



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

I Timothy 4:15

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TOPICS ON THE TENSES . . .

THE VIEWPOINTS OF THE AORIST

"Keeping the Aorist in Its Place" was the title of an article in an earlier issue of this periodical.¹ The exegete of the New Testament was there urged to remember that the aorist tense points to an action without describing it. It states in simple fashion that something happened (or happens), without defining the action further as durative, completed, single, momentary, or in any other way. When a Greek writer uses the aorist, the context alone can give one information as to the nature of the action itself.

This basic understanding of the aorist tense is frequently overlooked by interpreters of the New Testament. They wrongly infer: "The aorist is used here for an action. Therefore the action itself must be in some way punctiliar — single, momentary, once-and-for-all, or such like." This error is found, for example, in a book which recently crossed this writer's desk. The author, in describing what he regards as "The Normal Christian Life," states: "When Christ was crucified we were crucified; and His crucifixion is past, therefore ours cannot be future. I challenge you to find one text in the New Testament telling us that our crucifixion is in the future. All the references to it are in the Greek aorist, which is the 'once-for-all' tense, the 'eternally past' tense. (See Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14.)"² The author seems to be denying the necessity of a daily putting to death of the Old Adam in the Christian, and bases this unscriptural contention in part upon a wrong conception of the aorist.

THREE POINTS
OF VIEW

In spite of what has been said, however, about the aoristic ("undefined") nature of this tense, the aorist is not as flat and uninteresting as it may at first seem. Partly because of the distinctive meanings of various verb stems, the aorist may view an action

from different angles, as it were. It may look at an action in its undivided entirety, or it may point to the beginning of the action (state), or it may focus upon the completion of the action. The first of these represents the fundamental force of the tense. The last two are modifications of this basic tense idea. These distinctions appear in all four modes (indicative, subjunctive, optative, imperative), and in the infinitive and participle.

Moulton called attention to this matter early in the century in his *Prolegomena*:

It is seen that the Aorist has a "punctiliar" action, that is, it regards action as a point: it represents the point of entrance (Ingressive, as βαλεῖν "let fly," βασιλεῦσαι "come to the throne") or that of completion (Effective, as βαλεῖν "hit"), or it looks at a whole action simply as having occurred, without distinguishing any steps in its progress (Constative, as βασιλεῦσαι "reign," or as when a sculptor says of his statue, ἐποίησεν ὁ δεινὰ "X. made it").³

Davis, a protege of A. T. Robertson, puts it as follows in his *Beginner's Grammar*:

The verb-stem itself may accent the beginning of the action, the end of the action, or the action as a whole. The aorist tense itself always means point-action (punctiliar action). But the individual verb-stem meaning may deflect the punctiliar action to the beginning or to the end. Consequently, in the aorist the tense idea is to be combined with the verb-stem meaning. Thus in punctiliar action three distinctions arise: (1) the unmodified point-action, called constative; (2) the point-action with the stress on the beginning of the action, called ingressive; (3) the point-action with the stress on the conclusion or end of the action, called effective. ... Sometimes the same word can be used for each of these ideas; as βαλεῖν may mean "throw" (constative), or "let fly" (ingressive), or "hit" (effective).⁴

CONSTATIVE AORIST

In this article we have chosen to use the terminology employed by Moulton: constative, ingressive, and effective, even though the names may not be the most fitting. We begin with a discussion of the constative, since, as the basic force of the tense, it is the most frequently used in the New Testament.⁵ Other terms which have been employed by grammarians for this primary use of the aorist include "Mittelpunkt" aorist (Delbrück), "indefinite" aorist (Burton), "complexive" aorist (Gildersleeve), and "summary" aorist (preferred by Moulton to "constative"). Robertson chooses "constative" and points out that it is really the regular use of the tense: "It seems best, therefore, to regard 'constative' as merely the normal aorist which is not 'ingressive' nor 'effective.'"⁶

The constative aorist, then, simply points to the action as a whole, without distinguishing between the parts of that action — beginning, middle, or end. Examples of it abound in the New Testament, as would be expected. It is used, understandably, for actions that are single, instantaneous, or momentary. Thus Matthew 8:3: "And Jesus put forth (ἐκτείνας) his hand, and touched (ἥψατο) him, saying, I will; be thou clean (καθαρίσθητι). And immediately his leprosy was cleansed (ἐκαθαρίσθη)." A similar series of aorists is found in Acts 10: 22f.: "And they said (εἶπαν), Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God (ἐχρηματίσθη) by a holy angel to send for (μεταπέμψασθαι) thee into his house, and to hear (ἀκούσαι) words of thee. Then called he them in (εἰσκαλεσάμενος), and lodged them (ἐξένεισεν)." Note that in these examples various modes as well as the infinitive and participle are represented.

But the constative aorist, because of the peculiar nature of the tense, can be used also for actions that in themselves are prolonged in time. The aorist simply views such an action as a happening or event, without reference to its duration or progress. Compare John 1: 14, where the entire earthly life of our Savior is viewed as a single whole: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt (ἐσκήνωσεν) among us." Or John 2:20, where the

aorist views a protracted building program at a glance: "Forty and six years was this temple in building (οἰκοδομήθη)." (Note that the imperfect tense, if it had been used here, would have described the building of the temple as an on-going process.) Compare the following passages for other instructive examples: ἔμεινεν ("he abode") in John 7:9 and 10:40 (a poorly attested variant has the imperfect ἔμενεν in the latter passage); ἐκδήλουσεν ("he continued") in Acts 18:11; ἐνέμενεν ("dwelt") in Acts 28:30; ἐβασίλευσεν ("reigned") in Romans 5:14; ἠγάπησεν ("loved") in Ephesians 2:4; ἐκρύβη ("was hid") in Hebrews 11:23; and ἐκαρτέρησεν ("he endured") in Hebrews 11:27.

The constative aorist can be used, furthermore, for a series of actions which are viewed collectively as a single fact. Seven marriages are comprehended in the aorist ἔσχον of Matthew 22:28: "for they all had her." Repeated contributions to the treasury of the temple are summed up in ἔβαλον of Mark 12:44: "for all they did cast in of their abundance." Compare 2 Corinthians 11:25: "Thrice was I beaten with rods (ἐρραβδόσθην), ... thrice I suffered shipwreck (ἐναυάγησα)." And note, finally, how in Hebrews 11:13 and 39 the aorist is used in summary-type statements: "These all died (ἀπέθανον) in faith, ... received not (οὐκ ἐκομίσαντο) the promise."

INGRESSIVE AORIST When the aorist focuses upon the beginning of an action (state), it is said to be ingressive. This term is quite satisfactory, but it is not the only one employed by grammarians. We find also the following: "Anfangspunkt" aorist (Delbrück), "inceptive" aorist (Burton), "outset" aorist (Gildersleeve), and "inchoative" aorist.

Actually, it would be more correct to say that the ingressive aorist focuses upon the entrance into a state or condition, as the examples below will indicate. For it is found chiefly with verbs which in the present and imperfect tenses express the continuing in that state or condition. Yet it should be noted that the aorist of such stems is not always to be taken in an ingressive sense. Consider the verb συγάζω. The infinitive συγῆσαι in Acts 15:13 is ingressive: "after they had held their

peace — had become silent"; in Luke 9:36 the indicative ἐσέγησαν is clearly constative: "they kept it close — kept silent." Before a person takes an aorist as ingressive, he must make sure that the context warrants it.

Among the many examples of ingressive aorist in the New Testament are the following: Matthew 3:9: "And think not — do not begin to think (μὴ δόξητε) — within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father." Matthew 22:7: "But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth — he became wroth (ὠργίσθη)." Luke 19:41: "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it — burst into tears (ἐκλαυσεν)." John 4:52: "Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend (κοιμώτερον ἔσχευ)." The Nestle text of John 10:38 contains both an ingressive aorist subjunctive and a durative present subjunctive of γινώσκω in a single purpose clause: "in order that you may come to know (γινῶτε) and go on knowing (γινώσκητε) that the Father is in me and I in the Father." Acts 7:60: "And when he had said this, he fell asleep (ἐκοιμήθη)." Romans 13:11: "for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed — came to faith (ἐπιστεύσαμεν)." 1 Corinthians 4:8: "now ye are rich — have become rich (ἐπλούτησατε)." And the classic example in 2 Corinthians 8:9: "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor (ἐπτώχευσεν)." It may be noted in passing that the King James Version, as cited in the above examples, has often failed to render ingressive aorists with an appropriate word like "became ..."

