



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

I Timothy 4:15

Journal of Theology

Church of the Lutheran Confession

" T H Y W O R D I S T R U T H "

The attacks upon the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, also by liberals among the Lutherans, continue unabated. A pastor of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, F. Dean Lueking, recently addressed the membership of the American Lutheran Church in this fashion:

"The doctrine of inerrancy was clearly taught by one of the most revered and forceful leaders of Missouri's past, Franz Pieper. He forged this strong emphasis during years of controversy with fellow Lutherans in the U.S. and against the whole background of Protestant liberal theology from the 1880's through World War I and the 1920's. Pieper was the president of the Missouri Synod, president of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and the most capable organizer of Christian doctrine the synod has had.

"But another strand of Missouri's tradition has pointed out one embarrassing fact: the Bible nowhere makes such claims for itself. Faithful men, whose life work is not to organize doctrines about the Bible (important as that is) but whose task is hearing the message of the Bible itself, tell us that inerrancy, in the sense of scientific precision in all matters of chronology, geography, etc., is a human prop which the Bible does not need. In fact, it's an obstacle."¹

Are we really to believe that the convictions of the Old Missouri Synod regarding Scripture were based on nothing more than unfounded dogmatic inventions of men like Pieper? Are we really to believe that the Bible has absolutely nothing to say about its own inerrancy? We are reminded of Satan in the garden, who boldly asserted the very opposite of the facts to a gullible Eve. Indeed, "zu behaupten ist nicht zu beweisen" -- to assert something does not mean to prove it!

In the last issue of this Journal,² we began a discussion of the doctrine of verbal inspiration and inerrancy. We had opportunity there to demonstrate how this high view of Scripture is a matter of faith, and is therefore a fruit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It was shown that Holy

Scripture in numerous passages of both the Old and New Testaments speaks of itself as the Word of God, not only with respect to the doctrines which it teaches, but also with respect to its very words! We then suggested that inerrancy, the freedom from human fallibility and factual error in all matters that the Bible treats, follows from such verbal inspiration as a necessary and easily drawn consequence. With the aim of showing that Scripture predicates also such inerrancy of itself, we continued with a discussion of the word ἀλήθεια, as found in such passages as John 17:17: "Thy word is truth." And we now resume this same topic with a study of John 10:35.

* * * *

JOHN 10:35 "The scripture cannot be broken." This verse comes to mind immediately in any discussion of Biblical inerrancy. For it has been, perhaps, the locus classicus for this doctrine. Those who would do away with the doctrine must, therefore, dispose somehow of this verse. Dr. Martin Marty, in the article which precipitated this series in the Journal, states categorically: "The verb translated 'broken' does not have that intention and effect [namely, to affirm inerrancy]."³ It may well be that he was thinking of a novel interpretation of this passage by Richard Jungkuntz, which came to light several years ago in an article in the CTM.⁴ Whether or not it was Dr. Jungkuntz's intention to remove John 10:35 from the sedes for inerrancy does not appear from the article. But it is evident that, should his exegesis be accepted, we would have to strike this passage from all of our confessions which treat this doctrine. We would not be unwilling to do this, if we could be convinced of the correctness of his interpretation. But he has not convinced us.

The New Approach

Dr. Jungkuntz begins his article with some comments on what he calls the "modern" and the "traditional" interpretations of John 10:34-36. (In the KJV, the entire passage reads: "Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of

God?") Jungkuntz states that both interpretations are based upon the presupposition "that behind Jesus' words lies the intent by means of unanswerable formal argumentation to refute or at least to silence His opponents, the Pharisees, who have charged Him with blasphemy for claiming to be divine."

The "modern" interpretation, according to Dr. Jungkuntz, suggests that Jesus is here making use of an exegetical technique commonly employed by the rabbis. Through the use of Psalm 82:6 ("Ye are gods") and the literalistic understanding of this verse by the Jews ("the scripture cannot be broken"), Jesus would be trying to show His opponents that it cannot be blasphemy for Him to claim the title of divinity even though He is a human being. Jungkuntz objects to this "modern" interpretation for two reasons. First, Jesus would, through such a rabbinical technique, be using an argumentum ad hominem, by employing Jewish literalism without having to subscribe to it Himself; and, secondly, He would thereby not be meeting the chief objection of the Jews, namely, that He claimed to be God in very essence.

The "traditional" interpretation, Dr. Jungkuntz states, reaches as far back in time as Chrysostom, and includes among its proponents such more recent exegetes as Stoeckhardt and Lenski. It suggests that Jesus is trying to prove to His opponents by syllogistic argument that He is rightly called God in the highest sense of the word. Jungkuntz finds difficulty with this interpretation also. He feels that either Jesus would be guilty of equivocation, by using the word "God" in both a lower and a higher sense within the same argument; or He would be begging the question, by assuming as true a premise which the Jews would be unwilling to accept, namely, that He was "sanctified and sent into the world" by the Father.

Inasmuch as he finds all previous interpretations of John 10:34-36 unacceptable, Jungkuntz offers a new approach which he feels is "both hermeneutically justifiable and textually defensible." He begins with a reinterpretation of the clause οὐ δύναται λυθῆναι ἡ γραφή -- "the scripture cannot be broken." The traditional interpretation makes this statement equivalent to "Scripture cannot be denied; if Scripture says something, that something is a fact." Such an understanding, he feels, overlooks the "natural" sense of λῶω, both etymologically and in its New Testament usage.

In trying to establish the correct meaning of this verb, he points to the fact that etymologically λῶω means

"loosen, unbind, unfasten," and hence "undo" -- a meaning which he finds in both Ephesians 2:14 ("Christ hath broken down the middle wall of partition") and John 2:19 ("destroy this temple"). He proceeds then to examine passages in which λύω is used with reference to the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Matthew 5:17f. becomes very important in his argument: "Think not that I am come to destroy (καταλύσαι, a synonym of λύσαι) the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil (πληρῶσαι)." Particularly from this verse he concludes that "in contexts such as these, where the Law or the Old Testament Scriptures are under consideration, the antonym to λύω, 'undo,' is πληρῶ, 'fulfill.' Consequently, in such contexts the meaning of λύω must be 'to undo' in the sense of 'render incapable of fulfillment,' 'keep from being fulfilled,' 'prevent attainment of the goal or intention.'" Jungkuntz argues, then, that the statement "the scripture cannot be broken" may best be interpreted to mean: "Scripture cannot be undone, cannot be kept from going into fulfillment."

In the remainder of his article, Dr. Jungkuntz indicates what relevance he believes this statement has with regard to the rest of the passage in which it stands. Fulfillment, he states, implies a prior promise or prophecy. What is the prophecy to which Jesus alludes in John 10:34-36? That is indicated by the quotation from Psalm 82:6, which is addressed to the unjust judges, or rulers, of Israel. Because they are judges, standing in God's place among the people, they are referred to as "gods"; but because they are unjust in their judgments, they "shall die like men." According to this, and so many other related passages in Scripture, God will depose them, inasmuch as they have been false shepherds, who have viciously tyrannized the flock. And He will set up over His people a Shepherd (cf. the "good shepherd" of John 10), who will judge the people in righteousness.⁵ According to Jungkuntz, then, Jesus in John 10:34-36 is proclaiming to His opponents that the prophecy of Scripture concerning their judgment and His own establishment as the promised Judge and Shepherd is being fulfilled, even as it must be. In conclusion he states:

"Finally, it may be noted again that for the unbeliever this reply of Jesus does not prove His deity. But neither is it intended to. It is a preachment of God's Word. It is Law or it is Gospel. It is Law in that Jesus says: The Scriptures told you the Judge would

come; in rejecting Me you reject God and His Word. It is Gospel, however, in that Jesus says: The Scriptures told you the Judge would come; here I am, hear what I say, see what I do -- and believe."

A Reaction to This New Approach

Dr. Jungkuntz states that the key to a proper understanding of John 10:34-36 is the meaning of the word λῶναι, "be broken." He comes to the conclusion that λῶναι, in passages relating to the Word of God, means "keep from being fulfilled," or "render incapable of fulfillment," and he bases his interpretation upon this alleged significance.

Can we accept the meaning which he places into λῶναι?

Let us look more closely at the method whereby he arrives at this meaning. He engages, first, in a bit of etymologizing,⁶ a procedure which has more than once led to faulty exegetical conclusions. The meanings of words can and often do change over the course of years, and it is linguistically unsound to assume that the original denotation of a word is a safe guide to its current usage. It might, for example, be tempting to translate 1 John 3:1 as follows: "Behold what other-worldly love the Father hath bestowed upon us," inasmuch as the word ποταπός, a late form of ποδοπός, originally meant "from what country." But it is highly unlikely that the Koine readers of the New Testament understood anything other than "of what sort," or "how great," when they read this word. Or notice how the meaning of the word "prevent" has changed most markedly since the days when the KJV was translated. The fact that it originally meant "come before" helps little in arriving at its 20th century usage. An argument from etymology does not seem, then, to bear much weight.

Dr. Jungkuntz then explores the usage of λῶναι in those contexts of the New Testament which treat of Holy Scripture. He regards Matthew 5:17-18 as very significant in ascertaining the meaning of this term. He assumes that the verbs καταλύσαι (= λύσαι) and πληρῶσαι are antonyms, and therefore concludes that the meaning of λῶναι must be "keep from fulfillment." We note that if he had applied this procedure to the next verse of the same chapter, the results would have been somewhat different. That 19th verse reads: "Whosoever therefore shall break (λύσῃ) one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do

(ποιήσῃ) and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Using the argument from antonyms, λῶω would here take on the meaning "keep from doing." Applying this method to a verse like 1 John 4:2f. (cf. the variant reading), would yield yet another meaning: "not to confess" or "deny." Does it not seem that the validity of Jungkuntz's conclusion regarding the meaning of λῶω must be questioned?

