once been corrupted can ever again be restored by God."

But the real point is that the performing of a vow is not in its outward form, but, rather, in its own true worth. If a vow has no real value it ought not to be kept or maintained. In this connection it is necessary to assert that in the eyes of God all works performed by Christian believers are equal. Are they not, after all, works that are performed by Christ in the believers? And is it not also true, in the final analysis, that a man is saved not by works, but by faith? Also reason then affirms that vows ought to be a matter of free choice on the part of those who make them.

The final portion of Luther's monumental work examines in close detail the very nature of the monastic vows of obedience, poverty and chastity. What the defenders of vows consider to be any one of these three conditions is shown to be its very opposite. In contrast, Luther shows that these very conditions are more likely to be found among simple Christians in the ordinary walks of life. He concludes, once more, that monastic vows (especially those of obedience) could be defended only if the monasteries are institutions for the instruction of the young for a limited time, and if they are truly voluntary. He urges all to follow the words of St. Peter (I Peter 4: 10-12) in which Peter "wants nothing to be offered but the gift which was received; nothing is to be taught except the word of God; nothing is to be done except what God works in us."

It is my hope that the reader will not be satisfied

with this brief and inadequate attempt to distill Luther's magnificent words regarding his judgment on monastic vows, but will be led by it to read the treatise in its entirety. Luther's words are fresh and germane for our times; they breathe with the same evangelical earnestness that they revealed 450 years ago.

John Lau



OUR HERITAGE FROM
FAITHFUL TEACHERS

It is God's will that we should "remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation," Hebr. 13:7. We are to "remember" them, not soon forget. This does not mean that we are to make idols out of them, nor place their words on an equal plane with Scripture. But there is something about them which we are to remember. Let us therefore pause to remember our faithful teachers of God's Word whose labors have ended, and especially those whose counsel and fellowship we have enjoyed in our Church of the Lutheran Confession. As we remember their names, we remember also the days on which their earthly warfare came to an end, and they entered into the joy of their Lord.

Pastor Gervasius W. Fischer	June 10, 1958
Dr. Norman A. Madson, Sr.	December 10, 1962
Pastor Gerhard Pieper	May 21, 1969
Prof. Edmund Reim	August 22, 1969
Pastor Ruben Ude	March 8, 1970
Pastor Christian Albrecht	August 13, 1970
Pastor George Tiefel, Sr.	March 18, 1971
Prof. Egbert Schaller	July 29, 1971

There is much that could be said about each of these faithful teachers. Each was blessed with particular gifts from the Lord. We can only thank God for His great goodness in permitting us to enjoy these gifts of His for a little while. But we do not now intend to single out any specific gifts possessed by any of these men. That is not our purpose. Rather we shall speak in a more general way of our heritage from these faithful teachers.

When may a servant of the Word be considered faithful? In seeking an answer to that question, we turned again to those passages of Scripture which speak about the public ministry. We read again the words of Paul to Timothy: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth," II Tim. 2:15. Having read that passage, and having looked again at the names of our departed teachers in the Word, it came to us that there was indeed at least one major characteristic that was common to them all, despite their great diversity of gifts. They were not only of one faith, but they were all true workmen. They have left us an heritage of their work. We will remember them all as being hard workers.

Surely an heritage of hard work is most befitting those who would be faithful servants of the Lord. These men knew that the Lord did not call them to a life of leisure and the enjoyment of days of ease; He called them to work. St. Paul writes: "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work," I Tim. 3:1. Again: "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry," Eph. 4:11-12. The same thought is expressed in Acts 13:2: "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

A minister of the Word must be a workman. That is his calling. "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" said the householder to some on the market-place. When they said, "Because no man hath hired us," he replied, "Go ye also

into the vineyard," Matt. 20:6-7. Our faithful teachers left us an heritage of work, for they knew that the Lord's vineyard needs workmen, not idlers.

The ministry requires work of mind and body, hand and brain. The words of I Tim. 4:15, selected as a motto to be inscribed on the cover of each issue of this Journal of Theology remind us of this work: "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them: that thy profiting may appear unto all." The ministry wants the whole man. The professor of theology who burns the midnight oil preparing his lectures, or the pastor spending sleepless nights, thinking how best to minister to some sick or backsliding member, are both doing the work of the ministry.

The Lord Jesus set us all the right example. "I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day," John 9:4. The Master wants His barn filled, and the work must go on continually while the harvest time lasts. Paul gave this charge to Timothy and to all who would be faithful ministers of the Word: "Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season . . . Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry," II Tim. 4:2, 5.