EFFECTIVE AORIST Thirdly, the aorist may be used to denote the attainment of something which has been attempted. This use belongs especially to those verbs which in the present tense imply intention, effort, or process. When such emphasis is laid on the end of the action, or the results attained, the aorist is said to be effective. Other terms used for this point of view are "*Schlusspunkt*" aorist (Delbrück), "resultative" aorist (Burton), "upshot" aorist (Gildersleeve), and "culminative" aorist.

Assured examples of the effective aorist are somewhat harder to find in the New Testament. The following may be offered: Matthew 25:20: "I have gained (ἐκέρδησα)

beside them five talents more." Matthew 27:20: "But the chief priests and elders persuaded (ἐπεισαν) the multitude that they should ask Barnabas." Mark 7:35: "his ears were opened (ἠνούγησαν), and the string of his tongue was loosed (ἐλύθη)." Luke 2:39: "And when they had performed (ἐτέλεσαν) all things according to the law of the Lord." Luke 16:4: "I am resolved what to do — I've got it! (ἔγνων τί ποιήσω)." Luke 19:42: "but now they are hid (ἐκρύβη) from thine eyes." John 1:16: "And of his fulness have all we received (ἐλάβομεν)." Acts 5:4: "why hast thou conceived (ἔθου) this thing in thine heart?" Acts 5:37: "Judas of Galilee ... drew away (ἀπέστησεν) much people after him." Acts 12:25: "when they had fulfilled (πληρώσαντες) their ministry." Acts 27:43: "But the centurion ... kept (ἐκώλυσεν) them from their purpose." Philippians 4:11: "for I have learned (ἔμαθον), in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." It will be noted from these examples that the auxiliaries "has," "have," and "had" are frequently helpful in rendering an effective aorist in English. Dana-Mantey: "This idiom may be best translated by the English perfect when it affects a situation present to the writer, and by the pluperfect when relatively past."⁷

COMMENTS ON EXEGESIS

The same verb may, in different contexts, present all three points of view — constative, ingressive, and effective. (Compare the examples of βαλεῖν offered by Moulton and Davis above.) How does one make a choice in a given passage? Inasmuch as the constative is the regular and normal force of the aorist in the New Testament, it should be selected unless the context indicates otherwise. When one comes upon a stem with a verbal idea indicating state or condition, the ingressive aorist must be regarded as a strong possibility. Similarly, when one meets a stem which involves intention, effort, or process, the effective should be considered. There are cases in which it is difficult to decide with certainty, and then preference should probably be given to the constative. Moulton states: "The three kinds of point action, Ingressive, Effective, and Constative, are not always easy to distinguish. ... the marked growth of the constative enlarges the number of cases in which the whole action is comprised in one view."⁸

In some passages the choice that a person makes — constative, ingressive, or effective — will have a significant effect on the resultant meaning. Compare Matt. 3:17: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (εὐδόκησα)." Burton discusses the exegesis of this passage at length and seems in the end to favor an ingressive sense: "It may be described, therefore, as an Inceptive Aorist equivalent to an English Perfect, and may be rendered, 'I have become well pleased.' This, however, can only be a vivid way of saying, 'I am well pleased.' If then this view is correct, the rendering of the English versions is a free but substantially correct paraphrase. ... The Aorist affirms the becoming pleased and leaves the present pleasure to be suggested."⁹ This interpretation, however, suggests that the Father's pleasure in His Son was not from eternity, but came into existence at some point not precisely specified in the passage — an interpretation which is grammatically possible, but theologically unsound. Far better it is to take the verb as constative. As such it could be historical: "In whom I was well pleased," namely, in choosing Him in eternity as the Redeemer of the world. (Cf. Lenski on this passage.) Or — and this seems to be the best interpretation of all — it could be constative and timeless: "In whom I am well pleased," even as English versions have commonly rendered it.

A passage of great exegetical interest in our day is Revelation 20:4-5: "... and they lived (ἔζησαν) and reigned (ἐβασίλευσαν) with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived (ἔζησαν) not again until the thousand years were finished." Millennialists and others insist here that ἔζησαν must be taken in an ingressive sense, an interpretation which is reflected in several modern translations: *The Living Bible*: "They had come to life again and now they reigned with Christ for a thousand years. This is the First Resurrection. (The rest of the dead did not come back to life until the thousand years had ended.)" *New International Version*: "They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.)" *The New American Standard Bible* has a similar reading.

Space does not permit a detailed discussion of this exegesis.¹⁰ But it is the conviction of this writer that all three aorists (ἔζησαν, ἐβασίλευσαν, ἔζησαν) should be taken as constative. Inasmuch as the constative is by far the most common point of view of the aorist, it should be accepted as the intended sense unless the context demands the ingressive or effective. Furthermore, the aorist of ζῶω is generally used with a constative sense in the New Testament. Note the following: Mark 5:23: "that she may be healed; and she shall live (ζήσῃ)." Luke 2:36: "she ... had lived (ζήσασα) with an husband seven years from her virginity." Acts 26:5: "after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived (ἔζησα) a Pharisee." 1 Thessalonians 5:10: "Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live (ζήσωμεν) together with him." Titus 2:12: "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live (ζήσωμεν) soberly ..."

There is little doubt that a person's exegetical endeavors will be enhanced if he keeps in mind the three points of view of the aorist tense.

C. Kuehne

FOOTNOTES

1. *Journal of Theology*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (September, 1976), pp. 2-10.
2. Watchman Nee, *The Normal Christian Life*, 3rd and revised ed. (London: Victory Press, 1961), p. 31.
3. James Hope Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908), p. 109.
4. William Hersey Davis, *Beginner's Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Harper & Row, 1923), p. 123f.
5. Chamberlain states that "the commonest of these three emphases is the ingressive." He reaches this conclusion by restricting the constative to verb stems which have the idea of a continued act. See William Douglas Chamberlain, *An Exegetical Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), p. 77.
6. A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testa-*

ment in the Light of Historical Research (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934), p. 832.

7. H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1955), p. 197.
8. Moulton, *op. cit.*, p. 130.
9. Ernest De Witt Burton, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1898), p. 29.
10. A doctrinally correct exegesis of Revelation 20 appears in Wilbert R. Gawrisch, *Eschatological Prophecies and Current Misinterpretations* (Mequon, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, n.d.), p. 33ff. Other exegetical considerations can be found in the book by Millard J. Erickson which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue.



SPECIAL DANGERS FACING A PASTOR

A pastor has a divine office. God has established the ministry of the Word, and has entrusted this office to him through a regular Call. This office deals with divine matters. Therefore, the pastor does not act on his own, but on God's behalf. He knows that he is answerable to God for everything that he does in this office. As he carries out his duties, he knows that the eyes of his Lord rest upon him. His assignment is to bring to the souls entrusted to him the message of Christ the Savior, that they may learn to know and love Him, that they believe in Him, and, finally, through faith in Jesus, enter eternal life. His goal is, and must be, what the Apostle says: to "both save thyself, and them that hear thee," (1 Tim. 4:16). Like Paul, he is especially concerned "lest that by any means, when I have

preached to others, I myself should be a castaway," (1 Cor. 9:27). Therefore, in carrying out his duties he is to give attention, not merely to the flock entrusted to him, but he is to give attention to himself. The Apostle says very earnestly to young Pastor Timothy and to all preachers: "Take heed unto thyself!" As Beck phrases it in the American Translation: "Watch yourself and your teaching. Keep right on in these things. If you do that, you will save yourself and those who hear you," (1 Tim. 4:16).

The pastoral office has great temptations and dangers, such as is the case with perhaps no other office. Satan surely devotes special attention to those who are the ministers of God's Word. Many men have made a good beginning in the ministry but through the working of Satan have come to a bad end. We recall hearing that fearful saying of Chrysostom: "Hell is paved with the skulls of unfaithful pastors." And some other teacher in the church said: "It is easier to be unfaithful in the office of the ministry than in any other office." As pastors, we should surely take heed unto ourselves that we do not become guilty of unfaithfulness. Having preached to others, we ourselves do not wish to be numbered among the castaways.

Pastors are sinners, like everyone else. We must fight against the devil, the world, and our own flesh, like everyone else. We are tempted by all kinds of sins and constantly stand in danger of succumbing to temptations and losing the salvation of our souls, like everyone else. But we also stand in very special danger because of our office. We are in the same dangers as all other people, and in addition to this we are in special danger because we are pastors with special responsibilities.