But let us for the moment accept his suggestion that λῶω means "keep from fulfillment" in contexts relating to the Word of God. Would this meaning fit well in all such contexts? Let us test his new meaning in one of the very passages he uses to establish it, namely, Matthew 5:17. Substituting his meaning for the "destroy" (καταλῦσαι) of the KJV, we have: "Think not that I am come to keep the law, or the prophets, from being fulfilled: I am not come to keep (them) from being fulfilled, but to fulfill." We doubt that anyone in Galilee, whether friend or foe, would have thought that Jesus came to render the Old Testament incapable of its God-intended fulfillment. The charge of setting aside or breaking the law or the prophets would, on the other hand, not be at all unexpected. We go on to verse 19, where λῶω itself occurs, and again make the substitution: "Whosoever therefore shall keep one of these least commandments from being fulfilled, and shall teach men so, he shall be least in the kingdom of heaven." Should a man indeed be capable of frustrating the fulfillment of God's precepts? He might break them or set them aside, but he could hardly keep them from a Scriptural fulfillment! Or compare John 7:23, which Jungkuntz also uses in his discussion. Making the same substitution we have: "If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be kept from fulfillment ..." Did the Jews indeed obey the Sabbath law so as not to render it incapable of fulfillment? In their legalistic formalism they were quite concerned about not breaking or setting aside the Sabbath law, but they seemed quite unaware that it was but a passing type which had its Scriptural fulfillment in something far greater.

In these and similar contexts, the meanings "set aside" or "break" seem far more appropriate. And these meanings have the support of those men who have studied the semantics of the word in Koine Greek. Moulton and Milligan accept the meanings "set at naught" or "break" for contexts like Matthew 5:19 and John 7:23.⁷ And Arndt and Gingrich indicate

the following meanings in passages which speak of commandments, laws, and statements: "repeal, annul, abolish," in the sense of "doing away with."⁸ In his booklet, It Is Written, Dr. J.A.O. Preus, who is undoubtedly aware of Jungkuntz's article, affirms confidently: "We may go one step further in discussing Jesus' belief that Scripture is true and without error. In John 10:35, not long after His wonderful discourse on His own truthfulness in the 8th chapter of John, Jesus says, 'The Scripture cannot be broken.' The key word in this verse is the term 'broken,' the basic meaning of which is 'to loose,' 'to break,' or 'to destroy.' In classical Greek this word has the meaning of annulling or repealing a law, of rescinding a vote, of revoking a will (a meaning contemporary with the time of Christ). [Our emphasis.] It is also used of breaking a legal agreement or a treaty. Jesus in Matthew 5:19 uses it in this way: breaking a law. Thus Biblical scholars have been wholly within their rights in understanding that Jesus here means that Scripture cannot be annulled or deprived of its legal, binding character. There is no appeal and no escape from it."⁹

If the meaning of $\lambda\acute{o}\omega$ is not what Jungkuntz believes it to be, then his entire interpretation must fall. It does not seem necessary, therefore, to discuss it at greater length. Suffice it to say that the allusions to the Old Testament which he suggests in his interpretation do seem rather remote. It is unlikely that the Jews standing before Christ would have made all the "right" connections. If Jesus had really wanted to direct these Jews to the prophecies concerning the rejection of the unjust judges and the establishment of a divine Shepherd as righteous Judge over God's people, would He (Jesus) have indeed cited a verse like "Ye are gods"? Jungkuntz can apparently find only three men in two thousand years of exegetical history who lend support to his new approach, and he admits that their writings contain only "intimations" of his interpretation.

Another Look at John 10:34-36

But is there an understanding of John 10:34-36 which recognizes the commonly accepted meanings for $\lambda\acute{o}\omega$, and which nevertheless avoids the problems which Jungkuntz finds in the "modern" and the "traditional" interpretations? We believe that there is.

It is helpful to look with some care at the Greek text of this passage:

34. ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· οὐκ ἔστιν γεγραμμένον ἐν τῷ νόμῳ ὑμῶν ὅτι ἐγὼ εἶπα· θεοί ἐστε;
35. εἰ ἐκείνους εἶπεν θεοὺς πρὸς οὓς ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ οὐ δύναται λυθῆναι ἡ γραφή,
36. ὃν ὁ πατὴρ ἡγίασεν καὶ ἀπέστειλεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι βλασφημεῖς, ὅτι εἶπον· υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ εἰμι;

In arriving at any interpretation, we should surely note two points of emphasis, or contrast, in the conditional sentence of vv. 35-36. They are as follows: 1) The object clause, ὃν ὁ πατὴρ ἡγίασεν..., is placed forward in the apodosis, giving it therefore a degree of emphasis, and contrasting it with ἐκείνους, the equally emphatically placed object of εἶπεν in the protasis.¹⁰ 2) The pronoun ὑμεῖς is added to λέγετε as the subject of the apodosis, suggesting a strong antithesis to the subject of εἶπεν in the protasis, which subject may well be an implied ὁ νόμος from verse 34. We would, therefore, suggest the following translation, which must of necessity be somewhat awkward, because of the syntactic complexity of the Greek: "If it (the Law) called those men 'Gods' to whom the Word of God came -- and the Scripture cannot be broken -- Him now whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, are you saying of Him: 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"

Let us now consider these verses in their context. We should notice that the Jews have just accused Jesus of blasphemy: "For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." Vs. 33. Jesus responds by pointing out to them that in one place (Psalm 82:6) Scripture, which cannot be set aside, gave the name "Gods" to men, to the ones whom God had appointed as His human representatives to rule over Israel: "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?" Vs. 34. And then follows the conditional sentence, which we could paraphrase as follows: "If Scripture, which as you know cannot be set aside, ascribed the name 'Gods' to those men whom He had appointed, are you now charging with blasphemy that One whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world, because He claims to be the Son of God?" With these words, we believe, Jesus asserts His deity and

invites the hostile Jews to give careful thought to that charge which they have made against Him. If Scripture itself gives the name "Gods" to mere men, how could Jesus be blaspheming when He calls Himself "the Son of God"? For He is far more than those human judges in the Old Testament whom God appointed -- He is the One whom the Father set apart to be the Messiah and whom He has sent into the world. May the Jews not themselves be guilty of blasphemy? Let them seriously consider this possibility! Following this warning, Jesus points to "the works" which He has been doing, and pleads with them to believe in His divine origin because of His works, since they are finding it so difficult to accept His words. Vv. 37-38.

John 10:35 and Inerrancy

This, we believe, is the simplest and most direct understanding of an admittedly difficult passage. But let us now look again at the important sentence contained within it: "The scripture cannot be broken." Recognizing the commonly accepted meaning of $\lambda\omega$ as correct, we wonder how anyone can say that this verse does not imply the inerrancy of Scripture. Surely if Scripture is in error, it can be set aside. The liberals should be the first to agree with this proposition, for they have a way of conveniently setting aside any passage which they regard as fallible. But as soon as we admit the truth of the foregoing proposition, we are compelled to accept its contrapositive: If Scripture cannot be set aside, it is not in error. Inasmuch as Christ in our passage affirms that Scripture cannot be set aside, it follows of necessity that it is not in error!

We indeed do find it most difficult to understand how Marty, Lueking, and others can claim that John 10:35 has nothing to say on the subject of Biblical inerrancy. Surely their theological opponent, Dr. Preus, reveals a better understanding of the import of the passage when he writes:

" ... The point Jesus is making -- and the principle He is laying down -- is that if Scripture says something, it must be so. Scripture, even the Book of Psalms, a poetical book, has the factual, binding character which attaches to wills, treaties, and other documents which cannot be broken or twisted. And what is true of Psalm 82 Jesus applies in a categorical sense to all of Scripture.

"It has been argued that the concept of 'breaking Scripture' applies only to the authority of the Bible, but not to its factuality. However, the two go together. It is obvious from the context that Jesus treats the Scripture as having authority, but the authority depends upon the fact that Holy Scripture speaks the truth. It is significant that Jesus in this passage refers to the inerrancy of Scripture and does so on such a small point. The implication is that if Scripture speaks the truth on such a matter, it speaks the truth on all matters."¹¹

At times an example from everyday life can help to clarify the significance of a word such as λύω -- "break" or "set aside." If I should set aside the express meaning of another person's last will and testament, and construe the words of that document according to my own liking, would I not be guilty of breaking it? Or if I should set aside a section of the will because I did not believe it to be the words of the testator, but of someone else, would I not again be guilty of breaking it? Consider now what the liberals are doing with the Bible. Whenever they come upon something which goes against their theological egos, or conflicts with their supposedly enlightened understandings, they either deny its literal sense and read into it some notion of their own, or they deny its divine authorship and label it as the fallible word of man. Do these practices not involve a breaking or setting aside of Scripture? For they say, in effect, that this or that passage cannot stand as the Word of God!

We conclude the discussion of this verse with a quotation from William Arndt:

"The Bible student knows that Jesus here speaks of the use of the term 'gods' with respect to the judges of Israel. It is a strange usage, but it must stand as correct and proper, says Jesus, because the Scriptures have it, and they cannot be broken, that is, be declared false or erring. The truth is implied that whatever the Scriptures say is inviolable, that nothing of what they utter, let it appear ever so insignificant, may be regarded as erroneous."¹²

CHRIST AND INERRANCY

Several portions of the Old Testament have been especially subject to being "broken" by negative critics of the Bible. We have in mind those passages which speak of the six-day creation, the great flood, the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, the story of Jonah, and such like. Interestingly, and significantly, Christ attests the historicity of many of these very targets of the critics. As Theodore Engelder states:

"And just such portions of Scripture as have been put on the black-list have been vouched for by Christ. Did Moses write the Pentateuch? 'Moses wrote of Me,' John 5:46. Is the creation story a myth and old wives' tale? Read Matt. 19:4. Is the story of the Flood history or mythology? Read Matt. 24:37ff. Was Abraham a legendary figure? 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day,' John 8:56. Is the story of Lot's wife true, and the story of Jonah in the whale's belly? Read Luke 17:32 and Matt. 12:40. Every story related in the Bible, every circumstance of it, and every single jot and tittle shall stand. Jesus guarantees the truth of it."¹³

Surely this must be an embarrassing situation for those who wish to deny the aforementioned passages, and who yet wish to present Christ as a believable object for Christian faith and trust. For at this point they simply cannot accept Christ's words as they stand. To save face, Christ's face, they have suggested either 1) that Christ accommodated Himself to the faulty theological and scientific views of His day, or 2) that in His state of humiliation (the kenosis) He refrained from knowing any better. Both suggestions don't help much in preserving Christ's image, and both of them are subject to serious criticism.