Our faithful teachers have indeed left us an heritage of hard work. They were opposed to idleness in carrying out the duties of their office. They too had their sinful flesh which was naturally inclined to take its ease. They too were tempted to think thus: "As long as I have performed those duties which were specified in the Call which was handed to me and which I accepted, then I have done my work and can take my ease." The professor might then conduct his classes, correct his papers, do his research. The pastor would conduct public worship, visit the sick, instruct the catechumens. What more would they then have to do?

The idle servant of the Word is prone to restrict his work to the very letter of his Call. He regards the Call as a complete summary of the work he is to do, rather than a brief outline, and when he has followed the letter of the Call he can find nothing else to do. He becomes blind to oppor-

tunities. He might perhaps do mission work, but he can see no opening, and he has not the ambition to seek an opening. He might do preaching from house to house, but he is called only to preach from the pulpit. He might handle the pen, but he is too lazy to recognize the gift that is in him. To all such the Lord says through the prophet: "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion!" Amos 6:1.

Our faithful teachers have left us an heritage of working beyond their Call. While seeking faithfully to perform the duties of their Call, they were not hesitant to accept greater responsibilities than were outlined therein.

The servant of the Word is, after all, a steward, appointed to distribute his Master's goods, I Cor. 4:1. The Master has provided the goods in the Means of Grace. Those who would be stewards of the Master are to have an eye for furnishing souls. Not an opportunity is to be missed. We like to remember our faithful teachers as constantly striving to be such faithful stewards of the mysteries of God.

The world indeed has small honor for the hard-working steward of Christ. The world knows not the true standard by which the value of his labor must be assessed. It knows only earthly values and reckons only by earthly gain. The Gospel is foolishness to the world. The more zealously a servant of the Word is given to the wooing of souls for the heavenly Bridegroom, the less honor will he find with the world. "We are made as the filth of the earth," says the apostle, "and are the offscouring of all things unto this day," I Cor. 4:13.

But over whom do the angels in heaven have greater joy? Over the millionaire organizing trusts for the gaining of more millions? Or over the humble servant of the Word bringing the bread of life to his people, whether in the classroom or in the pulpit. The work of the ministry is not like the work of a street-sweeper, the traces of which are wiped out in a day. "I have chosen you, and ordained you," says the Lord, "that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain," John 15:16. What a glorious day when the hard-working reaper can present his sheaf at

the door of the everlasting barns and can say to the Door-keeper: In great mercy didst Thou make me a reaper in Thy harvest, and here is the sheaf which I have reaped.

Many in their ignorance would consider our faithful teachers to be foolish for giving up comfortable incomes in other church bodies for the comparatively modest incomes they would receive in schools and congregations of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. In most cases, they were well along in years when this decision became necessary. But even old age is not a valid reason for refusing to "deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Jesus," Matt. 16:24. Paul writes: "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful," I Cor. 4:2. What better heritage can a steward of God's Word leave behind than one of faithful work, without regard to personal comfort.

What can we of a younger generation learn from these faithful teachers now enjoying the bliss of heaven? Are we acquainted with days of discouragement and despondency? Be sure that our departed teachers were also acquainted with such days. But having now attained the glories of heaven, they too would only echo the refrain of Scripture, that despondency is a transgression of the very First Commandment. We are supposed to be workmen, but discouragement makes us to resemble a bird with broken wings. In the gloom of discouragement we too may at times be tempted to say: "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for naught." But what is the Lord's judgment? "I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted," Rev. 2:2-3.

Our hearts may droop because we may see so little fruit of our work. Then let us learn ever better to walk by faith. If we are thirsting after more of the kind of praise which comes from men, then Jesus says to us: "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets," Luke 6:26. Or would we place a crown on our own heads? Remember, it is the Lord who has hired us. We are to do the work, and let Him

do the crowning. For all of us the end is in sight and the reward of grace is coming. Soon the words spoken to aged Daniel, in a sense, will apply to us all: "Go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days," Dan. 12:13.

The devil, that roaring lion, is roaring louder than ever in these last days of the world, always seeking whom he may devour. For that reason, too, unfaltering perseverance in the work is the more necessary. There is no man more hateful to Satan than the steward of the Lord who is busily engaged portioning out the right kind of rations. The old evil foe found little satisfaction walking back and forth in his wide domain on the earth, for he was mortified at that one man Job. He sharpened his wits to fell him and to destroy the fruit of his labors. But in vain!