SPIRITUAL LIFE

One spiritual danger facing a pastor is that he, while preaching repentance and conversion to others, overlooks the necessity of his own spiritual life. Obviously, it is not enough merely to possess sufficient theological knowledge so as to enable one to pass his Seminary examinations and to justify his entering this office. This is not yet

enough equipment for the office of the ministry, for then objective knowledge replaces personal spirituality. It becomes tempting to think: Whoever shows the way of salvation to the lost will surely be saved himself! When a person preaches the Word to others so that they are converted, how can he himself be unspiritual? Pastors must therefore be conscious of this again and again, and remind themselves that the saving of others does not in itself save them. The Word which we preach does not benefit us if we do not apply it to ourselves. A person is not himself saved from drowning by the fact that he hands a life preserver to someone else. A person's hunger is not satisfied by the act of handing a piece of bread to others. Since it is so very easy for pastors to neglect applying the work and blessing of Christ to themselves, it is very important that we speak to ourselves in this way: Consider your own faith in your Savior! In your own soul, fight against those same sins against which you warn others!

BLESSING In this connection, it should be pointed out that pastors, in their office, are missing out on one thing which their parishioners have, namely, the blessing of the office. The pastor is not the direct object of the ministerial office, inasmuch as he is its subject. He does not sit beneath the pulpit. No one proclaims God's Word to him. No one is shepherding his soul. In that respect, we pastors are poorer than the humblest Christians sitting in our pews. And when we do, now and then, have the opportunity to hear God's Word from the mouth of someone else, how easily it happens that we show ourselves to be rather unreceptive hearers of God's Word! Perhaps we begin to criticize the delivery or the gestures or the outline or the exegesis. And so we miss out on the blessing which is intended for us in the sermon.

PRIDE Furthermore, the office of a pastor is a public office. He must always show himself publicly and be heard in public. He constantly stands before the public. He will also make an impression and will find approval, if not for himself, then for that which he advocates. It is here that there is a great temptation to become proud and conceited, to show

off. This is a frame of mind which is not found, and should not be found, in any true Christian. Pride is a great spiritual danger for every Christian, and especially so for the pastor. "Pride goeth before destruction," (Prov. 16:18). Many have experienced that. And this has been shown to be true also in the case of many a pastor. To be a Christian is contradictory to being proud. To be a pastor and to be proud is an abomination to God. The Psalmist says: "The Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer," (Ps. 31:23). Solomon writes: "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate," (Prov. 8:13). A proud man is a detestable man. And even more detestable is a proud pastor. Pride is a very special danger for his soul and threatens his salvation. A proud pastor surely cannot say with the Apostle: "By the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain," (1 Cor. 15:10). Pride is often the reason why pastors, when serving together in the same congregation, cannot get along well with each other. Each wants to have the major role. Each tries to gain a large following. As a result, it has become almost proverbial that "Two pastors in one church is not good, and will lead to controversy." Pride is also the reason why there is often so much "back-biting" among pastors. Slander is a great sin, and as pastors we constantly testify against this sin. We tell our hearers what Solomon says: "A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter," (Prov. 11:13). We tell our people: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone," (Matt. 18:15). We are not to tell others about it. We should carry it no farther. That is what we tell others. But, unfortunately, people often hear that pastors themselves do what they tell others not to do. Perhaps they repeat some tidbit about a fellow pastor that is only hearsay, but nevertheless pass it on to others as something to be believed. Here that passage applies: "Lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway," (1 Cor. 9:27). The basic reason for such back-biting is pride, envy, jealousy. The one begrudges the other for some success, tries to belittle him, and thereby shows that something is wrong

in his own heart and that he stands in great danger of losing the salvation of his soul. We pastors, too, surely have great reason to pray and sing with Hans Brorson:

I walk in danger all the way.
The tho't shall never leave me
That Satan, who has marked his prey,
Is plotting to deceive me.
This Foe with hidden snares
May seize me unawares
If e'er I fail to watch and pray.
I walk in danger all the way. (L.H. 413:1)

HABIT Then, too, the pastoral office is a spiritual office. The pastor is required by his office to be constantly occupied with Christian thoughts and feelings and deeds, so that all of this becomes rather a habit to him. Just as an axe becomes dull with constant use, so habits may become dulled, even when they involve matters that are very glorious in nature. So it may well happen with a pastor that he carries out his office routinely, like a machine. This may be the case especially when his duties seem to "pile up" all at once as, for example, when at 1:00 P.M. he plans a wedding with a young couple, at 2:00 P.M. he comforts one who is bereaved, at 3:00 P.M. he baptizes a child, and at 4:00 P.M. he gives private Communion to one who is sick. How easy it is to lose a genuine sympathetic interest in the feelings of all of these saints! That which is holy becomes a mere form. A machine-like spirit in carrying out the pastoral office tends to kill personal faith. Then a person considers God's Word and God's grace objectively, as a salesman considers the product he hopes to sell on a commission basis. He doesn't look at it subjectively, as a hungry man looks upon a piece of bread with which he hopes to satisfy his hunger. It may even come to the point that his heart becomes completely dulled to the truths and glories of his Christian faith. Without actually realizing it, he becomes more slow and sluggish and indifferent and unconcerned.

When a person deals constantly with spiritual matters, he finally grows accustomed to them, so that no one is in greater danger of hypocrisy than those who oc-

cupy spiritual offices. The pastor's constant occupation with spiritual matters may become a great danger to his soul, when they become only habit and routine. A pastor must be faithfully concerned that, in caring for the souls of others, he does not neglect his own soul. He must try to make his entire pastoral activity fruitful also for his own heart. In every sermon text he should ask himself: What does this Word say to me? What ointment does it lay on my wounds? What answer does it give to my questions? Applying the text first of all to oneself is the best sermon preparation, for then one can speak from personal experience while proclaiming the Word.

When a pastor is constantly occupied with the Word of God, with the purpose of proclaiming it merely to others for their salvation, then he stands in great danger of forgetting the salvation of his own soul and becoming indifferent to his own spiritual needs, with the result that "having preached to others, he himself becomes a castaway." When his work in the ministry becomes a mere habit in serving others, then he cannot be earnestly watchful over his own life. He may easily become guilty of those very sins which he chastizes in others. From the pulpit he may speak about self-sacrificing love, while at the same time his parishioners are saying among themselves that he must not really be in earnest about this, since he is such a poor contributor himself and is miserly in his general attitude. People will conclude that it is just a way of talking, to speak about "deeds of charity." Or from the pulpit he warns against the broad way which leads to damnation. But during the week he gives little indication that he is concerned about his own salvation with fear and trembling. People will say: This concern about salvation cannot really be so urgent after all. When a person cries out to other people: "Flee, run, for there comes a wolf!", but then he himself ambles slowly along, taking it easy, then the others are not going to believe him. That is the way it is with pastors who warn against the world and its sins on Sunday morning, but who conform their lives to the world during the week. People will believe their actions rather than their words. Thus the pastor helps to destroy what he himself has built up on Sunday morning. He gives cause to the enemies of his Lord to blaspheme

Christ and His Church. That is a great spiritual danger for the pastor. The word of the Apostle applies to him: "Thou that makest thy boast of the Law, through breaking the Law dishonorest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you," (Rom. 2:23-24).

PREPARATION When the duties of the ministry become mere habits, then it will follow that a pastor will be indifferent in his preparation. He may decide that he has now been preaching for so many years that he has come to the point that he will venture to step into the pulpit without very much preparation and study. When a person has the genuine ability to preach a fine sermon merely upon the basis of a sketchy, hastily drawn up outline, then that is certainly a wonderful gift of God for which the individual should not cease to thank God. But when a person enters the pulpit with an outline, not because of some outstanding gift of God, but because his flesh was too lazy to engage in concentrated study, that is entirely different. Perhaps he hopes to cover his lack of preparation with wild gesticulations and an abundance of "Oh's" and "Ah's." Of such a preacher it can usually be said, as was actually said of a pastor at one time: "The finest passage in the whole service was the passage of the minister from the pulpit to the vestry." The saddest part of this whole business is that such a pastor, by his indifference, is bringing the salvation of his own soul into danger. Even the simplest Christians can tell when their pastor is prepared as he stands in the pulpit. Then his words will enter into their hearts, and they will take home a blessing which they have received from the sermon.

TRIALS Luther includes trials among those things which help to make a true theologian, or without which no one will become a true theologian. He says: "*Oratio, meditatio, tentatio faciunt theologum*," that is, "Prayer, meditation, trials make the theologian." Without trials there will be no good preacher. He will merely chatter away without really knowing what he is talking about. Trials, testings, are necessary for a pastor, to help make him the kind of person that he should be. Just as trials serve to strengthen every

Christian in his faith, in patience, in hope, etc., so also the pastor should be strengthened through trials. And, as mentioned, he has very special temptations to withstand, right alongside of those which he faces as a Christian.