The Accommodation Theory

What about the argument that Christ accommodated Himself to the errant viewpoints of His day, the so-called "accommodation theory"? It is hard to believe. For in the aforementioned passages, it is not Jesus' friends or foes who have injected into the discussion such topics as the creation or Jonah. No, it is Jesus Himself who brings these subjects up and comments on them. According to the accommodation theory, we would have to charge Jesus with thereby furthering their faulty ideas.

But more can be said regarding this theory. When we

look into the Gospels we find that Jesus hesitated not at all to correct the wrong concepts which the Jews had concerning the Old Testament.

"Jesus had no fear in telling the people of His day that they erred: the Pharisees in their understanding the true meaning of the Law of Moses, the Sadducees in the doctrine of the resurrection, Pilate in thinking his power came from Caesar, the common people in pitying Him, His disciples in failing to understand that the Scriptures referred to Christ Himself. Like Jesus, also Paul, John, Peter, and the other writers of the New Testament are not at all hesitant to correct people for wrong theology. Paul corrects the Galatians for their misunderstanding of Jewish history. But nowhere do we find Jesus or His disciples disagreeing with the Jews of that day on matters such as have been discussed here [namely, the six-day creation, the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, the story of Jonah and the fish, and such like]."¹⁴

For these reasons, and others, we must reject the accommodation theory as subtile sophistry.¹⁵

The Kenotic Argument

Is the kenotic argument any better? On the contrary, it is worse, for it is fraught with even graver dangers. For if Jesus in His state of humiliation was fallible when He spoke of the events of the Old Testament, might He not have been fallible also when He spoke of the events relating to our salvation? Perhaps we must set aside, then, also such passages as John 3:16! The kenotic argument invariably leads to a questioning of the truth of everything that Jesus said.

We need to add, furthermore, that this argument reveals a failure to make a rather obvious distinction. There is a vast difference between not using His knowledge on certain occasions (the kenosis) on the one hand, and speaking falsehood on the other. Scripture affirms the first of these, but emphatically denies the second. Christ specifically says: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.¹⁶ Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." John 18:37.

The refusal to accept Christ's words as true, as infallible, as the very words of God, is a mark, not of en-

lightened theological scholarship, but of unbelief. For as Christ again says: "Because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." John 8:45ff.

* * * *

VERBAL INSPIRATION AND IN-
ERRANCY -- THE UNIVERSAL TERMS

In rounding out this discussion of the Bible's own claims to verbal inspiration and inerrancy, we need to underscore the universal terms that it uses in connection with these claims. In 2 Timothy 3:16, Paul does not say that some parts of the Bible are God-breathed but others are not; he says rather: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." In 2 Peter 1:20f., Peter does not restrict the activity of the Holy Spirit to portions of the Old Testament, but includes "every prophecy of Scripture (ἡ ὅλη προφητεία γραφῆς)" in this activity. In Romans 15:4, Paul affirms that "as many things (ὅσα) as were written aforetime were written for our learning." In John 10:35, Jesus says: "The scripture cannot be broken," the ἡ γραφή encompassing the entire Old Testament Scripture. And in John 17:17, He affirms: "Thy word is truth" -- not "contains" truth, but "is" truth.

With what right, with what confidence, with what joy ought we not therefore join in confessing:

We have a sure prophetic Word
By inspiration of the Lord;
And though assailed on ev'ry hand,
Jehovah's Word shall ever stand.

Abiding, steadfast, firm, and sure,
The teachings of the Word endure.
Blest he who trusts this steadfast Word;
His anchor holds in Christ, the Lord.

And again:

But still Thy Law and Gospel, Lord,
Have lessons more divine;
Not earth stands firmer than Thy Word,
Nor stars so nobly shine.

Thy Word is everlasting truth;
 How pure is every page!
 That holy Book shall guide our youth
 And well support our age.

C. Kuehne

(to be concluded)

FOOTNOTES

1. "Moment of Truth for Missouri," The Lutheran Standard, Jan. 16, 1973, p. 12.

2. Journal of Theology, Dec., 1972, p. 22ff.

3. "Showdown in the Missouri Synod," Christian Century, Sept. 27, 1972, p. 943ff.

4. "An Approach to the Exegesis of John 10:34-36," Concordia Theological Monthly, Oct., 1964, p. 556ff.

This article by Jungkuntz is recommended "for further study" by the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in their recently issued doctrinal statement, "Faithful to Our Calling--Faithful to Our Lord." This recommendation follows a discussion in which the full inerrancy of Holy Scripture is set aside as untenable.

5. Jungkuntz's argument employs many citations to the Old Testament, and is therefore difficult to summarize adequately. Those who desire the details are referred to the article itself.

6. Cf. Journal of Theology, Dec., 1972, p. 32, concerning such "etymologizing."

7. James H. Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, reprinted 1972), p. 384.

8. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 485.

9. Jacob A. O. Preus, It Is Written (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), p. 27.

10. Cf. F. Blass and A. Debrunner, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, translated and revised by Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), paragraph 478; and H.A.W.

Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Gospel of John (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1884), p. 105f.

11. Preus, op. cit., p. 27f.
12. In Theodore Engelder, Scripture Cannot Be Broken (Mora, Minnesota: Hope, Inc., n.d.), p. 4.
13. Idem, p. 71.
14. Preus, op. cit., p. 39.
15. For other arguments, cf. Preus, op. cit., p. 39f.
16. On the meaning of "truth," cf. Journal of Theology, Dec., 1972, pp. 28-33.



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ISAGOGICS, MODERN CRITICISM, AND MALACHI

In our day the science or study of isagogics has, with many, taken on a somewhat sinister aspect. The early church Fathers were not particularly concerned with the question of criticism of the books of the Canon from the outside, as it were, for they were much more concerned with the exposition of the content of the books and the formulation of doctrine drawn from them. Only upon occasion were they forced to turn their attention to isagogics, and then, generally, only to rise to defend Scripture. We have an example of this, in the early days, when Porphyry, who was of a somewhat radical disposition, at least in this, attacked the book of Daniel and declared it not to have been written by the true Daniel, but actually a forgery. Such a criticism rightly belongs in the field of isagogics, and the other Fathers rallied to defend their belief that the true Daniel was really the rightful author. In somewhat the same way, we today must also concern ourselves with isagogics, if for no other reason, simply as a means of defense against the inroads of modernistic theology, which would attack our sacred Scriptures from almost every conceivable angle. This period, in which we are living today, began in the years after the Reformation, when certain philosophical, rationalistic views began to make their appearance among the students of theology. It was the old war again, the war between reason and faith, two concepts which, according to Martin Luther, are as far removed from each other as black from white. For the simplest and most direct way for reason to attack faith is by attacking the foundation of faith, the Scriptures.

The attacks of the rationalists ordinarily centered on questioning the authorship of various books of the Old Testament Canon. For example, de Wette, Ewald, Graf and others made serious inroads on the common faith by raising doubts as to inspiration. They sought out what appeared to them to be discrepancies in various books, and made the assertion that these so-called discrepancies, slight though they might be, were conclusive evidence that those writings were not only uninspired, but were forgeries by some unknown person or persons.

These attacks have continued on into the twentieth century. By and large, many Bible students today hold an extremely low view of Scripture. They consider it nothing

more than the national literature of the Hebrews, a purely human literary production on a level with other similar literary productions of antiquity. Naturally, for us their position is untenable simply because it rests upon an unsound basis. The Bible is not a book of human origin, but of divine. It is not the word of men, but the Word of God. Other modern scholars wish to limit themselves, in their isagogical studies, to the human element in Scripture. That is to say, they, in their reading and study of the Old Testament Canon, consider only that the writers were human beings, with ordinary human weaknesses. As a result, they neglect entirely the concept of inspiration. They consider their method a scientific study, but the fact is that such a study is definitely not scientific, for it does not take into account all the facts in the case. But here again we have only another example of the war between reason and faith, for they are using only the facts which can be perceived by the senses and can be applied to reason. Still others approach the isagogical study of the Scriptures with what they feel is a neutral attitude. They feel that Scripture must prove itself to them. They test it as they might test any literary work, and by means of such testing they attempt to determine whether or not it really is the Word of God. Again, such an attitude is faulty, for from the outset it does not accept the basic idea of Scripture, with which the Scripture must be approached. That basic idea is simply this: the Scripture is the divinely inspired Word of God. In other words, we dare not place the human mind in a position where it must attempt to sit in judgment over against the mind of God.

In this present article the viewpoint taken from the outset is that the Bible, in all its books, including the book of Malachi, with which we are here concerned, is the Very Word of God, in all its parts and words, even those that deal with matters that we might consider peripheral. We believe with all our hearts that the following quotation from the "Brief Statement" must find root in us, and with that a proper isagogical study can be made: "We teach that the Holy Scriptures differ from all other books in the world in that they are the Word of God. They are the Word of God because the holy men of God who wrote the Scriptures wrote only that which the Holy Ghost communicated to them by inspiration. We teach also that the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures is not a so-called 'theological deduction,' but that it is taught by direct statements of the Scriptures.

Since the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, it goes without saying that they contain no errors or contradictions, but that they are in all their parts and words the infallible truth, also in those parts which treat of historical, geographical, and other secular matters. ... We reject the doctrine, which under the name of science has gained wide popularity in the Church of our day, that Holy Scripture is not in all its parts the Word of God, but in part the Word of God and in part the word of men and hence does, or at least might, contain error. We reject this erroneous doctrine as horrible and blasphemous, since it flatly contradicts Christ and His holy apostles, sets up men as judges over the Word of God, and thus overthrows the foundation of the Christian Church and its faith."

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

AUTHORSHIP As is quite commonly the case in the books of prophecy in the Old Testament Canon, the first verse of the first chapter is actually a superscription, or heading, which ordinarily sets forth the name of the author and the authority by which he writes. In the book of Malachi, this is also carried out. The first verse gives us, then, the following information: "The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi." The author, then, seems quite obviously to be Malachi. However, so little is known concerning the circumstances of Malachi's life that it is a point of argument among Bible students whether the word "Malachi" in the heading is actually a proper name or merely a designation or descriptive word given to the person who wrote the book. "Malachi" in translation means simply "messenger." The LXX translates the heading, therefore, in this way: "The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by the hand of his messenger." Some of the modern commentators have followed the LXX in this concept, and have left the authorship indefinite. An ancient commentator, Jonathan ben-Uzziel, has placed in his Targum the addition: "whose name is called Ezra the scribe." In other words, he also accepts the word "Malachi" as having an indefinite connotation and interprets the phrase as referring to the law-restorer Ezra. This is simply a conjecture founded upon the similarity of content and style between this present book and the known writings of Ezra. This understanding of "Malachi" found favor with a considerable

number of the church Fathers, and has also been upheld in later times by Hengstenberg and Ewald.