When the hand is once put to the plow, the watchword must be to drive on and on until the evening is come. Luke 9:62. When each one has plowed the acre apportioned us, the Master Himself will unharness us.

During the 1970-71 school year at Immanuel Lutheran College, our esteemed colleague, Prof. Egbert Schaller, led the college family through the Beatitudes during morning chapel services. The Lutheran Spokesman contained excerpts from these chapel addresses in serial form for several months, the last of which appeared in the March 1971 issue. The text was Matthew 5:8: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Since this was the last article by Prof. Schaller to appear in the Spokesman, we would like to quote the closing paragraphs of that article in which he was without doubt looking forward to that time, not far away, when he would see God. We quote:

"Every believer soon comes to know that it is not a simple thing to be pure in heart in his life. Indeed, sometimes it may seem just too much to bear! Knowing yourself to be clean and pure in the blood of the Lamb of God, and hating sin with all your heart just means that you are in the middle of a constant fierce war. Everything of this world, round about, is pulling the other way. And your wicked Old

Adam roars: Being pure is not my thing! So you have enemies within and without, in front and behind; and they will let you have no rest. It is a fight without furlough, full of skirmishes lost and of painful wounds.

"But Jesus says: Happy, blessed -- FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD. This will be the believers' exclusive prerogative. Do not ask for a picture of what it means, for nothing that we know on earth can be likened to the privilege of seeing God. We know only that to see God is the pinnacle of all true human success, the ultimate glory for which we were created but which none shall achieve except the pure in heart. The Psalmist cries in expectation: 'I shall behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.' And John writes: 'It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him: for we shall see Him as He is.' If there is any wisdom in us, let us train patiently to wait for that, and to cherish our pure hearts."

Thus have our faithful teachers preached and taught to the end. We who remain, like Elisha of old, must for now be content to see our spiritual fathers removed from our midst and be taken by the angels into Abraham's bosom. But, like Elisha, we would do well to offer an appropriate prayer to our Lord, asking that a double portion of their spirit may be upon us, II Kings 2:9. May God continue to bestow His gifts and blessings upon our Church of the Lutheran Confession. May it never lack for men who are willing to work, yes, to sacrifice all in holy gratitude to God for His unspeakable blessings toward us. May we, like our faithful teachers before us, ever take heed to the words of the apostle: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord," I Cor. 15:58.

A. Schulz



==== PANORAMA ====

ECUMENICITY AND REALIGNMENT

Among Lutherans who were formerly associated with the now defunct Synodical Conference

there is much talk about ecumenicity and realignment.

On the one hand the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod is making it known that it definitely wants to be counted in, but its actions and resolutions speak a language quite different from that which characterized the Synodical Conference for so many years. It has officially declared pulpit and altar fellowship with the ALC even though the publica doctrina of that body reveals a doctrinal cleavage which runs far deeper than the recent difference on the ordination of women. Missouri's fellowship entanglements in the Lutheran Council of U.S.A. is a sharp departure from its former stand on the National Lutheran Council which was the predecessor of the present ecclesiastically expanded and theologically extended Council. We have long since passed the point where it is necessary to argue whether or not this Council is engaged in matters purely external or in activities which have always been regarded as church work. Besides all this it is well known that fellowship is being practised and has been practised on higher and lower levels with others who do not share a common basis of agreement with them. This goes on without any effective doctrinal discipline being practised which means that the whole church body is responsible. Missouri will find it increasingly more difficult to get a true hearing for her testimony to the unaffiliated so long as she contains within her own fellowship teachers who diverge as sharply as is the case among those whom she approaches. The current ambivalence in Missouri is quickly spotted by those who have no intention of changing their own confessional position. As things now stand ecumenical progress for Missouri would seem to mean fellowship expansion without

agreement in all points of doctrine. This is what many want. This is what they now have. And all things point to the prospect of more of the same. The so-called "open question" approach has a wider opening than ever