One such temptation is weariness in office. Perhaps he is serving a comparatively small group of parishioners, and receives an income which is barely sufficient to make ends meet. He sees how others in other occupations receive a much larger salary. The temptation then comes to him to hang his pastoral hat up on a nail and devote himself to some other calling. Nearly every pastor will have to admit, in all honesty, that this temptation has come to him at numerous times during his ministry. And many give in to this temptation. — Or the pastor sees no real results to his work. He thinks: What's the use? My work is all in vain. As a result, he becomes indifferent and careless in carrying out the duties of his office, and thus stands in great danger of losing the salvation of his soul. — But even recognition and appreciation can become a trap. Visible results in his work can also be a snare. Perhaps there are members in his congregation who regularly express their appreciation for the sermons of their pastor, and praise him for his presentation. Unintentionally, they may be causing his ruination. When he sees that his work produces such complimentary results, he is easily tempted to become proud and to marvel at his wonderful abilities. With every little compliment, the pastor needs to say a prayer, asking for the gift of humility, so that glory may be given, not to himself, but to God on high.

FEAR AND FAVOR

Another special spiritual danger for every pastor is the fear of men. The Lord earnestly exhorts every pastor through His prophet: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the Word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his

wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul," (Ezek. 3: 17-19). Surely this constitutes a great danger for a pastor in regard to his office! From fear of men, he remains silent when he ought to speak. He does not admonish a person when he should, because he is afraid he might get into a dispute with this or that person in the congregation. Or perhaps some well-to-do and influential member of the congregation has become guilty of some sin, but the pastor remains silent, for he is afraid he might make an enemy of the person involved and possibly lose him as a member. What great spiritual danger there is for the pastor, according to the words of Ezekial, when he remains silent at times that he should speak and admonish, out of the fear of men!

Closely connected with this is the favor of men. This comes when the pastor always speaks and preaches what the people like to hear. The Apostle Paul describes such people as having "itching ears," (2 Tim. 4:3). When a pastor does this, he places the salvation of his soul in great danger. For here the Word of the Lord applies: "Woe to the women that sew pillows to all armholes, and make kerchiefs upon the head of every stature to hurt souls! Will ye hunt the souls of my people, and will ye save the souls alive that come unto you?" (Ezek. 13:18). And again: "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!" (Luke 6:26).

NEGLIGENCE Another spiritual danger for the pastor is negligence in study. The Lord of the Church exhorts every pastor through His Apostle: "Give attendance to reading!" (1 Tim. 4:13). Here the Lord earnestly commands every pastor to continue to study. A pastor who does not do this, and who is satisfied with the knowledge that enabled him to graduate from the Seminary, or who is perhaps ready to study all kinds of things except those things which are necessary for carrying out his office and which qualify him to "teach others also," (2 Tim. 2:2), he becomes guilty of a great neglect of duty. He is lazy in doing the Lord's work, and will come to the point that he no longer knows the right word to speak at the appropriate time and place. He can no longer offer his hearers that which God com-

mands him to offer them. The word of the Apostle applies also to the pastor: "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord," (Rom. 12:11). A pastor should study diligently so that he may always be like that "householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old," (Matt. 13:52). When he does not do this, the salvation of his soul is in great danger, for he then bears a close resemblance to that lazy and unprofitable servant who was cast into outer darkness (Matt. 25:30).

INDIFFERENCE Indifference in doctrine and practice is also a great spiritual danger for pastors. The doctrine is God's. A pastor should watch very earnestly over the doctrine. God wants His doctrine to be kept pure. Holy Scripture assures us of this fact in many places. Time and again, Scripture emphasizes the importance of pure doctrine, and at the same time warns against false doctrine. The Lord says to Timothy through the Apostle: "Take heed unto the doctrine!" (1 Tim. 4:16). And again he says: "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing," (1 Tim. 6:3f.). We are familiar with the many passages of Scripture in which God warns so earnestly against all false doctrine, and where His "woe" is pronounced upon all false teachers. False doctrine is an abomination to the Lord. And indifference in doctrine is just as great an abomination to Him. It isn't a matter of indifference whether God's Word is proclaimed in its purity, or whether it is falsified in some places. We are to keep watch over the pure doctrine with great zeal, and be on guard lest we deviate from that Word in even the least bit. There is always a great danger that this will be done, also in our times when so many religious leaders look upon pure doctrine as an impossible and unnecessary goal to strive for. We are quickly labeled as being dogmatic and separatistic and divisive and loveless and legalistic, etc., *ad nauseam*. When these appellations are thrown at us, we stand in great danger of taking something less than a firm hold on the pure teachings of God's Word. We are tempted to improve our standing among men at the expense of God's Word.

Indifference in practice is just as dangerous, when a pastor does not carry out his office in full accordance with God's Word. In order not to make any enemies, or in order to please men, he officiates at occasions where he should not officiate. For example, he confirms a child after only a very brief and inadequate period of instruction. Or he buries someone who did not die as a Christian. The temptation to follow such dangerous practices is great also in our time, when so many pastors are willing to bury anyone and everyone, for a price. When we do not join in such practices, we are decried as being narrow-minded, bigoted, and such like. But how fearfully much those pastors are going to have to answer for, who are indifferent in this regard!

LAW Another special spiritual danger which a pastor faces is the inclination to use the Law, when it appears as though the Gospel will not heal the wounds in the congregation. Pastors are called "preachers of the Gospel." And that is what they should be. They should preach the Gospel. They are called to do this. That is their office. Oh, at times they should and must preach also the Law. From the Law they must show what sin is. Through the Law they should bring sinners to a knowledge of their sins. But through the Law they will be unable to heal any wounds in the congregation. "The Law worketh wrath," (Rom. 4:15). Only the Gospel, the sweet message of the grace of God in Christ Jesus, can bring healing and salvation. But how very often we are much inclined to come in with the Law when the Gospel does not appear to be bringing about the desired results, or when some particular wound does not appear to be healing! This is for us a great spiritual danger. Then we are not extending to our hearers that which God wants us to extend to them, and which alone can rescue and save them. By withholding from them the saving Gospel, we make ourselves responsible if they are eternally lost. What a frightful thing it is to contemplate, if only one soul would be lost through our fault!

MONEY A special spiritual danger for a pastor is covetousness and concern for his livelihood. This has been a snare for many a pastor. Perhaps he has been tempted, for reasons of covetousness and avarice, to be

indifferent in carrying out the duties of his office. He is tempted to officiate here and there when he should refuse to have any part in it, all for the sake of the financial gain involved. Or, out of concern for his livelihood, he resigns from his office because it does not pay well enough, and he anticipates more and greater income in some other occupation. Covetousness and concern for one's livelihood are great evils for every Christian, but are much more so for a pastor. The example which such a pastor sets can be offensive to many people. And he himself is in great danger of losing the salvation of his soul. "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows," (1 Tim. 6:10).

CONDUCT Another spiritual danger for a pastor involves imprudence in dealing with members of the opposite sex. Because of his office, a pastor necessarily comes into contact with women in a very special way. Frequently, circumstances will dictate that he is alone with this or that woman or girl from his congregation. In his house calls, he may often find himself alone with her in the house. Or they may at times be alone with him in his office. Surely, great caution is called for! How easily he can fall to temptations of the flesh. Satan uses every such opportunity to try to bring about the downfall of a servant of the Word, and thus to cause great offense in the Church. And how often Satan succeeds in this, even among those who are considered pillars in the Church! And it can easily happen that a person whom Satan causes to fall in such a way never rises again, but stays away from his Savior and finally is brought to eternal damnation! It was in regard to this very matter that the Apostle says to pastors: "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise," (Eph. 5:15). And again: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," (1 Cor. 10:12).

HEAD OF THE FAMILY Finally, one must point out yet one more special spiritual danger which faces a pastor. We are thinking of this, that in his concern to care for the congregation, he neglects

his duty as the head of a family and a father, especially the training and discipline of his children. A pastor is surely to work in his Lord's vineyard. In the fullest sense of the word, he is to work for the Lord until death, as the Apostle says: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed," (2 Tim. 2:15). But he has a duty, not only toward his congregation, but also toward his family, if he has been so blessed by the Lord. Not only should the salvation of the souls who are members of the congregation lie close to his heart, but he should be especially concerned about the salvation of his own family. The father of every family has the duty to bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. A pastor is not somehow exempt from carrying out this duty. When we are told in Holy Scripture: "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel," (1 Tim. 5:8), then that applies, first of all, to caring for their bodily needs. But it is certainly not wrong when we apply this also to caring for their spiritual needs.