Actually, however, the evidence to build up the claim of these men is not at all conclusive. For example, the books of the prophets Obadiah and Habakkuk also contain only the name of the prophet in the superscriptions, without any added descriptions. Generally speaking, those who use "Malachi" in the indefinite sense base their arguments simply on the fact that little is known concerning a man named Malachi. However, it is stated in the Talmud that Malachi was one of the men of the great synagog, as were Haggai and Zechariah. In addition to this, other Fathers have taken notice of this, that Malachi was a Levite of the tribe of Zehulun, although they do not make any definite statements concerning the circumstances of his life. Therefore, because of the uncertainty of all claims regarding the name, it would seem to be sensible to expect this book to have the same type of heading as the other books of the minor prophets. Caspari writes: "All the prophets whose writings have come down to us in the canon have given their own names in the headings to their books, that is to say, the names which they received at their birth; and the names of the rest of the prophets of the Old Testament are also their real names." Paul Peters, after mentioning the fact of the LXX translation and also mentioning the opinion that the author was really Ezra, has this to say in his notes on the book of Malachi: "This would detract nothing from either the authority or the interpretation of the book, but it lacks support. All the prophets bear names that indicate their mission, and they had to issue their prophecies under these names. Then why not Malachi?" From this, then, we accept the understanding that there was a prophet whose proper, given name was Malachi, and he was the inspired author of this book of the Old Testament Canon.

DATE There has also been a not inconsiderable amount of debate as to the period in which Malachi lived, and worked, and wrote his prophecy. We know so little of the life of Malachi himself that definite information cannot be gained through any outside means. There are certain indications within his book itself, however, that permit us to date the prophecy, at least approximately. All commentators seem agreed that he lived and prophesied after the Babylonian captivity of the Jews.

In the first chapter of Malachi's book we find these

words: "Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible. ... Neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for naught. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand." And in the third chapter we find this written: "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings." From these mentions of the altar, the bread of offering, the fire which burned the offering and sent its savor heavenward, and of tithes, we may draw the conclusion that Malachi commenced his prophetic labors sometime later than Haggai and Zechariah, for apparently the temple had been rebuilt and the temple-worship had been restored.

From these same phrases from the first and third chapters we are able to narrow the time down still more. If we look at the thirteenth chapter of the book of Nehemiah, who also performed his work subsequently to Haggai and Zechariah and after the restoring of the temple, we find that there is agreement and similarity between the words of Nehemiah and Malachi in the reproof administered for certain abuses current among the people and even among the priesthood, namely, the marriage of heathen wives and the negligent payment of the tithes. Nehemiah wrote: "In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab. And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jew's language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel; nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives?" These words of Nehemiah have a great similarity to the words of Malachi, who wrote: "Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god." Obviously, both Nehemiah and Malachi are here dealing with the same offense. Then, we also have a close similarity in their dealing and writing concerning

the payment of tithes. Nehemiah wrote: "And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them; for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field. Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place. Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries." Malachi was indeed referring to the selfsame thing when he wrote: "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

Because of these similarities, we can establish the period of Malachi as being practically simultaneous with that of Nehemiah. However, it can be established that Malachi's writing was done after the second arrival of Nehemiah to the king's court. For Ezra, who performed his work previously, had already come into contact with the abuse of marrying strange wives; but the second abuse, that of being negligent with the tithes, could hardly have concerned Ezra a great deal, because during his time the costs of temple worship and up-keep were paid out of the royal revenue, the taxes. And then, too, the people could not have fallen so rapidly back into the practice of marrying strange wives during the short period that intervened between the work of Ezra and that of Nehemiah, and certainly, if Nehemiah had detected this abuse at his first arrival at the king's court, he would have attacked it at that time. Consequently, the falling back into that old sin could hardly have been too prevalent before the period of Nehemiah's return to the court, in the thirty-second year of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, as Nehemiah wrote in the thirteenth chapter of his book: "But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem; for in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon came I unto the king, and after certain days obtained I leave of the king; and I came to Jerusalem." Artaxerxes, king of Babylon, is, of course, a figure of secular history, and, therefore, his dates have been fairly well established. His reign was held in the approximate period from 465 to 425 B.C.

We hold, therefore, that since Malachi condemns and threatens with the punishment of God the very same abuses and sins with which Nehemiah is so greatly concerned, that the period of Malachi's work is the same as Nehemiah's. And since, upon Nehemiah's second arrival at Jerusalem, he found the abuses no less abated, we can deduce the fact that Malachi had not done a great deal of preaching on those particular subjects before that time. The work, then, which the prophet Malachi performed in conjunction with that of Nehemiah, bore the same relation which the work of Haggai and Zechariah had toward that of Zerubbabel and Joshua. Nehemiah's work was of an outward character also, for he was the governor; Malachi's labor was of an inward nature. There are other examples of such simultaneous labor to be found in the Old Testament, for example, in the case of Isaiah and Hezekiah, or of Jeremiah and Josiah. Therefore, because of the nature of the case, we can draw the conclusion that Malachi's work and writing took place in the approximate period from 450 to 425 B.C.

PROPHECY The purpose of this book of the prophet Malachi is to bring before the people of Israel a two-fold prophecy. First of all, Malachi condemns certain evil practices which the people have begun to follow, in direct opposition to the commandments of the Lord. This includes a proclamation of the judgment which will certainly follow if the people do not see the light and turn away again from those sins into which they have fallen. That condemnatory phase of his prophecy is followed by what we might naturally expect from the prophet whose period falls nearest the actual coming of the Messiah. Malachi gives one of the clearest prophecies of the coming of the Messiah to be found in the Old Testament.

In order to emphasize clearly in our minds the true purpose of Malachi's writing of prophecy, we must now digress somewhat into a discussion of the nature of Biblical prophecy. The concept of prophecy in the Bible is one that has been very much disputed. There are really two opposing schools of thought. The one school is that of the modern critics, who would deny that writers of the Old Testament were able to foresee the future and predict future events. The other school is that of the conservative Bible students who accept prophecy as being just that -- the writers having the God-given ability to predict what was going to happen in the future. We have an example of such a conflict of views

in the book of the prophet Isaiah, where we have this difference between the modern critics and the conservatives: the modernists say that the book had at least two authors and possibly more; the conservatives say that there is but one author. The basic issue, of course, is that of the two concepts of prophecy, for the modern critics declare that since the book of Isaiah speaks of two entirely different eras, that of the occupation of Israel by Assyria and of the occupation by Babylon, and since the prophets were men of their own times and could therefore speak only of events immediately concerning them, there must have been more than one author. The opposing school, that of the conservatives, on the other hand, gives the prophet, a single author, the ability to prophesy for a wider horizon.

The critic A. B. Davidson, of Edinburgh, can be taken as a fair example of the modernist. He describes the Hebrew prophet as being a man of his times, speaking to the people of his own time, not to people living in following generations. The things that the prophet would say, then, would be things that would be of importance only to the people of his day. This concept of Davidson's immediately narrows the scope of the prophet. It would eliminate the concept of prediction of future events. Thus the critics seek to humanize the prophets and make them ordinary flesh-and-blood mortals, also in their writings. The result of this effort causes the prophet to speak only for himself and ignores or denies the fact that the Lord is speaking through him. The whole attitude of the critics, summed up, is that there cannot be distinct prophetic foresight of the distant future.

And so the critics are faced with the problem of the prophecies that do arise in the Old Testament. How are they to be explained or accounted for? The first way in which the critics seek to accomplish this is by changing the situation. In other words, they say that the prophetic utterance was really made after the event occurred, and was later placed in an earlier writing by an editor. (Of course, they have no idea as to who such an editor might be!) Another method that the critic might employ would be to change the scope of the prophecy. Thus the critic could judge that the prophecy does not refer to a specific event in the far distant future, but rather speaks in a vague way of certain prevailing conditions that prove to have their parallels in years to come. Another method would be that by which the critics would change the prophet into nothing but a sort of moral philosopher, whose predictions are nothing

more than maxims, for they say that his original meaning was pointed only to his contemporaries. Through these means attempts are made at eliminating the predictive element from Old Testament prophecy.

The Biblical viewpoint of prophecy is quite different. The Bible itself declares what the function of a prophet is. The Lord speaks: "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren ... and I will put my words in his mouth: and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." The office of a prophet, then, is that he is a spokesman for God. Of course, the prophet was a man of his times, for he was raised up from among his brethren, but the important thing about him is that he was to speak the words which the Lord would give him.

The modern critic makes much of the situation. So also does the Bible. Most of the prophecies are precise as to date, for one thing, or else a clear description of the situation may be given, or else the period during which the prophet lived may be indicated by the content, as in the case of the book of our present study. Because Scripture makes the situation so clear, it can easily be seen why importance is thereto attached. It is simply so because they are predictions of the future. To go on, the scope of the prophet is actually unlimited, in the Biblical concept of prophecy, because it is stressed that he speaks the Word of the Lord. Can a limited scope be placed on the all-seeing, omniscient eye of God?

When the last criterion of the modern critic, the original meaning of the prophet, is reached, it is discovered that ordinarily the Bible makes no distinction between what the prophet said and what he meant. It could be very possible that the prophet himself did not know the meaning of his prophecy. He spoke the Word of the Lord, and it was sufficient for him that God knew what was meant. Also, since it was actually God Who spoke, the meaning of His words is meant for a wider horizon than just the prophet himself. The Bible, as a rule, is very reticent as to the feelings and ideas and opinions which the recipients of divine Truth entertained with regard to it. Perhaps the prophets understood the full meaning and perhaps not. As far as the prophecy is concerned, it actually makes very little difference!