But talks of a national and international grouping of Lutherans in an organizational set-up is not restricted to Missouri but is current also among others who were formerly a part of the Synodical Conference. Thus it is reported in the Northwestern Lutheran (p. 300, Sept. 12, 1971): "Remembering the many blessings which were enjoyed in the former Synodical Conference which was dissolved as a result of the doctrinal deterioration on the part of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, our Wisconsin Synod in a Scripturally ecumenical spirit encouraged its Commission on Doctrinal Matters to arrange for a consultation with orthodox Lutheran synods around the world aimed at the formation of a worldwide Synodical Conference." The ELS in its convention this summer passed a similar resolution. The Federation for Authentic Lutheranism (a group consisting of pastors and congregations who have left the Missouri Synod and Missouri Synod pastors and congregations who are contemplating severance), through its chairman has said: "The Federation has already seen many blessings from the hand of God as a direct result of her confessional stand. For example, fellowship talks will begin soon with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). Both synods have already offered their schools and seminaries to qualified students of the Federation. There is also great hope that an international Synodical Conference-type organization will bring confessional Lutherans closer together throughout the world." Sola Scriptura, Sept. - Oct. 1971 p. 4. Certainly no truly orthodox Lutheran synod will want to isolate itself from any other synod that agrees with it in all points of doctrine. But before there can be any serious talk of an international or even a national Synodical Conference-type organization it must first be determined which are the "orthodox Lutheran synods." As far as we are concerned we see such dif-

ferences as on the doctrines of the Church and Ministry, and of Church fellowship which will need to be frankly faced and settled before there can be any profitable talk of a national or worldwide Synodical Conference.

C. M. G.

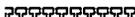


NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN
REPORTS ON CLC AND
WELS DISCUSSIONS.

In its September 12th issue the Northwestern Lutheran reports: "Our Synod also declared that

it is our sincere desire to remove differences with the Church of the Lutheran Confession and to establish fellowship with this synod composed largely of congregations, pastors, and teachers who broke fellowship with us several years before we suspended fellowship with the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. Since face-to-face discussions have stalled, apparently on matters of procedure, it was resolved that our Commission on Doctrinal Matters pursue every God-pleasing avenue of approach to resume fellowship discussions, giving consideration to the possibility of a personal meeting with representatives of the CLC to arrive at an acceptable procedure." pp. 300-301. In the absence of the official text it is premature to comment. However, it may not be out of place to express the hope that the resolution now leaves the WELS Commission free to hear and discuss whatever references to official documents and synodical actions the CLC may deem it necessary to offer in making its point. So far this has been a road block standing in the way.

C. M. G.



AMBIGUITIES
AT MILWAUKEE
CONVENTION

Enough time has now elapsed since the Milwaukee convention of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod so that the dust has had a chance to settle and reactions from various sources are in. Judging from past experiences with convention actions one might say that these reactions were predictable from the very start. Some might be moved to say that the reactions from CLC quarters could also have been pretty well anticipated long before this issue of the Journal was published. If this is said facetiously then, of course, the one who passes judgment is pretty well insulated against anything we may have to say. If it is said on the basis of a knowledge of the confessional basis of the reactor then it could be considered a compliment.

Sometimes indeed we may profit from a study of the reaction of those who presumably have no ax to grind even though we may otherwise find ourselves poles apart on many issues. Thus, for instance, we find ourselves more often in disagreement with the "Christian Century" than in agreement with this ecumenically oriented weekly, and yet in one of its comments on the Missouri Synod Convention it has made an observation which in our opinion reveals a perception which has been lacking in some other reports that have come to our attention. It speaks of ambiguities at Milwaukee both on the part of the conservatives as well as on the part of the liberals. This is in fact the very thing which serves to make the Missouri Synod image such a hazy one for so many people. For example, the convention refused to accept a resolution which would have bound pastors and theologians to synod resolutions on doctrinal matters. On the other hand it accepted a resolution which asked them to honor convention resolutions dealing with doctrinal matters. The conservatives wanted a binding resolution to undergird stricter synodical controls for the preservation of the confessional stance, while at the same time professing faith in the discipline and power of the Word and adherence to the evangelical approach. The liberals declared concern for the confessional image and the evangelical approach but wanted no binding synodical

control even in matters which involve doctrine. Representative of both "parties" claim to have gained some ground at Milwaukee. But the ambiguity of the situation presents a confusing picture to those who view the resolutions and synodical actions from the outside.