Yes, the person who does not provide for the spiritual needs of his own, who is unconcerned about the salvation of the members of his own family, will have a fearful responsibility to bear when he is called to give account to God. The Judge of all flesh will ask him: "Where are the children which I have entrusted to you? Have you directed also them to Me? Have you concerned yourself, above all, about this, that they learn to know and love their Savior, that they believe in Him, and that finally they are saved by faith in Him?" The Lord will ask these questions of every pastor to whom He has given children and a family. But a pastor stands in great danger of being so occupied in the work of the congregation that he neglects this duty in regard to his own family. He consumes himself in the work of the congregation, and neglects the salvation of those who are nearest to him, and whose salvation should lie especially close to his heart. Luther once said: "There is no easier way for parents to earn hell than by neglecting their own children." (St. L. Ed. X:1363) And that certainly holds true also of pastors. Pastors can earn

hell for themselves by neglecting the Christian training of their own children. And because of their work in the congregation, they stand in great danger of doing this very thing. This neglect must, therefore, be considered a very special spiritual danger which a pastor faces.

In view of all that has been said (and more could be said), we would have to say that the spiritual dangers which we pastors face are great! It is nothing else than a great and unmerited favor of God's grace, that even we pastors can be saved.

A. Schulz



ANATOMY OF AN EXPLOSION — AN IMPORTANT BOOK

The author of *Anatomy of an Explosion* is well qualified to write this book, a theological analysis of the controversy which has torn at the vitals of the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod for so many years. Kurt Marquart, a pastor in the Lutheran Church of Australia for many years and now Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, is that author. During the years when the fuse was burning and the flame was creeping up to the tragic explosion which rocked the synod to its outermost borders, Prof. Marquart was far enough removed from the holocaust that he is today in a position to provide an objective analysis free from the prejudice which might tend to color the evaluation of anyone who was more closely associated with the events. His work is scholarly and incisive, cutting to the very heart of the matter. In fact, it is the best treatise on the subject that this reviewer has seen coming out of Missouri Synod circles in the last forty years. It is irenic in tone, well-balanced in content, and gives no indication of a

cover-up tactic or of a political swing. None of the principals comes out unscathed, and there is plenty of room for repentance. Fortunately, there is no attempt at psycho-analysis such as we noted in Adams' *Preus of Missouri*. This is a theological analysis, and this interests us much more than any record of personality clashes.

Prof. Marquart uncovers the seeding of the mines which had been laid and which finally were triggered in St. Louis after the New Orleans Convention of 1973. We have here another *Roots*, which one does well to observe in retrospect as a warning of what can happen to any church body, however orthodox it may be in its official confessions, constitutions, handbooks, and all. Once the leaven is left to do its work, the fermenting and spreading is as certain as Scripture says it will be. No man or group of men can change this process by political action or by ingenious device, however good the intentions may be. One cannot command or invite the leaven to go away. Scripture points the way when it tells us to purge out the leaven.

If anyone doubts the spreading powers in the leavening process, he has but to look at the results of the carefully planned declaration which was disseminated throughout the Missouri Synod in the 40's. This declaration was known as the "Chicago Statement" or the "Statement of the Forty-four." The author of *Anatomy of an Explosion* reports on the havoc that was wrought by the theses of this document, which was signed by quite a number of well-known leaders in Missouri Synod circles. Of special interest in Marquart's comment on the sixth thesis. We quote as follows:

One of the most "dangerous" theses, though hardly noticed at the time was Thesis Six: "We affirm the historic Lutheran position concerning the central importance of the *una sancta* (one holy Christian Church) and the local congregation. We believe that there should be a re-emphasis of the privileges and responsibilities of the local congregation also in matters of determining questions of fellowship. We therefore deplore the new and impro-

per emphasis on the synodical organization as basic in our consideration of the problems of the Church. We believe that no organizational loyalty can take the place of loyalty to Christ and His Church." That the purely external, organizational trappings of synods are only of human origin and authority is perfectly true and needs to be stressed. But the further implication that synods involve nothing more than "organizational loyalty" is as false as it is disastrous. We have here the germs of the Graebner-concept: confessing, confessional churches are reduced to mere human organizations, which dissolve, theoretically, into a mass of footloose congregations and even individuals. (P. 56)

The further development of this thought is worthy of careful reading and study.

In connection, however, with the consideration of the "Chicago Statement," this reviewer would call attention to the statement's view on church fellowship, which found its support in the St. Louis Union Articles of 1938, which have been withdrawn but not retracted. Here is where the first visible signs of the sputtering fuse are to be detected. The 1938 Resolutions are referred to in the "Statement's" eleventh thesis, as follows:

We affirm our conviction that in keeping with the historic Lutheran tradition and in harmony with the Synodical resolution adopted in 1938 regarding Church fellowship, such fellowship is possible without complete agreement in details of doctrine and practice which have never been considered divisive in the Lutheran Church.

Here, one may say, was one of the first indications of a compromising attitude to Scripture in relation to acts of fellowship. The 1938 formula ("need not be divisive of church fellowship" as applied to certain doctrinal differences) was used as a support for tolerance even after the St. Louis articles of union were withdrawn as a basis for fellowship. This indicates once again (as was the case with the Chicago Statement) how important it is that unionistic resolutions should not only be withdrawn

but also firmly and definitely retracted. Until this is done and doctrinal discipline has been instituted, one can expect that such unionism as is current within Missouri Synod circles will continue.

We must admit a feeling of surprise when the author makes the judgment that Brux of India "became the victim of official over-reaction." (P. 50) The issue in that case was the matter of joining in private prayer with those not in fellowship with us. To suggest that such prayer falls into a category which rules it out as the practice of Church fellowship is a formalizing of the term "Church" which cannot be supported from Scripture. Ever since Missouri drew a distinction between joint prayer and prayer fellowship, the door has been open for unionistic practices particularly in the area of prayer. Once this distinction has been admitted, it is but a short step from there to the next stage, namely, that of admitting that there are certain other practices of joint worship which do not fall into the category of Church fellowship.

That more and more violent explosions (the Historical-critical, the Law-Gospel controversies, etc.) have detonated in Missouri can certainly be traced back to the spirit of tolerance which was initiated in the St. Louis Union Articles of 1938, followed by the "Chicago Statement" of the forty-four. The theological root of the Historical-critical method is well demonstrated by Prof. Marquart and is recommended as required reading for anyone who wishes to get to the bottom of the matter.

The book may be ordered from Concordia Theological Seminary Press, Fort Wayne, Indiana. The price is one dollar. We are advised that when the present supply is exhausted the price will be advanced. Even so, the purchase will be well worth the price.

C. M. Gullerud

HARDENING — IN THE LIGHT OF GOD'S OMNISCIENCE, OMNIPOTENCE, AND MERCY

*Therefore hath he mercy on whom he
will have mercy, and whom he will he
hardeneth. Romans 9:18.*

THESIS I: *God knows all things. He sees the end from the beginning. Omniscience is an essential divine attribute. According to His wisdom God reveals the future. That revelation we call prophecy, in the sense of foretelling. What God foretells in prophecy must come to pass. If it were to fail, God's foreknowledge would be in error, and God would cease to be God. Therefore, what is foreknown and foretold must come to pass.*

PHARAOH When the Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses at the burning bush and introduced Himself as I AM THAT I AM, He announced the forthcoming liberation of His people from captivity in Egypt. Moses was not to expect that Pharaoh would meekly acquiesce and submit to the will of the Lord. Moses was instructed to open negotiations by requesting permission for his people to sacrifice unto the Lord, (Ex. 3:18). How would Pharaoh react? The Lord knew: "I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand," (3:19). The last phrase implied that the Lord would exert pressure upon Pharaoh, extreme pressure, but that Pharaoh would stiffen his will against the will of the Lord. Beck translates: "not even if he feels a strong hand." NASB: "except under compulsion." The Lord in His foreknowledge knew the reaction of Pharaoh and foretold it to Moses. He also knew the outcome of the forthcoming contest of wills: "I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go," (3:20). Egypt would suffer from punitive wonders; Pharaoh would be compelled against his will to submit to the will of the Lord. At the very first encounter the Lord revealed to Moses that Pharaoh would oppose His will

with his will, but that the will of Pharaoh would be compelled to yield to the will of the Lord.

The Lord still had to convince a reluctant Moses to serve as His prophet, His mouthpiece to Pharaoh. But that also was achieved, for the will of the Lord always prevails. On the return trip to Egypt the Lord dealt with Moses in tender pastoral care by revealing the opposition that Moses could expect from Pharaoh and by giving him understanding of the cause of that opposition. The Lord told Moses: "When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go," (4:21). The Lord would not sit idly by and let nature take its course, as it were. No, He would be active in a very definite way: He would harden Pharaoh's heart. This the Lord told Moses before Moses had had his first encounter with Pharaoh.

Moses returned and presented his credentials to his own people. He had his first encounter with Pharaoh and confronted him with the will of the Lord: "Let my people go," (5:1). As the Lord had foretold, Pharaoh blasphemously pitted his will against the will of the Lord: "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?" (5:2). When confronted with what he could but consider the impudence of Moses and his God, Pharaoh retaliated by making the slavery of Israel even more grievous. They had to gather their own straw, yet make the same quota of bricks. This unexpected turn of events turned the leaders of Israel against Moses: "Ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh," (5:21). The Lord had revealed the end from the beginning because He knew that Moses would have to stand up against not only Pharaoh, but his own people.