The question arises, finally: Are we to accept the situation, scope, and original meaning which the Bible gives to prophecy, including its concept of prediction of the

future, to make these the criteria for judging prophecy? Or are we to set up our own criteria as the critics do? The critics have been forced to go to great lengths to prove (?) their theories, and that alone causes us to doubt the worth of their endeavors. The Biblical concept of prophecy allows us to look at the book of Malachi with a deeper understanding of his purpose. He may have had a horizon that stretched farther than his understanding could follow; the situation and scope may also have been beyond his grasp; he may not even have been fully aware of the complete meaning of his prophecies, but these things are natural, since he was but God's spokesman. He was a "man of God" and not simply a "man among men." The Biblical view of prophecy is certainly the only correct view.*

The purpose of the prophet Malachi, then, in the prophecies which his book brings forth, is not only to condemn certain abuses which were prevalent in his day, but also to demonstrate that those same abuses have their parallels in future times, also in our times. The shame and sin of turning away from the wishes of the Lord among the Israelites is no greater than the shame and sin of turning away from God's commands today. In like manner, in the second part of Malachi's prophecy, concerning the coming of the Messiah to save the world from sin, and for judgment, the truths which the prophet brings forth for his contemporaries are no less forceful today, or in any age. His purpose, then, is this: by the Law he demonstrates man's depravity and inability to save himself from his sin; by the Gospel he demonstrates God's love toward fallen mankind and the blessing of undeserved forgiveness through the Messiah.

Malachi's prophecy comes to a close with the promise of the coming of the Lord. After Malachi, no other prophet arose in Israel until the time of the coming of the Messiah. That adds depth of meaning to his prophecy. It is not within the realm of this article to draw further truths and comparisons with present day life and its problems from Malachi's book. That rightly belongs in the field of Exegesis. However, the truths contained herein, the warnings to give to the Lord His due, also in regard to stemming the onward flowing and increasing of the teachings of work-righteousness, be it by church or organization, have just as

* For an excellent discussion of this matter, see Oswald T. Allis, The Unity of Isaiah, chapter II, "Prophecy According to the Bible."

great meaning today, as we confess by our stand on "Sola Gloria." And, truly, the promise of the wonders of the coming Messiah have deep meaning for us, as we can look back and see that promise truly fulfilled in the beloved Son of God, Jesus Christ, Who gave His life a ransom for many, so that by the gift of faith in Him we have become heirs of everlasting life.

John Lau



SERMON STUDY FOR GOOD FRIDAY*

Text: Hebrews 12:24 "But ye are come ... to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

This is the day of Christ's death. We shall observe it by going in spirit to Golgotha and looking upon Christ. Having commended His soul into the hands of His heavenly Father, He hangs pale and lifeless on the cross. His holy body shows many signs of the indescribable pain and suffering which had preceded death. His head is bowed. The eyes from which love and meekness had beamed have grown dim. The mouth which had spoken such gracious words is silent. What comfort and hope He had brought to the distressed and afflicted and faint-hearted! The lips which had proclaimed the grace and mercy of God to sinners are now closed. Not one word does He utter, for He has become still in death. - And yet there is a voice that ascends so mightily from the cross, that it resounds throughout all heaven and earth and will not subside as long as the world stands. Look closer! Do you see what is trickling down over His forehead and face

* The sermon study by Pastor Schulz will not only serve as a help in connection with the pastor's preparation for the Good Friday service but should also add to his personal devotions in the busy season of Lent with its glorious opportunities for the proclamation of the saving Gospel of Christ. Editor.

from beneath the crown of thorns? Do you see what is gushing out of the wounds in His hands and feet, and what is flowing from His riven side? It is the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son. His blood has that powerful voice. Therefore under God's guidance let us reflect on:

The Voice of Christ's Blood

1. What Christ's blood says to God;
2. What it says to men.

I.

According to Scripture, blood has a voice. The shed blood of innocent men cries out. When the blood of pious Abel was shed by Cain, it cried from earth to heaven and called upon God's justice to avenge the murder. In Gen. 4:10 we read that God said to Cain: "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." We also read how God responded to this crying: "Now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth," v. 11-12.

Blood cries for revenge. On Golgotha we see the blood of Christ flowing. Death by crucifixion is for criminals. Blood is shed on the cross as punishment, and this has no voice. How is it with Christ's blood? From all sides witnesses testify to His innocence. His is the blood of a man who did only good throughout His life and stood blameless in the sight of men. Even His enemies could not prove the least fault in Him. His innocence was on trial before all the courts of justice of that day and was attested to by the judges themselves. His is the blood of an innocent man who was nailed to the cross because of the bitter hatred of the religious leaders of the people.

When we look more closely, we find that His is not the blood of a mere man, but of One who proved Himself to be true God. He had the testimony of an angel, that He was the Lord and the Son of God, Matt. 1:20f. He had the testimony of His heavenly Father: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," Matt. 3:17 and 17:5. He Himself had testified to this by His heavenly doctrine, and proved it by His divine power in performing wonderful miracles. He had the testimony that He was God's Son from those who benefitted

from His miracles, as well as from those who were witnesses thereof. Even when He was hanging on the cross, there were those who raised their voices to confess His deity. The malefactor said: "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom," Luke 23:42. The heathen centurion cried out: "Truly this was a righteous man and the Son of God," Luke 23:47; Matt. 27:54.

He who hangs on the cross is the God-man, true God who assumed human nature unto Himself. His flowing blood, therefore, is not merely the blood of a man, but the blood of the Son of God. Abel was born sinful of Adam, but became a believer in God. If Abel's blood could cry so mightily to heaven for revenge, how much more powerfully would the blood of the Son of God cry up to His heavenly Father! How much more mightily would it demand that God take revenge on those ungodly men who have slain His innocent Son, and on all those who permitted these atrocities to take place!

The blood of Christ speaks, but not like Abel's. If His blood had spoken like Abel's, it would have been impossible for the world to exist for another instant, for the vengeance of God over the murder of His dear Son would have destroyed it. Our text assures us that the blood of Christ "speaketh better things than that of Abel." It speaks as the blood of "the mediator of the new covenant," or testament. A mediator is one who endeavors to reconcile two hostile parties with each other. The hostile parties which Christ reconciled are God and men. "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," 1 Tim. 2:5.

Sin brought about this hostility. Man became God's enemy when he refused to obey God. By following the words of the devil, man gave himself into the power of God's arch-enemy, who then filled him with hatred toward God. God became man's enemy, for through sin man greatly offended his Creator and Lord. The justice of God demanded punishment. Death and damnation was the punishment inflicted upon rebellious man. Sin is a continual offense to God, and man's hostility toward God as a result of sin also continues. Man has hurled himself into eternal destruction. God is the offended One; man is the offender. According to His justice, the holy God cannot simply overlook the offense done to Him. Nor is weak man able to undo the sin with which he has offended God. The hostility remains. Who will venture to step between God and men and bring about a reconcilia-

tion? Who can and will present himself to God in this most crucial matter and offer his mediation?

Nothing will be accomplished merely by soothing words and prayers. Reconciliation of God with men can take place only when the whole human race renders satisfaction to the offended justice of God. This is done by restoring the innocence that was lost, by obeying perfectly the Law of God, and by a perfect redemption from all sins and the punishment they deserve. It is impossible for a sinner to do this. Ps. 49:7. Whoever would accomplish the reconciliation as mediator between God and men must be so great and perfect that God Himself could acknowledge him as a worthy mediator. In addition, he must be in a position to satisfy the demands of God's justice as a substitute for all men.

Where is such a mediator to be found? On the cross on Golgotha! Jesus Christ is the Mediator. On the cross He accomplished the reconciliation. He is a holy man, undefiled, separate from sinners, Heb. 7:26. Therefore He was entirely suited to come forward as Mediator for all men. And He is also the Son of God, of the same essence with His heavenly Father. As God He had the power and the means to satisfy God's justice, and by paying the ransom price has reconciled all men with God.

Through sin, human nature lost the innocence and righteousness in which it had been created; God demanded that it be restored. Christ, the Son of God, did restore it in His innocent human nature. Eph. 4:24. God's justice demanded perfect obedience; God's Son in His human nature accomplished this obedience from His birth even unto His death. Phil. 2:8. God demanded that men pay for the sins they had committed; God's Son in His human nature bore all the sins of the world upon Himself and put Himself under the judgment of God. John 1:29; Matt. 27:46. Justice demanded blood and life; God's Son according to His human nature gave His life and shed His blood as a sacrifice. 1 Tim. 2:6.

For that very reason, His blood "speaketh better things than that of Abel." It pleads before the throne of God: "Grace, grace, mercy to men! Heavenly Father, forgive them all their sins. Extend to them the hand of reconciliation and peace. Be their dear Father again and receive them as Thy children. Save them! Grace, grace!" And God answers from His heavenly throne: "I am reconciled. My anger is stilled. My justice is satisfied. All men are forgiven their sins. They are released from all punishment. I am their Father and give them eternal life."

Indeed, the blood of Jesus "speaketh better things than that of Abel." "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," 2 Cor. 5:19. Through Him all are reconciled to God. He restores peace through His blood on the cross. "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin," 1 John 1:7. What power Christ's blood had! It induced God to establish a new covenant of grace, and to give to His enemies - the sinners - forgiveness of sins for the sake of this blood. We are reconciled at great price. What love the Son of God had for us that He paid this price! How deeply our reconciliation must have laid in His heart. How He must have thirsted for our salvation. He has actually brought about our eternal redemption. Oh, how we rejoice to hear what the blood of Christ says to God. - - But the blood of Christ also speaks to men, and that is what we shall now consider.

II.

The voice of Abel's blood reached not only into heaven, but also into Cain's conscience. It said to him: "You are a murderer, and people will deal with you just as you have dealt with your brother." Cain's innermost thoughts are revealed by his words: "It shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me," Gen. 4:14. The voice of Abel's blood filled him with such mortal fear that the Lord, in order to calm him down, set a mark upon him so that no one would kill him if he found him.