The grave danger for those who supported resolutions calling for a firm position in doctrinal matters is the temptation to construct a modus vivendi in the face of an ambiguous situation both with regard to internal problems as well as fellowship questions involving relations with other church bodies. To take a stand, for instance, against ALC's ordination of women while defending its own women's suffrage in the Church and its continuing fellowship with the ALC is an ambiguity in Missouri which muddies the waters. It is all a fruit and result of the opening of the door to the "Open Question" way of solving differences, an evil against which President Preus so valiantly warned in his opening address. But now the Missouri Synod president is himself involved in an ambiguous situation. In commenting on the adoption of the resolution which merely called for an upholding and honoring of the doctrinal content of the synodically adopted statements under the norms of Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confession, the Lutheran Witness Reporter (July 25, 1971, pp. 1 & 3) states: "After adoption of this second substitute motion Synod President J.A.O. Preus left the chair and addressed the delegates. He expressed 'a great deal of regret at this particular turn.' He felt that adoption of the presidents' 'statement 'moves us back to Denver and confusion... It will cause a great deal of difficulty.'" Even though other resolutions seemed to recover what had been lost, yet the fact remains that the motion on the binding nature of Synod-adopted doctrinal declarations, was lost and the liberals are already making the most of this situation. It is being openly said that the position of all the professors at St. Louis is now secure. Furthermore, it is reported, that an amendment to suspend fellowship with the ALC was defeated by a wide margin. The whole situation is ambiguous to say the very least.

C. M. G.

BOOK When Human Wisdom Fails
 REVIEW T. Miles Bennett
 Baker 1971, paper 96 pp. \$0.95

"This volume is a serious and prayerful attempt to present in non-technical language both the movement of the story and the central message found in the book of Job. It is my deliberate intent to magnify the message of the book which can be the 'balm of Gilead' to any Christian bent low beneath the burden of life's darkest riddle -- human suffering and pain." (p. 5)

So says the author in his preface. And so he does. Prof. Bennett is "serious" enough to realize that it helps to be brief if one would speak in a practical way and aid people today in applying the comfort of the book of Job "to their own lives in times of overwhelming suffering." He is "prayerful" enough in his approach to reject the bulk of carping of Scripture's modern critics. He is "non-technical" enough not to call the central theme of Job "theodicy", but rather "the poignant cry of 'Why?'"

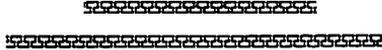
Perhaps the greatest value of this little volume lies in the fact that it is really more analytical than expositional. Through a well-organized presentation of his outline of Job, Bennett leaves the reader with a good overall grasp of the book. By pointing out a number of key "literary patterns" he opens up one's understanding of the work as a whole, as well as casting light on certain sections and verses.

There are drawbacks. Professor Bennett does not always refute the modern critics of Job as fully as one might wish -- and upon occasion would seem to give their opinions more credence than they merit. However, he is correct in stating that extended arguments are beyond the scope of this book. His treatment of 19:27 limps badly -- and one can see why when he says that "Israel lacked ... a clean concept of immortality or life beyond death ... during most of the O. T. period." (p. 19)

Despite a few such indications of the author's being influenced by the modern evolutionary approach to "Scripture as literature", there is value in this small book. It

would be useful for a beginning study or a quick review by any pastor, as well as the cautious layman.

Walter Schaller



Luther says: "It is not enough nor is it Christian, to preach the works, life and words of Christ as historical facts, as if the knowledge of these would suffice for the conduct of life, although this is the fashion of those who must to-day be regarded as our best preachers; and far less is it enough or Christian to say nothing at all about Christ and to teach instead the laws of men and the decrees of the Fathers. And now there are not a few who preach Christ and read about Him that they may move men's affections to sympathy with Christ, to anger against the Jews and such like childish and womanish nonsense. Rather ought Christ to be preached to the end that faith in Him may be established, that He may not only be Christ, but be Christ for thee and for me, and that what is said of Him and what His Name denotes may be effectual in us. And such faith is produced and preserved in us by preaching why Christ came, what He brought and bestowed, what benefit it is to us to accept Him."

-- "A Treatise on Christian Liberty," Works of Martin Luther, Vol. II, pp. 326f.

NOTICE . . .

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C O N T E N T S

VOLUME 11

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EDITOR'S NOTE 1
C. M. Gullerud

IN MEMORIAM:

PROFESSOR EGBERT SCHALLER (1904-1971) .. 2
C. M. Gullerud

OUR PRESIDENT SPEAKS 4
Robert Reim

SERMON AT THE FUNERAL
OF PROF. E. SCHALLER 5
Lester Schierenbeck

1521-1971: IN COMMEMORATION OF
LUTHER'S STAND AT WORMS 10
John Lau

OUR HERITAGE FROM FAITHFUL TEACHERS 23
A. Schulz

PANORAMA

ECUMENICITY AND REALIGNMENT 30

NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN REPORTS
ON CLC AND WELS DISCUSSIONS 32

AMBIGUITIES AT MILWAUKEE CONVENTION 33
C. M. Gullerud

BOOK REVIEW: When Human Wisdom Fails 35
Walter Schaller