Moses needed strengthening. In majestic calmness and self-assurance the Lord again spoke to Moses, introducing Himself thus: "I am the Lord," the I AM THAT I AM. Man can never grasp the grandeur of the infinite power that those words proclaim, for finite man simply cannot grasp the infinite. When the virgin asked in holy wonder, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"

(Luke 1:34), Gabriel laid all questions to rest with the simple words, "With God nothing is impossible," (Luke 1:37). So Moses, after experiencing the initial determined opposition of Pharaoh and the bitter unbelief of his own brethren, needed strengthening. He was assured of absolute support, for I AM would make His name as JEHOVAH (I AM THAT I AM) known to His people. During the years of the patriarchs the Lord had revealed Himself as GOD ALMIGHTY by giving aged Abraham and Sarah a son, by giving Rebekah twins, and by delivering Jacob from the hands of Laban and Esau. But now the limitless power of I AM, THE ALMIGHTY, would be wielded in the interest of the covenant made centuries before with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The current generation, after perhaps a century of slavery to the world power of that day with no hope of deliverance, would learn from personal experience that I AM, JEHOVAH, could and would remain faithful to His covenant with their fathers, deliver them, take them as His own people, and give them the land promised to them. What a lift that revelation must have given Moses!

Before the Lord sent Moses back to Pharaoh, He once more gave him the proper perspective of what he would be experiencing in his forthcoming continued encounters with Pharaoh: "I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in land of Egypt. But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments," (7:3-4). Pharaoh would not yield, for the Lord would harden him. Yet Pharaoh's will would in the end be compelled to yield to the will of the Lord.

From eternity God knew and knows all things. He knew that His people would one day be slaves in Egypt. He knew that Pharaoh would be ruling; yea, He had expressly raised Pharaoh to power, (9:16). He had already chosen His leader, Moses. He knew the confrontation to come, the course of the struggle, the setbacks for Moses, and the final outcome. What God knew from eternity, He revealed to Moses — the end from the beginning in general outline. What was foreknown and foretold had to occur. If Pharaoh had yielded to the initial request to go and sacrifice and then yielded to the final request

for freedom, there would have been no plagues upon Egypt, and God's foreknowledge would have been subject to contingencies, even as man when he attempts to foretell the future. If prophecy fails, then God is not God, for then He neither knows nor can control the future. But He does know and has foretold the future and causes all things to come to pass even as He has foretold. What does this make of man? Is he but a pawn in the hand of God? Is every decision of his will predetermined? Has God programmed man from eternity so that man acts out his life as a robot?

NO FATALISM "Whatever will be will be" is a verse from a popular song. It gives expression to fatalism. Fatalism is the philosophical belief that man's behavior is inexorably controlled by an inanimate power higher and outside of himself. Thus man sins from necessity and so is not responsible for his acts. He possesses no freedom of will whatever and so lives his life as a robot that has from eternity been programmed by a higher force outside himself. This view was entertained by both the ancient Stoics and Manicheans, and in more modern times by the Mohammedans. Our Confessions reject this view of life as heresy. It is the first error rejected in Article II, "Of Free Will," of the *Formula of Concord*. We reject:

First, the folly of the Stoics and Manicheans (who asserted) that everything that happens must so happen, *et hominem coactum omnia facere*, that is, that man does everything from coercion, and that even in outward works the will of man has no freedom or ability to render to a certain extent external righteousness and respectable deportment, and to avoid external sins and vices, or that the will of man is coerced to external wicked deeds, unchastity, robbery, murder, etc. (*Triglotta*, p. 909.)

BOUNDARIES OF MAN'S We are not speaking of man's will
FREEDOM OF THE WILL before the fall into sin or after
 his conversion by the power of
the Holy Spirit, nor of the power of his will in the
world to come, but only of the power of his will before
the Holy Spirit activates it spiritually. Every person

makes countless decisions daily. He has freedom to make such decisions in matters below him, as Luther put it. His decision-making in this area is limited chiefly in four ways.

1. Self-interest. Whether a person is deciding what to wear for a given occasion or what to eat for lunch or what career to choose, whether to do this or that, he is controlled by self-interest. Moral decisions are likewise controlled by self-interest, for the fall has turned the sinner inward. His life is self-centered rather than theocentric. The ancient prophet lamented, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way," (Is. 53:6). In the jargon of our age: everyone does his own thing. Helping others is frequently prescribed as therapy for people whose self-centeredness has immobilized them psychologically and socially. Thus even living for others must serve the interest of self. Man cannot break out of this mold.

2. Opinio legis. When man thinks of his relations with God, securing favor with God, being acceptable to God, he can only think in terms of his doing or leaving undone, of works and rewards, of God as a hard-headed Yankee trader who exchanges His favors for man's efforts to be good according to some norm. Whether he be an illiterate or a renowned philosopher, man thinks according to the law, as surely and as certainly as the law of gravity causes the apple to fall from the limb of the tree to the ground. The young ruler who came so eagerly to Jesus with the question, "Good master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" (Matt. 19:16), revealed this thought mold. Over the centuries man has freely chosen many varied works by which to please God. The great variety of choices reveals man's liberty, but the fact that man invariably thinks in terms of works and merits reveals the limitation of his freedom.

3. External works of the Second Table. Man can will to do that which is right in the sight of God according to the law God has given, but he can only exercise that freedom in respect to the second table of the law and that only in an outward way. Man can produce civic righteousness. That is, he can make moral decisions control-

ling his outward conduct according to the second table of the law. Our Confessions freely ascribe this ability to natural man:

Nor, indeed, do we deny liberty to the human will. The human will has liberty in the choice of works and things which reason comprehends by itself. It can to a certain extent render civil righteousness or the righteousness of works; it can speak of God, offer to God a certain service by an outward work, obey magistrates, parents; in the choice of an outward work it can restrain the hands from murder, from adultery, from theft. Since there is left in human nature reason and judgment concerning objects subjected to the senses, choice between these things, and the liberty and power to render civil righteousness, are also left. For Scripture calls this the righteousness of the flesh which the carnal nature, i.e., reason, renders by itself, without the Holy Ghost. (*Augsburg Confession*, Article XVIII, "Of Free Will," *Triglotta*, p. 335.)

However, in matters pertaining to the first table of the law — fearing, loving, and trusting God — natural man has no power, despite the fact that outwardly he can keep the Sabbath, go through the motions of worshiping God, and even refrain from blaspheming with his lips.

4. Sorrow over the consequences of sin. Natural man can grieve over his sin, that is, over the consequences of his sin. Thus Cain was very sorry that he was being driven away from the fertile areas of the earth because he had killed his brother. Thus Judas repented, confessed his sin, and grieved that he had gotten the Lord into such a bind. Scripture recognizes natural man's capacity for such sorrow, but calls it the "sorrow of the world" that "worketh death," (2 Cor. 7:10).

We observe, then, that natural man can exercise a certain degree of freedom in decision making, but his decision making can only operate within the limitations established in the primal fall. Natural man can but think, speak, and act within the bounds of enlightened self-interest, the *opinio legis*, and the sorrow of this world.

When we consider man's actions in the light of God's foreknowledge and prophecy, we find that man acts out his decisions within these circumscribed boundaries with the outcome exactly as long foretold and foreknown. Prophecy is fulfilled by man's freely doing his own thing, thereby unknowingly fulfilling divine prophecy. Consider Caiaphas' dictum, "It is expedient that one man should die for the people," (John 11:50). Spoken in self-interest and effected as a matter of self-preservation, it nonetheless enunciated the eternal saving will of God and brought about that which was foreordained from eternity, (Acts 2:23).

THESIS II: God works all in all; He is omnipotent. Omnipotence is one of His essential attributes. There can be no force or power stronger than or independent of God. Therefore God works all things, both the good and the evil, without, however, being the cause of the evil. Thus the devil and the evil angels, as well as all sinners, are swept along by the omnipotence of God, yet without God either causing or coercing them to do that which is evil. If anything could happen in this universe or world of men independent of or contrary to the omnipotence of God, God would cease to be God, for there can be no power superior to God.

PHARAOH Pharaoh was conceived, developed in his mother's womb, and was thrust into this world by birth according to natural powers that God had placed in the world at creation. So Pharaoh grew and matured into manhood. He became the Pharaoh of Egypt because the Ruler of history so wanted it, (Ex. 9:16). The intellectual acumen of Pharaoh and the determination of his will came from the Lord. Pharaoh's plans for Egypt, his determination to keep Israel enslaved, and his blasphemous opposition to the will of God, as he was confronted with it in the person of Moses, were all expressions of the energy that came from the Lord. If the Lord God is omnipotent, it cannot be otherwise.

St. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians regarding spiritual gifts, makes the statement that "it is the same

God which worketh all in all," (1 Cor. 12:6). There are no qualifications or exceptions. God works all in all, both the evil and the good. When Satan arose in pride against the Creator, he was acting in energy given him in creation but now misused. So also when he approached Eve to deceive her. Eve's ear listened to the tempter, her mind gloated over the possibilities of his promise of being like God, and her hand took of the forbidden fruit in the energy and strength exercised by the permission of God. Every blasphemer that opens his mouth, every rapist that forces a woman, every murderer that presses the trigger of a Saturday night special, does what he does with a power and strength and energy permitted by the Lord. "In him we live, and move, and have our being," (Acts 17:28). So St. Paul told the sophisticated Athenians, quoting one of their own poets. It can't be otherwise, for God, if He is God, must be working all in all.

<p>GOD NOT THE CAUSE OF EVIL</p>	<p>All evil is committed by angels or men who are swept along by the omnipotence of God. Yet God is not the cause of evil. The young ruler wanted to ingratiate himself with the Lord Jesus. So he addressed Him as "Good Master," (Matt. 19:16). But Jesus rebuffed him, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God," (19:17). The young man had no intention of confessing the deity of our Lord when he addressed Him as "good." Only God is good! That is a self-evident axiom. If only God is good, then God cannot be the cause of evil. Scripture reveals Satan to be both the cause of evil and the one who introduced sin into this world. St. John made the statement, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning," (1 Jn. 3:8). God is not the cause of sin; yet no sin is committed except by the permissive power of God, for God's omnipotence works all things in all.</p>
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<p>PHARAOH AGAIN</p>	<p>Thus Pharaoh was swept along by the omnipotence of the Lord God as he established policy for Egypt, when he opposed the initial request of Moses to let the people go to sacrifice, when he made the slavery of Israel harder, also when he repented before the devastation of the plagues, then again</p>
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when he changed his mind, and when he hardened himself. None of these mental, emotional, and spiritual activities was possible outside of, independent of, or contrary to the omnipotence of God. Yet God was neither causing nor coercing Pharaoh to do what he did. Pharaoh acted freely within the boundaries that sin has established for natural man. He acted from the outset until the finale in self-interest.

LUTHER Luther discussed both the omnipotence and omniscience of God in their relationship to man's conduct in his treatise on "The Bondage of the Will," written against Erasmus in 1525. His presentation is well worth reading and rereading:

It may perhaps be asked how God can be said to work evil in us, such as hardening, giving men up to their lusts (Rom. 1:24), leading them astray, and so forth. We ought, of course, to be content with the words of God, and believe quite simply what they say, since the works of God are entirely beyond description. Yet in order to humor Reason, which is to say human stupidity, I am willing to be a silly stupid and see whether with a bit of babbling we can in any way move her.

To begin with, even Reason and Diatribe admit that God works all in all (I Cor. 12:6) and that without him nothing is effected or effective; for he is omnipotent, and this belongs to his omnipotence, as Paul says to the Ephesians. Now, Satan and man, having fallen from God and been deserted by God, cannot will good, that is, things which please God or which God wills; but instead they are continually turned in the direction of their own desires, so that they are unable not to seek the things of self. This will and nature of theirs, therefore, which is thus averse from God, is not something nonexistent. For Satan and ungodly man are not nonexistent or possessed of no nature or will, although their nature is corrupt and averse from God. That remnant of nature, therefore, as we call it, in the ungodly man and Satan, as being the creature and work of God, is no less subject to di-

vine omnipotence and activity than all other creatures and works of God.

Since, then, God moves and actuates all in all, he necessarily moves and acts also in Satan and ungodly man. But he acts in them as they are and as he finds them; that is to say, since they are averse and evil, and caught up in the movement of this divine omnipotence, they do nothing but averse and evil things. It is like a horseman riding a horse that is lame in one or two of its feet; his riding corresponds to the condition of the horse, that is to say, the horse goes badly. But what is the horseman to do? If he rides such a horse alongside horses that are not lame, this will go badly while they go well, and it cannot be otherwise unless the horse is cured. Here you see that when God works in and through evil men, evil things are done, and yet God cannot act evilly although he does evil through evil men, because one who is himself good cannot act evilly; yet he uses evil instruments that cannot escape the sway and motion of his omnipotence.

It is the fault, therefore, of the instruments, which God does not allow to be idle, that evil things are done, with God himself setting them in motion. It is just as if a carpenter were cutting badly with a chipped and jagged ax. Hence it comes about that the ungodly man cannot but continually err and sin, because he is caught up in the movement of divine power and not allowed to be idle, but wills, desires, and acts according to the kind of person he himself is.

All this is settled and certain if we believe that God is omnipotent and also that the ungodly is a creature of God, although as one averse from God and left to himself without the Spirit of God, he cannot will or do good. The omnipotence of God makes it impossible for the ungodly to evade the motion and action of God, for he is necessarily subject to it and obeys it. But his corruption or aversion from God makes it impossible for him to be

moved and carried along with good effect. God cannot lay aside his omnipotence on account of man's aversion, and ungodly man cannot alter his aversion. It thus comes about that man perpetually and necessarily sins and errs until he is put right by the Spirit of God. ...

Let no one suppose, therefore, when God is said to harden or to work evil in us (for to harden is to make evil), that he does so by creating evil in us from scratch. You must not imagine him like an evil-minded innkeeper, full of wickedness himself, who pours or blends poison into an innocent vessel, which itself does nothing but receive or suffer the malignity of the blender. That is the way people seem to imagine that man in himself is good, or at least not evil, and that he suffers an evil work at God's hands, when they hear it said by us that God works in us good things and bad, and that we are subject by sheer passive necessity to God's working; for they do not sufficiently consider how unrestingly active God is in all his creatures, allowing none of them to take a holiday. But anyone who wishes to have any understanding of such matters should think as follows. God works evil in us, i.e., by means of us, not through any fault of his, but owing to our faultiness, since we are by nature evil and he is good; but as he carries us along by his own activity in accordance with the nature of his omnipotence, good as he is himself he cannot help but do evil with an evil instrument, though he makes good use of this evil in accordance with his wisdom for his own glory and our salvation. (*Luther's Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 175-178.)

(To be continued)

Paul F. Nolting

BOOK REVIEWS

Contemporary Options in Eschatology: A Study of the Millennium, by Millard J. Erickson
(Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977). 197 pp. \$7.95.

Millard Erickson is presently serving as professor of theology at Bethel Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota. He holds several degrees, including a B.D. from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. from Northwestern University.

This volume grew out of a request by students of the author for a course that would present in a thorough and objective manner the eschatological viewpoints current in the circles in which they would one day minister. In nine chapters, Erickson seeks to give an impartial presentation of various beliefs on the millennium and the tribulation. After a discussion of certain background views, he treats postmillennialism, amillennialism, premillennialism, dispensationalism, pretribulationism, posttribulationism, and several mediating tribulational positions. In a concluding statement, he reveals his own convictions: "Overall, posttribulational premillennialism seems to me the most adequate position. The exegetical arguments for a premillennial coming, particularly those based on Revelation 20, seem to me persuasive. At the same time, the Biblical testimony seems clearly to favor the interpretation that the church will be on earth during the tribulation but will be sustained by the gracious protection and provision of God." (p. 183) The volume contains, finally, a bibliography, a general index, and an index of Scripture passages.

In discussing each of the eschatological beliefs, the author presents first an overview and history of the position, then its doctrinal tenets, and finally an evaluation of it according to both positive and negative aspects. This approach provides for an orderly presentation of subject matter and promotes the author's aim of an objective treatment. A reader who hopes to become

better acquainted with contemporary thinking in eschatology will not go away from the book disappointed.

This reviewer does, however, take exception to a number of opinions and conclusions expressed by the author. Erickson affirms that "for the first two or three centuries of its existence, the church was largely millenarian, regarding the thousand years of Revelation eschatologically and futuristically." (p. 58) This millennialism, he later states, was largely premillennial: "The view that we today term premillennialism has a long history, having roots in the early church. Probably it was the dominant belief during the apostolic period, when Christians believed strongly in the approaching end of the world and the parousia of Jesus Christ." (p. 94) It is true, now, that premillennial views were present in the early centuries of the New Testament church, and that many Christians expected an imminent return of their Lord. But it is historically questionable to suggest that most of the Christians at that time were millennialists. While there are occasional hints of premillennialism in the 2nd century Apostolic Fathers, for example, there is no evidence which would indicate that this doctrinal position was commonly held at that time.