Does the blood of Jesus speak to us in this manner? "It speaketh better things than that of Abel." Just as it pleads for grace before God, so also for us it is a loving, inviting voice. It calls us to enjoy the grace which has been earned for us, in order that we might be free from the accusations of our guilty conscience, from sin, death, and damnation, and instead have eternal life. By this blood the whole world is redeemed. In it lies the forgiveness of all sins for all sinners, the reconciliation of all men with God, and therefore also your redemption and the salvation of every one of you. The blood was shed for you, and therefore you possess everything it has earned. Accept this gift, make the reconciliation your own, and lay hold on your salvation. Believe in the blood of Jesus, place your complete trust in it, and be ye reconciled with God, for your sins are washed away and you shine in the righteousness of

Christ. Come to the blood. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool," Isa. 1:18.

Surely this is not the kind of language which causes the sinner to cry out in despair. Rather these are words of life which drive all fear from the heart and fill it with joy and heavenly comfort. Today the voice of Christ's blood echoes loudly and clearly in our ears and hearts, for this is the day on which the blood was shed.

But will those who hear these words of Christ's blood pay any attention to them? One would think that since all people are sinners, they would joyfully hear this voice, take hold of the salvation which it offers, and be assured that the blood of Christ is the means of their reconciliation. But that is not what happens, and we must deeply lament that it doesn't happen. The blood speaks, but for many it speaks in vain. There are people who respond to this voice only with disdain. As far as they are concerned, there is no sin, or it is at least so small a matter that no one should worry about it. Therefore they have no need of forgiveness. They think that death is the end of it all, and therefore the blood of Christ is completely unnecessary. The best thing to do is to enjoy this life as much as possible.

Others simply erase from their minds the words of the blood of Christ. They may agree that a reconciliation with God is necessary and something to be desired, but for them it is still too soon. The life of sin pleases them too much. They do not want to break with sin as yet, but will think about doing so later. They say: "All in good time. When we get closer to the end, then the blood of Christ will still call out for mercy on our behalf."

Still others despise the voice of Christ's blood, because they think they have something better. They think they can earn the grace of God with their own righteousness, and bring about reconciliation with their works. They wish to be their own savior.

If these unfortunate people do not repent, they will know in the eternal torment of hell what the result is when people in their hearts despise the blood of Jesus and harden themselves against its loving voice. No one can stand before God without being washed in the blood of the Lamb of God. When God offers and gives it to men in order that they may be cleansed from their sins, and they do not accept it, then it is their own fault if they are eternally lost. The

blood has flowed for them in vain, even though it has earned reconciliation for them.

Even though most people do not wish to hear it, nevertheless the voice of the blood of Christ follows them! Its message is this: You are sinners and cannot deny it. God is a just God who is displeased with all ungodliness. The wicked cannot stand before Him, but must die and be lost eternally. Where will you spend eternity? You can have eternal life only when you are reconciled with God. There is only one way in which you can be reconciled with God: Through the blood of the only Mediator, Jesus Christ, who pleads constantly for grace on your behalf before the throne of God. He invites you to enjoy the benefits of His work of reconciliation by a living faith in the Savior. His blood flowed for sinners, was given to sinners, and calls sinners unto itself. Be ye reconciled with God. Come with all your sins to the blood of Christ, cling to it in faith, and bring it as your ransom before your God and Lord. Take hold quickly of the only help which cleanses your souls from sin, saves from the wrath of God and death, and assures you of eternal life.

The salvation of the soul is more important than physical comfort and well-being. Reconciliation with God is the most important of all blessings, and it is offered to you freely in the blood of Christ. God wants to take you into heaven. He wants only good for you. Therefore recognize the things which belong to your peace. Luke 19:42. Be cleansed with the blood of Christ today and every day of your life. His blood calls you to salvation. May it not call to you in vain! May God in His grace grant that the day of Christ's death may be your day of reconciliation, that your garments may be washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. Amen.

A. Schulz



CHAPEL TALK ON THE OCCASION OF THE CEASE-FIRE IN VIETNAM*

Text: Genesis 8:20-21a "And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour."

When the judgments of God and the chastisements of the Lord are brought to a close, even though the effects and the results of those judgments and of those chastisements are still evident, then it is time that a child of God raise his voice in a prayer of thanksgiving and praise both in private as well as publicly with fellow believers.

The world has never experienced a temporal judgment and chastisement as severe and as extensive as that which Noah lived through in the days just prior to the events of our text. The Lord in his anger over against sin and as a chastisement upon His people wrought death and destruction throughout the world in a fashion that has never been repeated even by the most extensive wars the world has ever known.

How different the world looked to Noah when he came forth from the ark after the flood! If you and I had had the opportunity to stand with him on the deck of the ark when it was in the building and looked over the countryside, and then to have been present with him as the Lord opened the door of that ark following the flood and gazed about us, the terrible effects and results of God's judgment would have leaped to the eye. The world before the flood was still fresh in its beauty as it came from the hand of the Creator. Oh yes, marred it was and polluted in part since sinful man had laid violent hands upon it, but nevertheless a world that must have fallen upon the eyes of the beholder with tremendous splendor.

* On Jan. 27th a peace agreement was signed in Paris declaring a "Cease-fire" in the war in Vietnam. In thanksgiving the students and faculty of ILC joined in a special chapel service of praise to God on the morning of Jan. 29th. The chapel address delivered by Prof. Roland Gurgel is herewith recorded for the edification of the readers of the Journal and also as an example of a special message for a special occasion. Editor.

What a different sight met Noah when he came forth! A world quite barren and changed in many aspects. The waters had receded. Green leaves and grasses were just beginning to reveal themselves again. God in His mercy had remembered Noah and his family, but the results and the effects of that terrible judgment and chastisement were very much in evidence. His family was still with him but how many relatives and friends were left on the other side of that flood! The advances made by gifted generations in every secular field were washed away by the devastating waters. Noah and his family had to begin anew on the water-torn land with but their hands and their memories.

What a different kind of world Noah entered! Yet we find him pausing and offering a sacrifice unto the Lord. An offering of thanksgiving was brought by Noah because that temporal judgment and chastisement had been removed. The flood was a thing of the past even though its effects were very much in evidence.

Now we cannot begin to compare the last dozen years of war that our country has experienced with the flood, nor the effects of that war with the far-reaching effects of the deluge. We might easily shrug our shoulders and say there is no comparison at all for we have lived far from the battle fronts and isolated to a degree from the problems it has caused in our land and nation. However, a mental journey through the battlefields of Vietnam, a recalling of the lists of dead, wounded, and missing in action of our soldiers will quickly remind us that the Lord has indeed brought a judgment of considerable proportions. A judgment and a chastisement brought because of sin in the world, of sin in our nation and in us as well as in other nations and peoples.

Now that a cease-fire is in effect (and we pray that peace be at hand), we find that our world has changed, too, from what it was a dozen years ago. The results, the effects of the war are and will be with us. The animosities, the hatreds, the bitternesses that have arisen in our midst during these years of war have not been healed by the cease-fire. As a nation we have undergone some devastating changes. In spite of these very apparent conditions, we have reason today to pause and to give thanks to the Lord.

Because of His mercy and grace, He has brought an end to battle; He has brought a cease-fire; and we hope that He may give us a lasting peace. As He sent the flood and dried up the waters, so He permits and sends wars and breaks the

bow and the spear in sunder. To Him then for the beginning of peace that He has given, we lift our hearts and hands in thanksgiving even as did Noah.

Though surrounded by a world that looked quite different in many ways from that which he had known before, he gives thanks; oh yes, for his life, for the safety of his wife and children, for opportunity to begin life anew on this earth, for the assurance that the Lord was still with him, certainly these things were in his heart and were reason for thanksgiving, but there was another reason that brought him to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving. If he and his family had not been brought across the flood, had they perished with all the others, that would have been the end of God's promise of a Savior. Noah was brought across the waters that from his seed the Messiah should be born. Noah's deliverance was a testimony to him of God's faithfulness to His promises, the assurance that for Jesus' sake, he would one day be brought across death into an eternal home.

When we ponder reasons for giving thanks on this day, may we be aware of the fact that there is a spiritual blessing granted us, too, in connection with the end of this war. I wonder how many of us realize the change that has taken place these last years in regard to the government's approach to those studying for the ministry? There was a time when anyone preparing for the public ministry was exempted from military service. Such students could pursue their studies without interruption. In these last years that policy was changed. All college students were subject to draft. We were faced with the thought the future might find us short of pastors for our churches and teachers for our parochial schools. With the cease-fire came also the announcement of the cessation of the draft. The Lord has again made it possible for those of you preparing for the ministry to do so without interruption. For the Church it may well mean gaining young men for the work of the ministry who might otherwise have been sidetracked either temporarily or permanently. For this we offer our thanks!

Give thanks also that the war has not devastated the fields and cities of our country. The bombs have not fallen here. We do not have to embark on a reconstruction program of that nature.

We have spoken of bringing thankofferings to our Lord. The question arises quite naturally, what shall we bring? Noah brought of the clean beasts that the Lord had provided

long in advance. God had made preparations for that offering even before the flood had come. But it was more than the sacrifice of animals that Noah brought. He came with a heart filled with thanksgiving and a life dedicated to the service of His God. It is with that offering that you and I come on this day also. In appreciation for the many spiritual blessings in our Savior, but also for the temporal blessings of peace and the assurance that we are under His care, we come offering our heartfelt thanks and dedicating our lives to Him. For some of you students that may well mean dedicating yourselves to a service in the public ministry of Him who has freed you from the possibility of military service among other things.

There is yet one final thought to note from our text on this day of thanksgiving for being brought out from under the temporal judgments and chastisements of our God. When Noah had brought his offerings we are told, "The Lord smelled a sweet savour." This stands in direct contrast to the situation before the flood when the Lord describes the world as being filled with corruption, and the savour was anything but pleasing. Now He declares that He smells a pleasing odor. That pleasing savour did not come from the flesh of Noah. He, too, was flesh born of flesh and his sins did not escape the attention of God. Noah, however, had found a covering for his iniquity in the promised Savior. It was in that promised Messiah that he came with his thanks before the Lord. That was the righteousness that was acceptable to our God and made the offering of Noah a "sweet smelling savour."

What a marvelous thing that your thoughts and mine, that our words of praise and thanksgiving this morning and the other days of our lives find an entrance into heaven, that they are pleasing to the Lord, because they, too, are covered by the blood and righteousness of our Redeemer. God does not turn His back on us. He does not forget us. He does not say I will have no part of you. He does not leave us to face the effects of His temporal judgments and chastisements by ourselves. No, He assures us, as He did Noah, that when we come to Him in childlike trust, clinging to our Savior, then our prayers and praises, our offerings of thanksgiving, the fruits of our lives and hearts built on Christ, all these are a sweet smelling savour, something He gladly accepts. That brings peace and contentment into our hearts. We do not walk into the future ignored or forgotten or forsaken by Him, but with the assurance that He is aware

of us, concerned with us, and finding our prayers and praises pleasing in His sight.

For all of His many mercies, temporal and eternal, we in Jesus' name give Him thanks this day.

R. Gurgel

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BOOK REVIEWS

1.

The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, The Book of Isaiah - Volumes I, II, and III, by Edward J. Young. Eerdmans, \$9.95 each.

Reading is understanding. Understanding calls for discriminate reading, which necessitates reading back to a book. Such reading is defensive. The only book that is not to be so read is the Bible. Commentaries on the Bible or books on theology must be read critically--lest one unwittingly imbibe error. All writers of biblical commentaries or theological works start from certain presuppositions. A knowledge of those presuppositions helps one to read both receptively and defensively.

Dr. Young is known in our midst. He was professor of Old Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary. His works have been printed by the William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

In an age of scholarly apostasy Dr. Young was an exception in that he accepted verbal inspiration. His exposition of Isaiah manifests throughout a sincere desire to let God be God in His Word. There is none of that sophisticated unbelief that, with an air of superiority, imposes its own critical judgment upon the Word. Young's comments consistently reflect the words of young Samuel: "Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth." The school of modern scholarly apostates with the attitude of "Listen, Lord, while Your masters speak."

For example, in commenting upon Isaiah 40:8, "The grass

withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever." Dr. Young writes:

"Isaiah ... brings to the fore the characteristics of transitoriness and weakness to bring out more sharply the contrast with the permanence and enduring quality of the word of God. By referring to the word of God the prophet means every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (cf. Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4) ...

"To God's word there is a permanent character. Unlike the flesh of man, which withers and fades, it stands forever. It rises up, stands, and endures. In contrast to all flesh with its perishable nature, the word of God is imperishable and endures forever. The thought is similar to that of our Lord's, 'The Scripture cannot be broken.' When God speaks, His word expresses the truth; and that truth cannot be annulled or changed." Volume III, p. 35.

Dr. Young also accepts, without reservation, the Isaianic authorship of Isaiah--chapters one through sixty-six. In the preface to Volume III he writes:

"For nearly thirty-five years I have been reading everything I could obtain that pertained to this prophecy, and I believe that I am thoroughly familiar with the arguments advanced by those who deny Isaianic authorship. Frankly, I am not satisfied with their argumentation, for they ride roughshod over the explicit testimony of Scripture itself, and such a procedure is really but a form of rationalism." Volume III, p. 6.

In Appendix I of Volume III, "The Authorship of Isaiah," Dr. Young has presented a comprehensive summary of arguments for the authorship of Isaiah, thus updating "The Unity of Isaiah" by Oswald T. Allis.

From the foregoing it is obvious that Dr. Young accepts, again without reservation, predictive prophecy. Jahve vindicates His demand for exclusive worship on the grounds that He alone knows and has revealed future events. As the Lord of all history He did reveal to Isaiah, centuries before his historical appearance, the name of Cyrus (44:28; 45:1)--God's "servant" to restore His people so that the promise made to David might be fulfilled in Christ.

In the preface to Volume III Dr. Young presents a partial bibliography on chapters 40-66. Among them is Aug. Pieper, *Jesaiás II*, Milwaukee, 1919. He remarks:

"This last-named work in particular has been a

great help in understanding the prophet's message."

In his own comments Dr. Young quite frequently refers to Pieper, for the most part favorably, but at times taking issue with a point of grammar or exegesis.

In the key chapter, 53, Dr. Young permits both Law and Gospel to shine forth. In commenting upon verse 5, "But he was wounded for our transgression, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed," he writes:

"In saying that the servant bore our sins, therefore, Isaiah is in reality declaring that he bore the guilt of our sins. Yet even guilt is intangible; but guilt involves liability both to censure and to punishment, and with this we meet the heart of the matter. When the servant bore the guilt of our sins, we are saying that he bore the punishment that was due to us because of those sins, and that is to say that he was our substitute. His punishment was vicarious." P. 348.

Sin and guilt are treated as what they are--moral issues that confront a man with his God, not as subjective psychological or social feelings which can be rationalized and so resolved. They had to be dealt with by the vicarious atonement of the Servant--our Lord Jesus Christ. This is indeed "the heart of the matter" --which distinguishes Christianity from paganism in all forms, ancient and modern, sophisticated and crude.

Apart from the word *love* no other word of Scripture is, perhaps, emptied of its meaning so frequently and so completely as is the word *peace*. During the recent Christmas season we again were compelled to suffer at the hands of public figures who attempted to proclaim the Christmas message in platitudes that revolved about a *peace* that is but a caricature of the scriptural concept. It is refreshing to read Dr. Young's comments on *peace* in this verse:

"By the word *shalom* (peace) we are to understand the peace that God maintains toward men. The word involves more than a sense of well-being or weal. Because of our sins, so the thought may be paraphrased, God was not at peace with us. If He was to be at peace with us, there must be chastisement. We deserved that chastisement, but it fell not upon us, but upon the servant. In our place he was punished; and inasmuch as he was punished, God was at peace with us. One is not reading into the text if he asserts that the chastise-

ment that fell upon the servant was for the purpose of propitiation. Because of the servant's chastisement, our deep need of peace was fulfilled. If peace refers only to well-being or to material prosperity it is difficult to perceive why the death of the servant was necessary to procure that peace. Rather, this peace is the peace of God that passeth understanding." Pp. 348-349.

Dr. Young consistently finds that fulfillment of the glorious future of Israel in the Christian Church of the New Testament. To this interpretation we have been accustomed traditionally and through Pieper's *Jesaias*. We may be unaware of how these passages are interpreted by others. Dr. Young's commentary is an unpolemical refutation of the dispensationalists' canon that the Old Testament prophets knew nothing of the Church, which was allegedly a mystery revealed to St. Paul, and of the pre-millennialists, who consistently find descriptions of the millennium in the figurative language of Isaiah and other prophets.

We began by saying that reading, if it is to be fully fruitful, must always involve reading back to a book. Dr. Young is a conservative Reformed scholar. That should immediately tell the Lutheran reader that a cave is in order. There are certain presuppositions without which the Reformed scholar can neither think nor write. The central thought of Calvinism is the sovereignty of God. This writer is currently reading "The Calvinistic Concept of Culture" by Henry R. Van Till. He makes this point. The Lutheran reader should realize that there is always a chain of inferences that follows in the wake of the concept of the sovereignty of God when grace comes into focus. Grace is described as sovereign, omnipotent, immediate. The Reformed think of grace as particular rather than universal, as immediate rather than mediated through the means of grace, as irresistible rather than resistible because it comes to man in the humility of the foolishness of the Gospel. In line with this same chain of doctrinal inference is that of eternal security, popularly spoken of as "once saved, always saved," which is based on the eternal decree of election, revealed in time by an immediate and irresistible call. Thus man's "security" comes to rest upon his conversion experience rather than at the foot of the cross and at the mouth of the empty tomb. These various features of traditional Calvinism become part of the flow of Young's writing. For example, in commenting upon verse 6 of chapter 53: "All

we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," Young writes:

"The guilt that belonged to us God caused to strike him, i.e., he as our substitute bore the punishment that the guilt of our sins required. Consequently, we are no longer without a shepherd, for the shepherd has given his life for the sheep. Those for whom he served as substitute are designated *all of us*. In this phrase the prophet includes himself and all for whom he speaks. It is not warranted to draw from these words a doctrine of universal atonement." Volume III, p. 350.

The best known of Reformed doctrines is that of double predestination or the election of grace and the decree of reprobation. It is interesting to compare Pieper and Young in the discussion of Isaiah 45:7: "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things."

First Young:

"The Bible teaches that there is a *decretum absolutum*, that God has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. Likewise, the Bible also teaches the responsibility of the creature. Both are scriptural truths and both are to be accepted. To stress the first aspect of the truth at the expense of the second is to fall into the error of fatalism or hyper-Calvinism. To stress the second at the expense of the first is to fall into the error of Arminianism. There is a third position, namely to accept both aspects even though one cannot harmonize nor reconcile them. They can, however, be reconciled by God. Hence, even though we say that God has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, we are not thereby denying the responsibility of the creature.

"But this is not to assert that God is the author of sin. The statements of the present verse must be explained in the light of the whole Bible. Scripture is its own interpreter, and Scripture makes clear that God is not evil and not the source of evil. God has included evil in His plan, and has foreordained its existence; and yet He Himself is not evil nor is He its author. Again, we have a line of teaching that we as creatures are unable to harmonize or reconcile; we must be believers. We gain nothing by seeking to minimize the force of the present verse. 'O the depth of the

riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen' (Rom. 11:33-36)." Volume III, pp. 200-201.

And now Pieper:

"... es ist durchgängige Lehre der Schrift Alten und Neuen Testaments, dasz Gott 'solches alles', d.i. Glück und Unglück (dafür sind hier wie so oft im Alten Testament, ganz besonders bei Jesaias, Licht und Finsternis, Friede und Ubel Bilder, -- *species pro genere*) selber wirke, wenn auch letzteres nur um der Sünde willen. Seit der Verfluchung dieser sichtbaren Welt und alles natürlichen Lebens, Gen. 3, steht Gott persönlich hinter jedem Verderben, das die Welt birgt, wie er es ist, der jedes Blatt am Baum bewegt und jeden Pulsschlag unsers Herzens wirkt. Diese Erkenntnis hat der Deismus und der heutige Naturalismus selbst in der Christenheit schier ausgelöscht. Auch von dem gegenwärtigen Weltkrieg gilt: 'Du schlägest sie, aber sie füllen es nicht'. Jerem. 5, 3. Aber auch die christliche Predigt trifft diesen Ton so wenig. Bei Luther ist auch dies Stück der christlichen Erkenntnis wunderbar lebendig. Er sieht Gottes unmittelbares Wirken in den kleinsten Ereignissen seines persönlichen, wie in den grössten des Völkerlebens, besonders auch in den widrigen. Vgl. Seine Predigten wider den Türken. Die Schrift ist übevoll dieser groszen Lehre." P. 221.