Addressing himself to the period of the Reformation, Erickson states that the Lutheran *Augsburg Confession* is "basically postmillennial." (p. 61) According to postmillennialism, the preaching of the Gospel will become increasingly effective as the second coming of Christ approaches. And, as more and more people are converted to Christ, peace on earth will be the natural result — peace in the sense of a cessation of conflict among nations and of friction among social classes and races. Ultimately, "the whole mass of humanity shall be imbued with and governed by Christian principles and spirit." (p. 67) The *Augsburg Confession* in no way promotes such millennial thinking, but rather repudiates it: "They condemn also others, who are now spreading certain Jewish opinions, that before the resurrection of the dead the godly shall take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being everywhere suppressed." (Article XVII)

The author insists that the fact that dispensation-

alism is a movement of fairly recent origin should not in itself lead one to set it aside as false. "... if we are making any progress in the study of the Bible, we must expect some things to be uncovered that were not previously known. This may involve interpretations of specific passages, but it may well also lead to a whole new system of theology." (p. 112) How does this assertion agree with the Apostle Paul's words to the elders of Ephesus: "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God"? (Acts 20:27) From such statements in the Bible, we discern that the full complement of spiritual truths has been present for Christians from the very earliest days of the New Testament church.

This reviewer disagrees also with Erickson's conclusion that posttribulational premillennialism is better supported by Scripture than other eschatological viewpoints. While the author expressly aimed at presenting the exegetical pros and cons of all significant contemporary positions on the last things, he has failed to adduce some of the most cogent Scriptural arguments against dispensationalism, tribulationism, and literal millennialism. (This has been done recently with far more success by Wilbert R. Gawrisch in a series of lectures for a pastors' institute of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the series being entitled "Eschatological Prophecies and Current Misinterpretations." These lectures have been published in paperback, and are available from the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin, or from the CLC Book House. One would welcome more studies of this kind, especially since aberrations in the area of the last things are gaining such ground in our day.)

Criticism must be brought, finally, against one of the words in the title of Erickson's book: *Contemporary Options in Eschatology*. The word "options" suggests that the individual Christian may choose freely and legitimately from a variety of eschatological positions — as if Scripture is not fully clear on the matter. That this may well be the opinion of the author appears from his plea that differences in eschatological belief should not be divisive of church fellowship, so long as there is general agreement in the obvious Scriptural truth that

the Lord is coming again. He says: "It is important to remind ourselves of the true meaning and purpose of the doctrine of the Lord's second coming. Differences of interpretation and conviction have sometimes become the basis for separation of fellowship. ... A minute point of doctrine may become regarded as a requisite of orthodoxy and hence of fellowship. The apostle Paul did not intend the doctrine of the second coming to have such an effect. ... Comfort, not contention, is the purpose of this message." (p. 183)

This attitude is typical of fundamentalism, and must be rejected. Scripture asks, not for a mere general agreement in doctrine, but for a perfect unity which involves a oneness in understanding and judgment. (Cf. 1 Cor. 1:10; Rom. 15:5-6.) False teachings in the area of eschatology are dangerous, as indeed is all religious error. Millennialism, in both its post- and premillennial forms, turns the attention of the Christian away from the inestimable spiritual blessings of the kingdom of Christ — forgiveness of sins, peace with God, eternal life — and focuses his attention rather on political and material expectations. And it tends also to obscure the fact that Christ's second coming will be sudden and unexpected, and it can therefore lead the Christian to neglect that oft-repeated admonition of his Lord: "Watch [literally, keep on watching] therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." (Matthew 25:13)

C. Kuehne

The Gospels (A Synoptic Presentation of the Text in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) with Explanatory Notes, by Joh. Ylvisaker (Originally published by Augsburg Publishing House. Reprinted by Northwestern Publishing House). 790 pp. \$13.50. May be ordered from CLC Book House, Immanuel Lutheran College, W. Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI 54701.

This book, *The Gospels*, has been in use at Immanuel Lutheran Seminary since its beginning and has been a fa-

vorite among our students through the years, but up until this recent reprinting by NWPB we have experienced great difficulty in acquiring sufficient copies for classroom use. We are therefore very happy that this need has been alleviated, and we do not hesitate, furthermore, to recommend its use to Sunday School and Parochial School teachers and other enlightened persons who desire a volume for ready use in connection with their studies in the Gospels. While the presentation was originally offered in mimeographed form for the use of seminary students, the author was requested to make it available for publication in book form. In fulfilling this request the author revised the material and made changes to make it ready for a wider use. The present volume is a translation from the original Norwegian text which had been presented in 1905 and 1907. The translation, which leaves room for some improvement, is in the main faithful to the original. The English version dates back to 1932 and was the result of collaboration between the Board of Publication of the Norwegian Lutheran Church and Augsburg Publishing House. If, in the future, another reprinting is planned, it would be well to include an updated list of errata, since some of the Bible references are in error and in a few places the Greek and Hebrew words in the footnotes are not exactly reproduced. The reader is alerted to the transposition of "Luke" and "John" at the top of the second page of the Synopsis of the Gospel text to be found at the rear of the volume.

The Gospels is much more than a mere synoptic presentation of the texts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John but it is in fact also a commentary. The author was over-modest in terming this material "Explanatory Notes." The text is expounded, apparent contradictions are extensively dealt with, and the chronological sequence and harmony are set forth. One may not always agree with the author's views on the chronology but this does not in any way detract from the usefulness or orthodoxy of the presentation. It is quite evident, for instance, that Prof. Ylvisaker does not agree with A. T. Robertson's Harmony (following Broadus) in which the Gospel of Mark is presented as following the most chronological sequence of events. A more recent study of manuscript materials also appears to establish the view that Mark

is the oldest of the Gospels. Students in isagogics will, of course, recognize the fact that the Holy Ghost for obvious and good reasons caused the evangelists at various times to present their material in a topical order rather than in a chronological sequence which cannot be used as an argument against the inspiration and infallibility of Holy Writ as some do.

The Gospels breathes an evangelical spirit and can even be said to develop a devotional atmosphere as the text is laid out and expounded. This, too, was the overriding purpose of the author, for he says in the Foreword: "My great desire was to portray to my classes the Lord Jesus in all His love and majestic glory, so that they might go forth as living witnesses of Him who had become their life and the foundation of their salvation." It was the privilege of the author to occupy the chair of New Testament Interpretation at Luther Seminary in St. Paul for 38 years. In 1904 his alma mater, Concordia Seminary at St. Louis, conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity as a recognition of signal services in the Lutheran Church. We unashamedly urge our readers who do not have this book to spend the \$13.50 for *The Gospels*. It is well worth the price and well worth the time you will spend in reading it.

C. M. Gullerud

BRIEF BOOK NOTICES

From Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.:

Eerdmans' Handbook to the History of Christianity. Organizing Editor: Tim Dowley. 656 pp. Price: \$19.95.

A Half Century of Theology, by G. C. Berkouwer. Paperback. 268 pp. Price: \$6.95.

The *Handbook to the History of Christianity* is a very attractive book set up with text, illustrations, charts and maps both in color and in black and white.

Historical sections, special articles, marginal citations are presented by a wide range of authors (mostly European). The volume is set up in a color scheme which makes each section and presentation easily identifiable to the reader. An index of people, places, Bible references, helps the reader to locate the subject of his special interest. With the wide range of authors of differing theological stances, it goes without saying that one will not find himself in agreement with all of the conclusions and judgments that are made and drawn.

The paperback volume *A Half Century of Theology* is authored by G. C. Berkouwer, professor emeritus of theology of Free (Reformed) University of Amsterdam. Some have ranked him as the leading Reformed theologian of our day. The book deals with his theological reminiscences on the topics of election, the Church, the Bible, the coming kingdom, faith and reason, recent Roman Catholic theology and the theology of Karl Barth. It is, of course, presented from a Reformed standpoint with Calvinistic overtones. But it is interesting to note that the trend in Reformed circles (particularly European) pretty much follows the same lines as we have observed among Lutherans of this country. Much of the theology that one observes in the European quarters has been transplanted to these shores. This book will be read with a careful testing of the spirits and under the discriminating light of the Scriptures. One is not to be overwhelmed by the fame of those who have gained popularity in this age of false ecumenism. That there have been great changes taking place on the theological scene is apparent to anyone who stops and surveys the products that are emerging. The errors are old as the hills but they often appear in a new garb which may deceive the unwary. It is disquieting to note how viewpoints of old heathen philosophers are being remodelled and served up as a new hermeneutic. He who wishes to be informed of the trend among the Reformed will do well to study this book of 1977.

C. M. Gullerud



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