Time and space do not permit a fuller discussion of this deep area of Christian doctrine. But such study is needed to combat the evolutionary naturalism of today which explains all phenomena by a closed system of cause and effect.

There are many excellent conservative Reformed writers of established ability and recognized scholarship, such as Dr. Young. Our pastors surely can study their works with profit. We have drawn attention to some of the basic Calvinistic presuppositions so that our reading does not become unprofitable and even deleterious.

Paul F. Nolting

2.

The Late Great Planet Earth, by Hal Lindsey
(with Carole C. Carlson); 192 pages; paperback,
\$1.95.

This book is a bestseller, but don't read it--unless time weighs lightly in your hand. Over 1,500,000 copies are in print (the 23rd printing already), but don't spend the money--unless you need a "textbook" on current millennial thinking. For this is the substance of Mr. Lindsey's effort. His literary style is very engaging, exhibiting the customary fascination of millennialists for prediction and date setting. But an overwhelming sense of fear accompanies the believer's concern as the message of these pages draws attention away from the Gospel. Lindsey teaches premillennialism, and "premillennialism is in constant peril of removing soteriology from the center of Christian doctrine and substituting an earthly eschatology for it." (F.E. Mayer, The Religious Bodies of America, p. 431.)

Millennialism is older than the pyramids, as various forms of utopian thinking and self-righteous preoccupations have plagued truth and faith through the history of the world. In the United States the Premillennialistic form of this "faith" has its roots in fundamentalism, which in turn was a revivalistic reaction to liberal theology. Whether it was the Great Awakening of the 18th century evangelists as Edwards, Whitefield and Tennent: or the thousands of camp meetings along the sawdust trail during the frontier days of the 19th century; or the modern mass evangelism of Dwight Moody, Billy Sunday, and even in our day, Billy Graham... revivalism expressed its "pietistic individualism" in early American religion just as "rugged individualism" characterized the frontier spirit and was considered the backbone of national determination. "Salvation by individual decision to accept Christ fitted circumstances in which men had to decide things for themselves" (L.E. Streiker, The Jesus Trip, Advent of the Jesus Freaks, p. 56).

The nature of the reaction is stated by Mayer, "Modernists had all but removed eschatology from their message. Fundamentalism countered by making eschatology a center emphasis of the Christian message. Furthermore, modernists had stressed the necessity of reinterpreting the Bible in terms of modern psychology and sociology. As a result prac-

tically everything in the Scriptures was questioned or given a symbolic meaning. Many fundamentalists went to the opposite extreme and advocated a literalism so strict that they would brook no figurative language whatever." (Op. cit., Mayer, p. 428.)

The Late Great Planet Earth is such an extreme. It is intriguing deception at its best, for sprinkled among the pages of predictions and "world-tomorrow" prejudice (ala Herbert W. and Garner T. Armstrong) are statements of truth. It's just enough to throw faith into the whirlwind with the dervish as the logical progressions entice one to accept unfulfilled prophecy (their way) on the basis of fulfilled prophecy, since we even accept these latter.

Mr. Lindsey perhaps provides a small service in the first chapter of this book by describing the preoccupation of people today with the future: palm readers, astrologers, extrasensory phenomena (ala Jeane Dixon), gurus of Eastern cults... "'The future' is big business. Frenchmen, for instance, spend more than a billion dollars a year on clairvoyants, gypsies, faith healers, seers and prophets. In Paris there is 'one charlatan for every 120 Parisians, compared with one doctor for every 514 citizens and one priest for every 5000.'" (p. 16)

The "test of a prophet" he has correctly, quoting Deuteronomy 18:22, "When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word which the LORD has not spoken." (p. 20) Armed with this admirable premise he then proceeds to demonstrate how many prophecies have "come true": Jeremiah's, concerning the 80 year captivity of Israel under Nebuchadnezzar; Micaiah's, concerning the battle outcome involving Ahab (I Kings 22); numerous passages from Isaiah concerning Hezekiah, the Babylonians, Cyrus; and an acceptable presentation of those prophecies fulfilled in the life and times of Jesus. Yet, he shows his millennialistic colors by describing Old Testament prophecy, "Imagine a man looking at a range of mountains. He is able to see the peak of one mountain, and beyond it the peak of another. However, from this vantage point, he cannot see the valley which separates these two mountains." (p. 28) So he considers the prophecies of the Messiah (Suffering and Reigning) as two separate kingdoms separated by the valley of time.

To put an end to the matter briefly, we consider the chronology of world history for this dear old late great planet according to Lindsey: (1) Israel had to repossess

the Holy Land, fulfilled in 1948 with the Israeli declaration of independence. (2) Israel would recapture all of Jerusalem. This is convenience in retrospect, considering the outcome of the Six-Day War in 1967. (3) Israel will rebuild the Temple on a site presently occupied by the Dome of the Rock, the second most important holy place of the Moslem faith. He goes out on a limb here...

In preparation for the great battle Armageddon (in the valley of Jezreel near the "mountain of Megiddo") these events become increasingly better focused: (1) Russia will be one of the antagonists, identified as the "Gog" of Ezekiel 36:37. Millennialists are as excited about the procurement of horses by the Russians as evolutionists were by the discovery of the orange dust on the moon by Apollo 17 astronauts. (2) There will be an Afro-Arab configuration centering in Egypt (Ethiopia-Cush -- the Black African nations; Libya-Put -- the Arabic African nations; together with the "king of the South"--Egyptian ruler). (3) The emergence of Gomer and his hordes (Iron Curtain Countries of Eastern Europe); of Togarmah and his (Southern Russia and the Cossacks). (4) From the East, the land of the rising sun, an army of 200 million will arise primarily from China, invincible to nuclear annihilation because of their number. (5) The revival of the Roman Empire (considered as the continuation of the 4th kingdom of Daniel 2, 7, 8) Lindsey identifies with the emerging Common Market in Europe, eventually to be exactly ten nations. Finally, one nation (horn) replaces three of these nations through combat and the other seven follow his lead voluntarily. A "future Fuehrer" will heed the people's cry for deliverance in the face of ever-increasing crime waves. He is also called the new Roman dictator, and the Antichrist, deifying himself as the Caesars of the first Roman Empire. The "false prophet" will arise, a Jew, who will glorify the Roman dictator. (6) There will be one-world religion, typified in Babylon, and the whore of Babylon. Lindsey sees signs of this in the WCC, etc. Astrology will assume great importance in the whole configuration. (An interesting sidelight is his use of the Greek word pharmakeia, translated "sorcery" in Revelation 18:23. From its resemblance to "pharmacy", he derives a sign of the imminent millennium in world-wide drug abuse.)

THEN... the Rapture or "translation." His description of it becomes amusing for those who properly understand Paul in I Thessalonians 4. For example, "There I was driving

down the freeway and all of a sudden the place went crazy... cars going in all direction... and not one of them had a driver."

"It was the last quarter of the championship game and the other side was ahead. Our boys had the ball. We made a touchdown and tied it up. The crowd went crazy. Only one minute to go and they fumbled -- our quarterback recovered -- he was about a yard from the goal when -- zap -- no more quarterback -- completely gone, just like that!"

"My dear friends in the congregation. Bless you for coming to church today. I know that many of you have lost loved ones in the unusual disappearance of so many people ..." (all on page 136)

THEN... the Great Tribulation -- the seven year countdown, distortions of Revelation 11:2,3; Matthew 24:21,22.

THEN... World War III, Armageddon -- the red horse is unleashed! This chapter is complete with maps describing the various phases of the battle. The United States is out of the picture. Economic, social, and moral deterioration relegated it to subsidiary connections with "Rome."

THEN... Jesus comes to Jerusalem; stops the battle; protects the Jews who all will have been converted by this time. He comes with the previously raptured believers. This is the beginning of the Millennium, 1000 years. There follows a brief foray of the unbelievers, then the final destruction of Satan; the "atomization" of the elements to make the "new heaven and new earth" for the eternal fellowship.

The effort to refute this earthly eschatology isn't worth the time. Watch out for their devices! It all sounds so good. The future is big business; it makes for interesting study. And many have believed it, grasping like unsuspecting fish for a baited hook.

Our Savior teaches us to read the signs of the times for a specific purpose; be ready at all times! This is preparedness created and sustained by the soteriology in the Gospel. The signs will in fact occur in the physical creation, among the political effects of national interest, even in the churches. We look for the realization of our hope completely outside of earthly utopian dreams.

The millennium which John saw started on Calvary and is going on right now. The type of kingdom Christ rules is "not of this world." It is not the food and drink variety, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. It is the rock cut from the mountain without human agency,

able to shatter all world-type kingdoms. What others would have us wait for, Christ says we have right now as participants in His kingship, ruling together with Him with the Word, deriving power from Him, and directing our attention to Him, when He will finally issue the culminating invitation, "Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matthew 25:34 - NASB).

M. Sydow

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF SEMINARS

In accord with a resolution of the 1972 convention of the CLC, several pastoral seminars will be held during the coming months, D.v. The details are as follows:

1) Locations and dates:

Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire -- June 12 through 14 (three full days); meals will not be served at the college, but beds will be available (bring your own bedding).

Grace Lutheran Church, Valentine, Neb. -- August 7 through 9 (three full days); meals and lodging will be provided by the congregation. West Coast: To be arranged.

2) Topics:

Greek: The tracing of a concept through the New Testament (R. Gurgel).

Hebrew: How to reactivate your Hebrew for a more reliable exegesis (G. Radtke).

Adult Instruction: A unit approach (B. Naumann).

Hermeneutics: Topics of current interest and importance (C. Kuehne).

Book Reviews: Each pastor attending a seminar is urged to present a brief oral review of a useful book he has recently read.

3) Tuition: \$10 per person.

4) Enrollment: Although the seminar is designed for pastors, interested teachers and laymen are welcome to participate. Those who plan to attend the Eau Claire or Valentine sessions are asked to register by mail no later than April 30, indicating which of the two seminars they will be attending. Send such registrations to:

The Seminar Committee
Immanuel Lutheran College
West Grover Road
Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54701

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